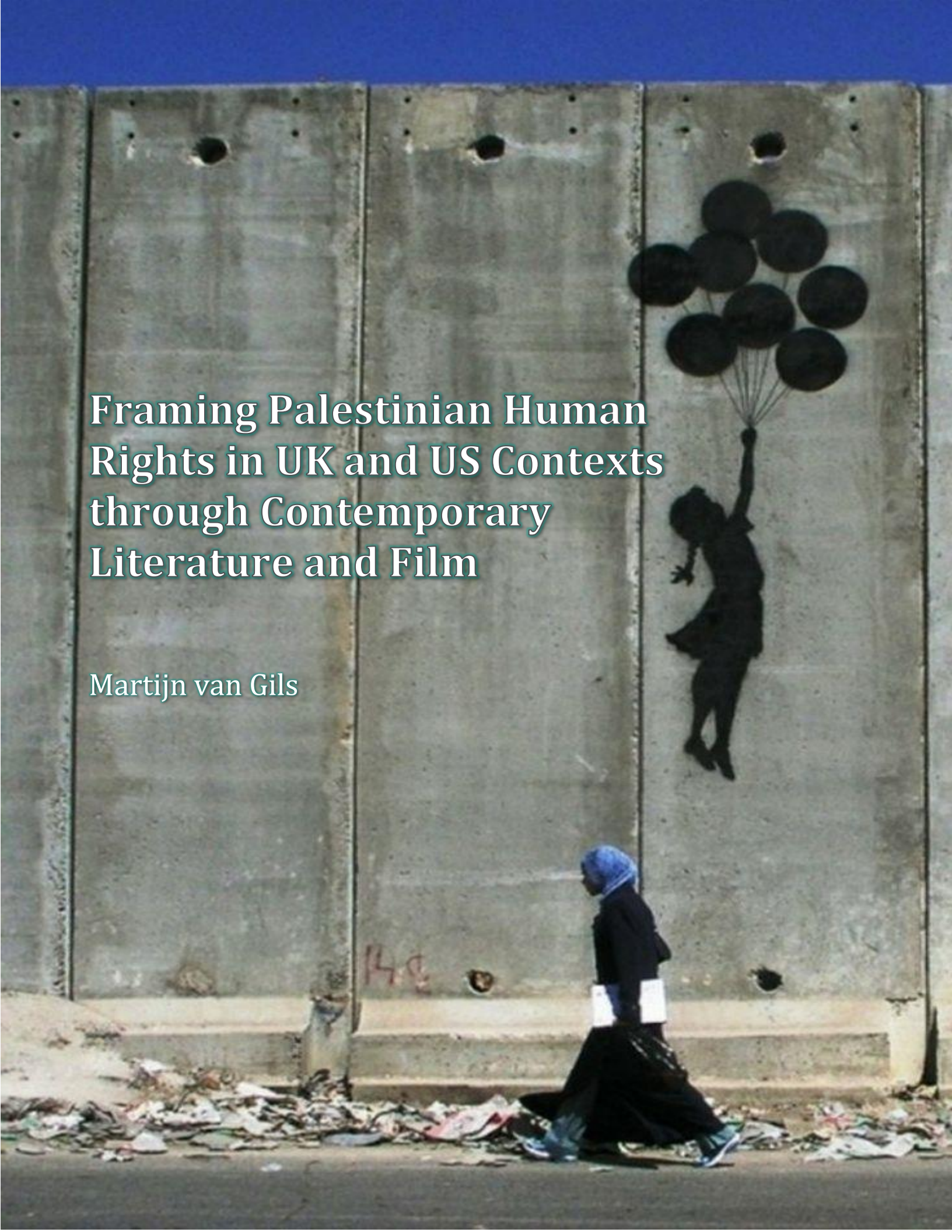

Framing Palestinian Human Rights in UK and US Contexts through Contemporary Literature and Film

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Abstract

In this thesis, I investigate how contemporary works of Palestinian literature and film articulate claims to human rights within various UK and US shared reading spaces. My method involves a close analysis of the framing of human rights in contemporary works of Palestinian literature and film; and discussions of the shared reading spaces where the works circulated. I distinguish between three types of rights claims found in the works: the right to exist (contesting the historical erasure of Palestinian life and culture); the right to land (contesting the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land); and the right to speak (contesting the international underrepresentation of Palestinian voices). The right to speak is manifest both within the narratives, as in the very circulation of the works themselves.

Each of my chapters addresses a different series of local contexts, a different medium, and a different type of event, illustrating the variety of Palestinian arts. I investigate how the various media frame human rights and lend themselves to different types of shared reading spaces. My respective case studies concern: (1) Film screenings of the documentaries *Five Broken Cameras*, *Roadmap to Apartheid* and *The Wanted 18* at UK universities; (2) *A Bird is Not a Stone*, a poetry anthology which was performed in Arabic, English, as well as Scottish languages in Scotland and England in 2014; (3) The 2015 instalment of 'One Book, Many Communities', an annual campaign where people from many countries are stimulated to organise reading groups of one specific novel selected by the organisation – in 2015, this was *Mornings in Jenin*. I argue that the works articulate their claims to rights by framing Palestinian lives as 'grievable' and by asserting the need for self-representation and self-determination by representing corporeal suffering and the subjects' responses to this. The shared reading events construct a space where what I call Palestinian 'invisibility' is counter-acted, as they enable access to Palestinian voices.

Keywords: Palestine, literature, (documentary) film, circulation, voice

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Introduction

Palestinian Literature and Human Rights

> The right to narrate is not simply a linguistic act; it is also a metaphor for the fundamental human interest in freedom itself, the right to be heard—to be recognized and represented.
>
> – Homi Bhabha, "The Right to Narrate.", n.p.

In this thesis, I discuss the manifold ways in which contemporary works of Palestinian literature and film frame human rights to transnational audiences in the UK and the US – manifested both in the narratives themselves, as well as the varying modes of circulation these works undergo. As my use of the phrase 'UK and US contexts' implies, and as will be visible in my case studies below, my project is not to identify how human rights are thematised within one specific, geographically defined context. Rather, I wish to illustrate the variety of media and modes of circulation through which contemporary works of art frame human rights to transnational audiences. One of my primary assumptions is that, within the constellation of news media which envelop and even control many people's daily lives, literary forms have an important role to play in expressing one's voice and demanding recognition of one's human rights. As such, my primary theoretical foundation regards theories on the relationship between literature and human rights, as well as the notion of 'voice' in relation to transnational patterns of narrative circulation. In the pages to follow, I will first outline and justify my case studies, before setting up my methodology. Secondly, I will provide a brief overview of Anglophone

scholarship on Palestinian literature and film, outlining what strands are relevant to my work. Following this, I shall provide a theoretical basis for human rights and the notion of 'voice'. Lastly, I will provide an overview of my chapters.

Outline of Case Studies.

I have selected three case studies in which works of Palestinian literature and film have circulated in recent years. These case studies, in the order in which I shall discuss them, are as follows: first, screenings of documentary films by a variety of student societies at UK universities, of which the three most prominently shown films are *5 Broken Cameras* (2011), *Roadmap to Apartheid* (2012) and *The Wanted 18* (2014). My second case study is *A Bird is Not a Stone* (2014), an anthology of contemporary Palestinian poetry which emerged out of a dialogue between Scottish and Palestinian poets. The anthology contains translations of the poems in English, Scots, Gaelic and Shetlandic, and there was a series of readings from the anthology in Scotland and England. My final case study is the annual, international "One Book, Many Communities" event by the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, which encourages international groups of readers and librarians to organise group reading sessions for one particular book. I shall focus on the 2015 event of this campaign, which centred around Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (Bloomsbury, 2010).

Due to my focus on the transmission of the narratives, these case studies emerged out of research into instances where works of Palestinian literature have recently circulated. Both the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology as well as the "One Book, Many Communities" event have achieved visibility in media outlets such as *ArabLit* and *The Electronic Intifada*. My chapter on student societies emerged out of a gap I perceived in scholarship, as student activism and especially students' use of literature and film have attracted little attention. Student societies are part of a formative stage in people's lives; therefore, they deserve consideration in a project

which interrogates how artistic works intervene in international discourses. Further, each case study concerns a different medium and different local contexts, making them suitable to discuss in relation to one another to make broader observations about the place of literary forms in relation to news media. Despite the fact that I do not focus on more clearly defined geographical areas, I do centre my analyses on UK and US contexts due to the historical relationship these countries have with Palestine and Israel, as the UK established a mandate in Palestine before declaring support for the establishment of a Jewish state there; and the US having traditionally supported Israel both culturally and economically. I will expand further on these dynamics in chapter 1.

Methodological Remarks and Defining Key Terms.

In order to analyse the transmission of human rights discourses, each chapter will be, in part, an analysis of the narratives themselves and how they thematise human rights; and on the other hand, an analysis of the shared reading (or viewing) space in which the works are performed and received. While the first part involves a close reading, the second part generally involves a discussion of interview material. I reached out to several actors involved in the circulation of the works – representatives from various student societies, and the editors involved in the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology. This focus on interviews inherently limits the scope of the project, as many of my observations in these sections are contingent on people recalling events from their own points of view. Further, my mediation of these interviews, rather than an engagement in field research, means that my analyses of circulation are at one extra layer of remove from the shared reading spaces. However, I have taken care at many points to ensure that my arguments are based on statements from more than one source. Despite the limitations, I believe that a discussion of how the works are circulated is integral to understanding the role of literature in promoting human rights. Beyond this, in all of my chapters, I draw on online

material with respect to the reception of the works, as well as reviews of the shared reading spaces. Online materials figure prominently in my final chapter, where I did not conduct interviews due to lack of response from the organisation and due to the availability of such online material.

With respect to my terminology, I wish to clarify my use of a few key terms. Inevitably, the label 'Palestinian' raises questions about geographical and cultural identities. As Ihab Saloul has argued, the migratory frame of reference in the Palestinian context "compels us to take into consideration both voluntary and involuntary intercultural processes of (im)mobility" (112). He then quotes Edward Said, who argued that the forced exile of the *Nakba* (Arabic for 'catastrophe', referring to the displacement of 750.000 Palestinians during the war which saw as its end the establishment of Israel in 1948) made it possible for Palestinian people to take on the *choice* of 'becoming' Palestinian, rather than a more essentialist notion of 'being'. At the same time, Saloul states, this does not contradict the notion "that one can discern a distinct Palestinian identity that goes well back in history through the culture, civil society, and political rhetoric" (112). Thus, Palestinianness is related to an active 'commitment' to be Palestinian; a commitment based on historical roots.

Furthermore, where the terms 'Palestinian literature/film' are used, this should not be taken as productions that are necessarily made within the Palestinian Territories. Not all of the works I analyse are produced in Palestine itself – for instance, Susan Abulhawa wrote her novel *Mornings in Jenin*, which I discuss in relation to the 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign, in the US. Despite this geographical distance, nearly all works under discussion were produced by 'Palestinians' – in the case of the documentaries, at least in part, and with the exception of *Roadmap to Apartheid*.

One more set of terms which requires explication is my use of the terms 'international' as compared to 'transnational' or 'cross-cultural'. International, as per the Oxford English

Dictionary, is defined as: "Designating or relating to relations between two or more nations or organizations made up of nations" ("International.", Def. A.1.a). While this carries an assumption of nations as separate entities, transnational, on the other hand, is defined as: "Extending or having interests extending beyond national bounds or frontiers" ("Trans'national.", Def. A.). Thus, I employ 'international' when referring to multiple national contexts; for instance, when I discuss 'international media'. I employ 'transnational' when referring to cultural flows which exceed the nation, which may involve the crossing of one or more borders. Finally, 'cross-cultural' relates not to national boundaries, but instead it is "pertaining to or involving different cultures or comparison between them" ("Cross-."). I employ this term to refer to reciprocal connections enabled through the circulation of the works under analysis. This is not to say that 'transnational' has no sense of reciprocity, but it is not inherent in the term as such.

Mapping the field of Anglophone Scholarship on Palestinian Arts.

What is striking about the Palestinian-Israeli conflict is how this struggle not only takes place on the ground, but is also prominently discursively produced in international terrains. Elaine Drainville and Amir Saeed argue that the conflict "takes place in the media, perhaps more so than any other armed conflict" (832). Palestinians have historically faced profound obstacles in making their voices heard, as a result of various forms of repression which I will outline in-depth in chapter 1. As a result of this historically oppressed position, it is crucial to engage with Palestinians' narratives, considering how they articulate claims to human rights.

Reflecting on the state of Palestinian literary production, Bernard argues that "[d]espite improved opportunities for international publication for Palestinians in the last several decades, (…) the Palestinian literary archive remains diminished, and dominated by a few prominent writers" (3). Even so, she argues, due to the prominence of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in

Arab politics, Palestinian writers have exerted a larger influence in Arab literature than what may be expected given their population size. Furthermore, Palestinian literature in translation has had a "special kind of currency" for non-national readers, and a reasonable amount of Palestinian writing has been translated into English and other languages – though still not widely known (Bernard 3). This illustrates how Palestinian literatures are circulated, but remain within more specific circles.

At the inaugural lecture of the 2017 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign, Bashir Abu-Manneh situates himself within a growing body of Anglophone scholarship on Palestinian literature. As he outlines, Palestinian writing has fast-gained wider postcolonial critical attention: studies on the Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish, the novels of Sahar Khalifeh, and recent Palestinian films are proliferating (Abu-Manneh, n.p.). In this lecture, Abu-Manneh reflects on the Palestinian novel, stressing the importance of seeing these novels as 'historically mediated works', by using a materialist approach that connects cultural forms to socio-political developments (Abu-Manneh, n.p.). This consideration of Palestinian literature through the lens of historical conditions – both material and psychological – is a more common trend in scholarship on Palestinian literature. I will focus here on a strand of scholarship which highlights the importance of self-representation. Edward Said argues that Palestinian cinema since 1948 must be understood in a twin context of standing against 'invisibility' on the one hand, and media stereotypes of Palestinians as a violent people on the other (3). Said argues that films represent a collective identity, providing a visual articulation of Palestinian existence and resisting an imposed identity of Palestinians as terrorists (3).

In his famous essay on the "Permission to Narrate" (1984), Said notes the absence of Palestinian voices in global discourses. He states that Palestinians "are there all right, but the narrative of their present actuality – which stems directly from the story of their existence in and displacement from Palestine, later Israel – that narrative is not" (30). Thus, the permission

to narrate serves to counter the fact that the Palestinian narrative "has never been officially admitted to Israeli history, except as that of 'non-Jews', whose inert presence in Palestine was a nuisance to be ignored or expelled" (33). According to Said, "Palestinians will initially have to play the major role in changing the consensus" (38); hence the call for the permission to narrate. Said's comments illustrate how the spread of Palestinian narratives are important to consider, and are inextricably bound up with questions of voice.

Many scholarly works operate within this framework of analysing how the objects they discuss respond to imposed silence, and/or constructions of Palestinians as terrorists. Elaine Drainville and Amir Saeed (2013) analyse original video footage from within the Occupied Territories that aim "to challenge mainstream Orientalist discourses" (830). Referring to Said's concept of the 'permission to narrate', they argue that, within this context of historical marginalisation, "the very act of historical narrating can be seen as a form of political resistance" (831; cf. Tawil-Souri 2011). Anastasia Valassopoulos (2014) discusses two Palestinian documentaries from the late 60s-early 70s, arguing that these works reflect "the struggle for international recognition at the level of cultural production" (148). "The films," she states, "participate in the fight for legitimacy over how the Palestinian people should be defined and for whom this definition is being offered" (150). These two articles illustrate the emphasis on Palestinians inserting their own voices into an international discourse which has historically constructed a cultural image of 'Palestinians' into which they themselves had little ability to intervene. In my thesis, this permission – or *right* – to narrate will recur prominently.

One of my primary assumptions is that, in order to understand how literature and film constitute an expression of 'voice', it is imperative to consider how and where works are circulated, and what degree of autonomy by the authors was involved. Several scholars mention circulation, but do not delve into this aspects in concrete terms. For instance, Drainville and Saeed's article mentions the desire of Palestinian women to articulate their struggles to a wider

audience, and emphasises the need for Western audiences to hear these stories despite their lack of knowledge of Palestine, or the "potential unwillingness" to embrace a different perspective (838). However, there is no attention to spaces where the films have circulated, and which responses they attracted. The "potential unwillingness" therefore remains abstract.

Bernard's book *Rhetorics of Belonging* starts by outlining how the book concerns how literatures intervene in "the asymmetrically waged local and international contests over the region's political past and future" (1). One of the arguments she puts forth is that literature "produce[s] its own demographic imaginary (…) and so its own criteria for national citizenship and national belonging" (40). "When these texts enter into international circulation," she argues, "their imaginings of a national citizenry travel beyond their domestic readers to an international audience, and advocate for the recognition of a particular definition of citizenship among that wider readership" (40). However, Bernard's approach largely centres on a view of how writers anticipate readings of their texts, rather than analysing readerships (2). In my project, I wish to analyse the transmission of the works by investigating how actors circulate or discuss the works under analysis.

Human Rights and Literature.

The primary focal point of my analysis concerns the relationship between literature and human rights. One prominent scholar in the field of literature and human rights is Martha Nussbaum. In her book *Poetic Justice*, she argues that literature can bring about "the ability to imagine vividly, and then to assess judicially, another person's pain, to participate in it and then to ask about its significance" (91). Daniel Bell is critical of Nussbaum's assessment; while he does state that novels may play an important role in raising popular consciousness and bringing to light injustices, he argues that Nussbaum overestimates the political impact of literary works. He states: "Novel-reading per se cannot usually do all (or most) or the 'psychological' work of

motivating concern for the plight of strangers" (575-576). In his influential book *Human Rights, Inc*., Joseph Slaughter states that he does not wish to offer "a euphoric celebration of human rights as just the thing that the world needs now; nor a defense of the sentimental power of literature" in Nussbaum's framing. However, he does believe that "everyone should know why human rights are important, that we do need a little human rights just now, and that literature does have a capacity to minister to that need" (6). In my project, I will engage with literature's role in the socio-cultural climate dominated by news media, analysing its 'impact' not from the view of quantitative analytics – which is deeply problematic, if not impossible – but from notable trends of people take out of their experiences in the shared reading spaces.

Literature's specific intervention into human rights discourses lies in its construction of 'human' subjects, as well as its testimonial value which avoids the sensationalism symptomatic of news media in the age of digital consumerism. With respect to the latter: Brenda Vellino points out how what she dubs 'human rights witness poetry' is a medium "that potentially moves us beyond the CNN effect of atrocity representation that too often devolves into sentimental or sensational sound-bite fragments minus context, understanding, and critical reflection" (148). News media often come into play only when major developments happen, or worse, only comment on single events, making it so that daily life under occupation is rarely seen; and moreover, that Palestinian voices are not heard unless international media choose to air them. Literature allows insight into personal narratives, which carries greater emotional resonance to audiences and allows access to personal voices.

With respect to constructing human subjects: Lori Allen argues that, in modern Palestine, "appeals to human rights help to constitute a human subject with certain kinds of rights that are seen to arise not from a political status but from the state of (human) nature" (161). This focus on 'human nature' is echoed in scholarship more generally: Pramod Nayar outlines how literature, which has always been concerned with the Other, "constitutes a

dominant cultural discourse and a set of texts within which particular beliefs about what it means to be human may be found" (xii). I wish to draw here on Judith Butler's notion of 'grievability', in relation to the framing of rights discourses through the prism of human nature. Butler argues that certain peoples are not regarded as "humans", through a process of infinite paranoia of the 'Other' as a subject neither alive nor dead, but as a "spectral" presence. These Others' lives "cannot be mourned because they are always already lost" (Butler 33-34). There is no social framework through which these lives are recognised and may be considered 'grievable'.

Butler mentions the role of narrative in humanizing the 'Other': narratives, she states, "stage the scene and provide the narrative means by which 'the human' in its grievability is established" (38). There are different scholarly traditions to engage with how literature establishes what Butler calls the 'grievability' of human subjects. According to Nayar, discourses on human rights commonly take the form of one of two critical routes into examining and defining normative ideas of the 'human'. The first route concerns a narrative tradition in which the human's growth and development is documented. This is manifest in the *bildungsroman*, which is Slaughter's focus in his book *Human Rights, Inc.* (xii). In Rakhshan Rizwan's words, a 'pleasure-centric' model of advocacy articulates human rights atrocities "in terms of their ability to interrupt a life and deprive it of enjoyment and pleasure" (34).

The second route, according to Nayar, concerns itself with those who are "expelled" from the very category of the human. This route establishes a narrative tradition in which a broken, deprived, dehumanised subject is presented to construct the idea of human 'dignity' through inverse imagery (xii-xiii). Nayar's book is situated in this context, arguing that this inverse presentation "implicitly demonstrate how the subject can only develop and grow in *conditions* that *sustain* life" (xiii; emphasis original). In this thesis, I wish to reconcile these two approaches by expanding into a framework that deals more fully with a picture of human

dignity: not simply by presenting a life under threat, but rather juxtaposing a variety of emotions to provide a more complex human subject who is worthy of conditions which sustain life. This involves presenting images of corporeal suffering as well as images of what life is otherwise like, or *could* be like outside of the framework of the occupation. It is through this construction of subjecthood that Palestinian lives are framed as 'grievable'.

I should note that it is not the case that out of the literary works emerges a singularly celebratory picture of human rights. As is nearly always commented upon, human rights contain an inherent paradox in that, while they are framed as 'rights' enshrined in international law, they are a set of "promises", leaving a fundamental gap between the imagination of human rights and their practice (McClennen and Slaughter 4, quoted in Nayar xv). In her book chapter "States of Cynicism", Bernard argues that in recent decades, many Palestinians and Israelis came to see the 'human rights industry' as incompatible with their desires. Bernard situates Palestinian- and Israeli-authored works "within a complicated landscape of skepticism, pragmatism, and tempered hope for human rights" (374). "These texts," she argues, "often condemn nonemancipatory appropriations of humanitarian ideas, but they also gesture toward a future in which the discrepancy between the promise of universal human rights and the current forms of its institutionalization might be less stark" (374). Similarly, in the works under analysis in my thesis, an implicit or explicit criticism may be found toward the lack of improvement in Palestine, even as their claims continue to operate within the framework of human rights and often present more hopeful alternatives.

In my thesis, I differentiate between three strands of 'rights' articulations which may be found in the works under analysis. Broadly speaking, these are: the right to exist, the right to land, and the right to speak. The right to exist concerns the historical erasure of Palestinian life and culture, which the works contest by undeniably asserting Palestinians' presence and framing

their lives as 'grievable' through emotional appeals focusing on familial frameworks. The right to land concerns the historical and present occupation of Palestinian land. The works I analyse stage an intimate connection between Palestinians and the land they inhabit to lay claims to the land. The right to speak concerns historical representations of Palestinians which do not account for their own wishes; how they have been 'spoken for'. Dovetailing with Said's permission to narrate, the works articulate the necessity for self-representation. This may be the most pertinent right for this thesis, as assertions of the right to speak enables access to the other rights articulations. While the right to speak finds manifestation in the narratives themselves, I also wish to elevate this concept to a meta-level by considering the very material production and circulation of the works as belonging to an assertion of the right to speak in real-world contexts.

'Giving Voice' or 'Enabling Access to Voice'?

I illustrated above why narratives are crucial for Palestinians to lay claims to human rights. In this section, I wish to discuss the matter of how these narratives are transmitted. Due to the processes of translation which are sometimes at work, or the fact that Western actors often take on the task of circulating the works of art or even producing them, one cannot uncritically speak of the notion of 'voice', as the lines between who speaks are sometimes blurred. This is especially crucial to negotiate in a context where the notion of *self*-representation has always been deeply problematic.

In thinking through the notion of representation as opposed to self-representation, I draw on the distinction between 'giving voice' and 'enabling access to voice'. Trinh Minh-Ha argues that making a film about the 'Other' carries inherent assumptions of a paternalistic 'permission' to speak for oneself. Since the subjects' speech "proves insufficient in most

cases", the works are completed through the insertion of a commentary that objectivly describes the images according to a scientific-humanistic rationale. This, she states,

> is astutely called "giving voice" – literally meaning that those who are/need to *be given* an opportunity to speak up never had a voice before. Without their benefactors, they are bound to remain non-admitted, non-incorporated, therefore, unheard. (60)

Building on Minh-Ha's arguments, Drainville and Saeed outline the dilemma of representing those deemed 'other' than ourselves. They present a possible alternative: "enabling access to voice", which is based on "points of contact" and cooperation with the relevant group, rather than 'speaking for' (831-832). This will undoubtedly ring alarm bells for some, as many germane questions arise: how does this cooperation emerge? How does one ensure that the voice which emerges is an accurate representation, and not a distorted mediation?

I cannot go further into these questions here, but I will reflect on them in each of my chapters. I will devote some attention to the degree to which these shared reading spaces enable access to voice, and how this may be problematised. In chapter 2, due to the problematic history of documentary films as outlined by Minh-Ha, I will reflect on this for the production of each film, as well as for the circulation of the films by student societies. In the other two chapters, I will only discuss these questions in relation to the shared reading spaces, as the works themselves are by Palestinian authors expressing their own voices.

As a final comment: I recognise that this very thesis constitutes an attempt by a white, Western scholar to come to grips with the artistic works emerging out of Palestine. However, due to my focus on the transmission and reception of these claims, perhaps this position constitutes an advantage. I can only encourage my readers to engage with the primary works for themselves, to hear the plurality of voices that emerge from them, and consider the claims

for human rights they make in relation to the socio-political climates we, as readers from various backgrounds, inhabit.

Outline of Chapters.

In chapter 1, I will trace the historical roots and contemporary manifestations of what has been called Palestinian 'invisibility'. I develop the conceptual merits of this term to account for repression of Palestinian narratives, arguing that the term holds greater resonance in the Palestinian context than similar terms, such as 'subalternity' or 'voicelessness'. Disentangling the concept of invisibility, I identify a number of key points which shape the obstacles to the spread and recognition of Palestinian narratives. I outline how, historically, Palestinians have been: ignored in the planning of a Jewish state or generally seen as non-factors in these plans; denied a legitimate relationship with the land they inhabit; had their cultural productions suppressed; and construed as violent, irrational people by international media, which is bound up with a rhetoric of 'emergency'. I argue that the contemporary works under analysis intervene within these historical and contemporary discourses by bringing Palestinians' narratives back into focus, framing their lives as 'grievable' and articulating claims to human rights.

In chapter 2, I analyse the documentaries *5 Broken Cameras* (2011), *Roadmap to Apartheid* (2012), and *The Wanted 18* (2014), as well as screenings of these films by student socities at UK universities. I will argue that each of the films employs the documentary medium in self-reflexive ways to undeniably assert the presence of Palestinian subjecs, articulating calls for their right to exist. Particularly *5 Broken Cameras* and *The Wanted 18* move beyond a broad picture of corporeal unmaking and frame Palestinian lives as grievable, through a representation of familial life and animated cows, respectively. Further, the films focus on civil forms of resistance, establishing the right to land and differentiating the documentaries from

news media. In each of the films' production, there were outside actors involved; on the whole, the films take measures to put Palestinian voices centre-stage and avoid 'speaking for' anyone.

The student societies consider film screenings their primary tool for drawing in support, as they provide an indelible image of what is happening on the ground while moving beyond the sensationalist tendencies within news media. Further, several people who become engaged with the society's activities – often following the screenings – remain engaged with Palestine. Importantly, the shared viewing events are also spaces where members of the Palestinian diaspora often take part in the discussion, providing their own viewpoint. Through this dialogue, the student societies enable access to voice.

In chapter 3, I discuss the poetry anthology *A Bird is Not a Stone* (2014), which emerged out of a dialogue between a group of Scottish poets and a group of Palestinian poets. In my analysis of the poems, I focus on how the poems assert the right to exist by painting a picture of Palestinian life which juxtaposes the 'ordinary', constituted by sceneries of normative life, and the 'extraordinary', constituted by the occupation and the resultant violence. The anthology draws its strength out of engaging in a project of self-representation which highlights the elasticity of Palestinian life, framing their lives as 'grievable'. Further, many of the poems lay a claim to the land of Palestine by establishing an intimate connection between the narrators and the land. In some poems, the right to land is articulated from a position of exile and is expressed rather from the perspective of the right to *return*.

In my discussion of the transmission of the anthology, I outline how the multi-lingual presentation has political implications by presenting the translations as different *versions* of the poems. The readings employed a multi-lingual framework as well, and at certain points one of the Palestinian poets performed her own poetry in the Arabic original. I thus argue that, while processes of translation can never escape a sense of distortion or the risk of seemingly 'speaking for', the editors took various suitable measures to enable access to voice instead.This

is further illustrated in a campaign to send copies of the anthology to Palestine to enable the authors to circulate it themselves, ensuring that they retain ownership over their work. Further, I argue that the anthology is both symptomatic of and constructive towards a cross-cultural dialogue between Scotland and Palestine. The discussions during the tour were informed by the dawning Scottish Independence Referendum, when the socio-political climate enabled greater resonance of discussing cultural and political sovereignty on reciprocal terms.

Finally, in chapter 4, I turn to the other side of the Atlantic, discussing Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) and its reception in American reading groups during the 2015 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign. I argue that the novel's articulation of the right to exist and the right to land are intertwined through its historicization of Palestine. This historicization speaks against discourses on Palestinians which de-legitimised their relationship with the land, staging an intimate connection between the Palestinian family and the land they inhabit while painting a picture of Palestinian life. Further, I argue that the novel poignantly asserts the right to speak through its representation of the character Yousef, who is framed for an act of violence he did not commit and becomes a 'face' on American news, representing evil and terror. The novel's juxtaposition of this news image with a prior exploration of how Yousef was betrayed and tortured, as well as a subsequent image of his innocent childhood, stresses Yousef's humanity and articulates the right to self-representation.

In the American reading groups, a major point of discussion constituted how the novel altered people's perceptions of the news. I argue that shared reading spaces serve to bring together readers with varying amounts of knowledge on Palestine, forming a community centred around the work. In this space, readers can discuss not only the novel, but crucially also its relationship to real-world events and participants' prior knowledge. The novel enables the formation of transnational communities which constructs a situational awareness, as US participants are confronted with their own global position. Further, rather than being confined

to the physical space, there is an important element of imagined communities as well, since participants have knowledge of the other groups that meet nationally and internationally. This knowledge is fostered through online exchanges. Further, the organisation generally involves the authors in the campaigns, enabling access to their voices.

Chapter 1

The Notion of Palestinian 'Invisibility'

In this chapter, I will outline the construction of Palestinian 'invisibility', which has long informed Palestinian cultural productions. I do not mean to reduce the artistic productions of Palestinians, whether in the land of Palestine itself or abroad, to mere engagements with a singular historical trajectory. As with all literatures, Palestinians have produced formally and thematically heterogeneous works of art. However, it would be intellectually disingenuous to suggest that works of literature and film do not often identifiably emerge out of a local context. While it is indeed problematic to attach artificial labels to authors, it must still be acknowledged that writers have always responded to particular *conditions*, which must be engaged with in historically specific terms.

In this chapter, I will trace the discursive patterns of what has been referred to as Palestinian 'invisibility'. It is not my project here to write a comprehensive history on the topic: each aspect I outline is explored more thoroughly in the sources I cite, so readers who wish to know more about them are encouraged to look into these. At the risk of seemingly positing a historical linearity, I present the aspects in a semi-chronological fashion, moving from the early 20th century to post-1967 Palestine to the present day. To discuss the matter of Palestinian 'invisibility' is to invoke an enormously complex subject, which has historically taken various

forms. I employ 'invisibility' as an umbrella term to denote the obstacles Palestinians have faced in being recognised and having their voices heard. The term carries similarities with other terms, such as 'subalternity' or voicelessness, and is prominently constructed through cultural stereotypes, which overlaps with Edward Said's concept of Orientalism. While these overlaps are undeniably there, the notion of invisibility holds a more profound resonance in the Palestinian context than these other terms, due to the problems inherent for Palestinians in asserting their *presence*, as will become clear below.

In the works of scholarship that discuss the notion of invisibility – such as Nur Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians* (1992) and Edward Said's *The Question of Palestine* (1992), which I cite prominently here – various historical dynamics are described, which all work to form the notion of Palestinian invisibility. By now, the notion of 'invisibility' may be said to have become part of the conceptual toolbox in Palestine studies. In this chapter, I take on the task of outlining the meanings of Palestinian invisibility, negotiating the works of scholarship on the matter, and linking it to my own project.

Helga Tawil-Souri outlines how various forms of repression have problematised Palestinian cultural production: "Zionist narratives, the Israeli state, Arab 'host' governments such as Lebanon and Syria, an Orientalist and Islamophobic environment in the diaspora, corruption and nepotism within the Palestinian Authority (PA)" (470). This complex network of repression has given rise to the long-standing difficulty Palestinians have had to express their voices on international platforms. The notion of Palestinian invisibility has many different dimensions. Disentangling these different aspects from each other is difficult, as they have at various points co-existed and worked together. However, the most important aspects may be summarised as follows: Historically, Palestinians have been ignored in Zionist plans of the early 20th century; denied a legitimate link to the land of Palestine; had their cultural products

suppressed; and finally, construed as backwards people and terrorists by international media. I shall cover each of these aspects below.

Invisibility and the Concept of 'Transfer'.

Nur Masalha's *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought 1882-1948* (1992) provides an account of the representations of Palestine within Zionist discourses and proposals of the late-19th and early 20th centuries. Masalha discusses the famous Zionist phrase referring to "a land without a people for a people without a land", which was coined by Israel Zangwill, a prominent figure who was often quoted in the British press as a "spokesman for Zionism" (5). Chaim Weizmann, who became the first president of Israel, propagated the phrase as late as 1914 (5-6). Masalha states that neither of these figures intended this phrase in a literal sense: "They did not mean that there were no people in Palestine, but that there were *no people worth considering within the framework of the notions of European supremacy that then held sway*" (6; emphasis added). This sheds light on the cultural atmosphere underlying early proposals for a Jewish state as informed by notions of racial hierarchies.

The firm belief in the Arab population in Palestine as not constituting a significant factor in plans for a Jewish state was embodied in the discourses surrounding the notion of transfer. 'Transfer' denotes the "organized removal of the indigenous population of Palestine to neighbouring countries" (1). What is particularly significant in this context is the ignoring of Palestinians and their wishes at the foundational stages of political Zionism. At key historical points, where calls were made for the establishment of a Jewish state, the native inhabitants were simply ignored. Masalha outlines how, at the 1897 First Zionist Congress, there was no mention of the Palestinian population when the desire for the establishment of a Jewish land in Palestine was established (5). Similarly, at the 1919 Paris Peace Conference, Chaim Weizmann

called for Palestine to become a Jewish state, and, as Masalha argues: "while the transfer or removal of the native population is implicit in such a vision, it remained unspoken in official deliberations at the conference" (12). In 1917, Israel Zangwill stated that an article of his in *Pearson's Magazine*, in which he "pointed out the difficulty in the existence of the Arab population in the Land of Israel", was read by Arabs and caused much agitation among them (qtd. in Masalha 17). Therefore, he was asked by Zionists to avoid mention of the 'Arab problem', which became official policy during the 1920s. Masalha cites the then dominant Zionist group Ahdut Ha'avodah, which adopted a policy of "avoiding all mention of the Arab question in party manifestos and policy statements" (17).

Edward Said corroborates this historical outline in his book *The Question of Palestine* (originally 1979, 2nd edition 1992). At one juncture, Said discusses the Balfour Declaration – a 1917 letter by British Secretary of State Arthur James Balfour to Lord Walter Rothschild, a prominent member of the British Jewish community, in which it was announced that Britain "view with favour the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" (Bunton 18). According to Said, the Declaration has long formed the juridical basis of Zionist claims to Palestine. Said frames the Declaration in light of its positional force. He states:

> "the declaration was made (a) by a European power, (b) about a non-European territory, (c) in a flat disregard of both the presence and the wishes of the native majority resident in that territory, and (d) it took the form of a promise about this same territory to another foreign group, so that this foreign group might, quite literally, *make* this territory a national home for the Jewish people." (20)[1]

[1] My references to Said are from an online version of the 1992 edition, lacking proper page numbers. The page numbers noted here are based on personal counts, where the first page of the preface is counted as page i, following Roman numerals, and the first page of the introduction as page 1.

Adding to this, Martin Bunton states that the mandate that sanctioned British rule in Palestine put the Jewish minority in Palestine in a uniquely privileged position while never mentioning the Palestinian Arab population by name – much like the Balfour Declaration, which the mandate incorporated (22).

Similarly to Masalha, Said outlines how, between 1917 and 1922, in the wake of the Balfour Declaration, commentators including Lord Rothschild and Chaim Weizmann stressed the 'reconstitution' or 'rebuilding' of a national home for the Jewish people. He states that none of these statements "is clear about what is at present to be found in Palestine" (10). However, the words 're-constitution' implies that its present constitution was to be dissolved. "The style of these declarations of intent," Said states, "is to leave out any unambiguous reference to the doubtless inconvenient fact that the country was already constituted (if only as a colony) and that its inhabitants were most unlikely to be happy about their 'reconstitution' by a new colonial force" (11). Such examples illustrate how Palestinians were denied a legitimate presence, and how Zionists propagated the idea that their wishes did not matter compared to the need for a Jewish state. This context, which is pervaded with European groups discussing the fate of Palestinians, illustrates the problem of Palestinians articulating their own voices within political atmospheres. One of my primary assumptions in this thesis is that artistic media, while operating within political discursive patterns, circulate through different modes, allowing for a greater degree of autonomy and expressions of one's own voice.

A De-legitimised Relationship with the Land.

A second important element is the manner in which Palestinians were (either tacitly or explicitly) acknowledged as a presence, but were denied a legitimate relationship to the land they inhabited. Gabriel Piterberg outlines how Zionist leaders saw Israel as 'empty' in a deeper sense, where the land was also condemned to exile so long as it lacked Jewish sovereignty. He

states: “it lacked any meaningful or authentic history, awaiting redemption with the return of the Jews” (32). Beyond the notion that Jewish people had a historical or religious right to the land, a major driving force of this delegitimization of Palestinians’ relationship with the land stemmed from its political status. As Bunton outlines, while ‘Palestine’ denotes a well-known geographical space, it is not possible to speak of Palestine as a political unit in the early 20th century, as it was divided into three districts (Jerusalem, Nablus and Acre) according to Ottoman rule (12). This political fact has historically contributed to a denial of the existence of Palestinian nationhood. Masalha cites Israel Zangwill, who justified the saying that Palestine was a ‘country without a people’ by stating that “there is no Arab people living in intimate fusion with the country, utilising its resources and stamping it with a characteristic impress: there is at best an Arab encampment” (qtd. in Masalha 6).

Linked to this, Masalha states, is the denial of any sense of ‘Palestinian’ identity or nationalism (17). Zangwill stated in a book that that ‘Arabs’ possess more than enough land, and thus “[t]here is no particular reason for the Arabs to cling to these few kilometres” (qtd. in Masalha 14). Notwithstanding a number of references to Palestinian nationalism, which were mostly filled with contempt, the dominant view among the Zionist leadership was that Palestinian national sentiment was not distinctive. Instead, they were simply ‘Arabs’ who happened to inhabit the land of Palestine (19). This attitude persisted, as Avraham Stern, founder of the Lehi – a paramilitary organisation to foster the formation of Israel – in 1940 described Arabs as “not a legitimate people”, who are “not a nation” (qtd. in Masalha 30). Furthermore, Masalha argues, the justifications underlying several transfer proposals – such as Weizmann’s 1930 proposals – were based on a sense that ‘transferring’ the Palestinian population would mean nothing more than a relocation “from one Arab district to another” (37-38). What is notable is the idea that the absence of a distinctive sense of self as a ‘nation’ according to European frameworks negates a population’s human rights, which establishes

'rights' as something that is reserved for those who are bound to social and political 'national' entities. As I have outlined in my introduction, literary works provide the ground for reflection on rights as emerging from 'human' nature, rather than this view of rights emerging out of the status as 'citizen'.

According to Said, it was only in the 1960s, after the Palestinian Liberation Organisation (PLO) emerged, that international media started treating Palestinians as independent from the collective 'Arabs' (xvii). Even from this point onward, however, the tendency to delegitimise the relationship between Palestinians and the land persisted. Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir famously asserted in 1969 that Palestinians "did not exist" historically, asking: "when was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state?" (Bunton 12). Said points to the custom in Israel at the time of writing his book to refer to Palestinians as 'so-called Palestinians' (10). Furthermore, Bunton outlines, US Republican presidential hopeful Newt Gingrich called Palestinians an 'invented people' in 2011 (12). Such rhetorical strategies point to the tendency to deny Palestinians a sense of nationalism, and, by extension, a legitimate link to the land. In response to these rhetorical patterns, Palestinian authors have often taken upon themselves the project of articulating claims to human rights through the prism of their intimate relationship with the land.

The Rhetoric of Emergency.

A third element I wish to discuss here is the pervasive rhetoric of 'emergency' which has long permeated pro-Israeli rhetoric. As Masalha outlines, the early 20th-century hopes of the Zionist leaders that the native Arab inhabitants of Palestine would quickly "fold their tents and steal away" was, over time, replaced by an awareness of Palestinians' attachment to the land (208). Demonstrations in the early 1920s against Jewish immigrations swept away the illusion that solving the 'Arab problem' would be easy (15). Palestinian resistance culminated in the 'Arab

rebellion' from 1936 to 1939. In response to this uprising, Zionist responses to Palestinians became increasingly militarised (26). Furthermore, Baruch Bracha outlines that the British authorities imposed an expansive set of emergency regulations on the Palestinian mandate in 1937. These laws were deemed necessary "for securing public safety, the defence of Palestine, the maintenance of public order and the suppression of mutiny" (297-298). The regulations were adapted and then introduced as the "Defence (Emergency) Regulations" in 1945, to be formally incorporated into Israel's domestic law after it declared itself an independent state in 1948 (302-304; cf. Morton 173).

Considering how this state of emergency was imposed over Palestine shortly after Israel carried out the *Nakba* (in which, as I have outlined, 750.000 Palestinians lost their homes), there is a bitter irony in promulgating the laws in the name of 'defence' and 'the suppression of mutiny'. Craig Calhoun argues that a problem with the term 'emergency' is that it removes reference to agency, as emergencies commonly refer to sudden, unpredictable events which require immediate action (30-31). Here lies the inherently decontextualizing nature of the discourse of 'emergency'. As I have argued elsewhere, employing the terms 'emergency' and 'security' render invisible the anti-colonial nature of Palestinian armed struggle, and allows a homogenous construction of Palestinians as terrorists (Van Gils and Shwaikh 446). Within the framework of invisibility, it may be said that, following Judith Butler (2006), Palestinian lives are not considered 'grievable', since in many spheres, no framework is provided to recognise and mourn Palestinian lives (34).

The state of emergency contributes to the framing of Palestinians as not being grievable. Reflecting on states of emergency in Kenya and Palestine, Annie Pfingst argues that, following Butler, state-imposed emergencies constructs a framework in which certain categories of life are "not apprehended as grievable, are not protected but rather framed as threats" (10). The rhetoric accompanying the emergency regulations renders invisible Palestinians' struggle,

painting their actions as unjustified instances of violence against a state which is presented as if it has always existed as it is – or, as I outlined above, was waiting for redemption – and has only now become 'acted upon' by other forces. Following Butler, I argue in this thesis that literature's intervention lies in a humanizing effect; in Butler's words, narratives "stage the scene and provide the narrative means by which 'the human' in its grievability is established" (38). The rights articulations in the works under discussions are tied in with a humanizing project that establishes Palestinian lives as 'grievable', contesting the rhetoric of 'emergency'.

'Two Narratives' and International Media.

I would now like to concern myself with international media productions in the last few decades. Representations of Palestinians have remained to be primarily in the hands of non-Palestinian actors. This is caused both by international framing of Palestinians, as well as the repression or even destruction of cultural expressions, primarily under the direct occupation of the Palestinian Territories between 1967 and 1991 and afterwards. With respect to the latter: Tawil-Souri states that in this period, Palestinians were forbidden from nationalist cultural expressions: the Palestinian flag became a forbidden symbol; graffiti was forbidden, and the production of local media was restricted to controlled and censored news (471). When Israel ceased the formal occupation (while remaining largely in control), bans on cultural and media productions were lifted. Despite this, silencing policies continued through incursions by the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), ransacking cultural institutions like the Sakakini Center, bombing the national radio station building and transmission tower, destroying or interrupting the transmissions of television stations, etc. (471; see also Jacir 23-25). These measures are reminiscent of Israel's siege of Beirut in 1982, when Palestinian archives – containing, among other things, film footage from the 1940s to the late 1970s (Jacir 28) – were confiscated by the IDF, and still lie under military 'protection' (471; see also Said xvii-xviii).

Despite these obstacles, the possibilities for self-representation improved, according to Said, from the moment the PLO emerged as the authentic leadership of the Palestinian people (viii). By the early seventies, he states, Palestine and the PLO had become central to the Arab League and to the UN. Various countries and organisations began to express their support for Palestinian self-determination. At various points, Said emphasises that public opinion has risen steadily in favour of a Palestinian state across the West (xv; 4), and that the emergence of his own book was only enabled by this change in the political climate. However, Said states, there remained a 'lag' between Europe and the US, which primarily only saw "gingerly acceptance of Palestinian rights" (ix).

Anna Bernard outlines how, in the 1980s, the idea of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict as a clash between 'two narratives' became a popular view in Western Europe and North America – for a large part due to media coverage of the Israeli siege of Beirut in 1982 (6-7). She emphasises how this is no small achievement, "since it registers how much more widely the Palestinian national movement is recognized among Jewish Israelis and Euro-US observers today than it was three decades ago" (31). Despite these developments, Said outlines how negotiations between Israel and Palestine have remained problematic, as Israel's position was that it was not a fit party to negotiate with because it was "only a terror organisation". This allowed Israel to accord itself the right to choose both negotiating teams, holding up progress for years (xi). At the political level, Palestinian voices were still barred from participation.

Nowadays, since the advent of the internet, it has become easier for grassroots publications sympathetic to Palestinians to arise – prominently including *The Electronic Intifada*. Despite this, mass media in the West often remain imbalanced in their representation of the conflict. John Pilger has noted that media in the West frame the conflict in terms of two warring rivals, glossing over the power relations between the two countries. Further, Israelis are often stated to be "murdered by terrorists", while Palestinians are said to be "left dead"

after a "clash with security forces" (143). Several publications comment on pro-Israel bias in American news media. The website *If Americans Knew* provides a number of reports on US news agencies in the years of the Second Intifada, stating that deaths of Israelis were over-reported compared to those of Palestinians, or that newspapers are significantly more likely to cover Israeli opinion pieces ("Analysis of Media Coverage."). Writing in the context of the 2014 Gaza bombings, publications such as *Mondoweiss* and *The Guardian* criticise American media for uncritically engaging with Israel's actions (McGreal; Werleman).

A report in *The Times of Israel* states that during the Gaza war, "[b]roadly speaking, there was more far more empathy for Israel in the north American press, and far more savage criticism on the British side of the pond" (Ben Zion). As is also illustrated above, British newspapers including the *Guardian* are far more sympathetic towards Palestinians. At the same time, the BBC has repeatedly come under fire for non-contextual, even misleading reporting of the conflict. In his above-mentioned book, Pilger outlines how the BBC refers to Israel's policy of assassination as "targeted killing", while the statistics that conflicts between Israel and Palestine lead overwhelmingly to Palestinian victims is ignored (159; cf. Gibson 2006). During the 2014 Gaza war, protests were held across the UK against what was seen as biased reporting by the BBC. In an open letter by the organisers, they state that the BBC frames Israel's shelling of civilians as "retaliation", without providing historical context on the occupation and displacements ("Crowds protest BBC."; cf. Davies).

Thus, compared to several decades ago there has been increased recognition of the Palestinian narrative. Another piece in *The Times of Israel* stated that, as the Gaza raids continued, international media became increasingly critical of Israel (Ahren). Despite this shift, American news media retain a tendency to report from the Israeli perspective. In the UK, coverage is more critical of Israel, although particularly the BBC has been criticised for their reporting. However, even while the Palestinian narrative is increasingly recognised now, the

political realities on the ground continue to look bleak, and figures such as Ilan Pappe have criticised peace negotiations for prolonging Palestinians' suffering (Weiss). In recent years, settlement projects have continued, with new settlements being built and even formally annexed (Beaumont 2014; 2017). So long as one party has its narrative largely recognised while Palestinians still face major obstacles, there is little hope for equal dialogue. Literary forms are a site through which Palestinian voices may be given expressed, to return necessary balance to the field of narrative representations.

Chapter 2

Screening Palestinian Documentaries at UK Universities: *5 Broken Cameras* (2011), *Roadmap to Apartheid* (2012) and *The Wanted 18* (2014)

> In terms of promoting social change, documentary film remains one of the most effective ways to enhance understanding on a mass level. Nothing else can so fully reveal one part of the world to another. Documentary also provides its own singular aesthetic and emotional pleasures. For these reasons, and others, it is worth the effort to make sense of the documentary now, to linger on the history that shaped it, and to speculate on its possible future. – Betsy McLane, *A New History of Documentary*, 364

> Certainly this is part of the power of the documentary. We may know the facts already, we may learn nothing new, but now we have an indelible image and a permanent record that cannot be ignored – Louise Spence, "The Talking Witness Documentary", 299-300

In this chapter, I will analyse three documentary films and their circulation by student societies in the UK: *5 Broken Cameras* (2011), *The Wanted 18* (2014) and *Roadmap to Apartheid* (2012). These films were chosen according to my research on event pages of various Palestinian-related societies, out of which it emerged that these three were shown most prominently.[2] Each of the films was well-received internationally, winning a number of awards (*Roadmap to Apartheid*, "Home."; "Awards: The Wanted 18."). Most prominently, *5 Broken Cameras* was nominated for the Best Documentary Feature category at the 2013 Oscars; an

[2] Out of a sample of 12 universities, Facebook event pages indicate that, in the last 2 years, 6 have screened *5 Broken Cameras*, 7 screened *Roadmap to Apartheid*, and 4 screened *The Wanted 18*. As this is based on event pages, it does not account for screenings during Freshers' Week, or other undocumented screenings.

enormous achievement for a film concerning Palestine ("Awards: 5 Broken Cameras."). I focus on student societies as they form a crucial part in raising awareness. In UK universities, student societies are thoroughly embedded within campus culture: during Freshers' Week at the start of the year, the majority of the activities are organised by student societies. For societies which are concerned with Palestinian activism, film screenings often form a crucial part of their activities. I have chosen to place this chapter first as documentary film is widely considered to be the most influential medium through which global realities are consumed (see McLane, above). Far from being a static 'news' medium, however, recent documentary films have become increasingly wary of presenting themselves as entirely non-fiction. Documentary makers have begun to employ artistic practices to frame their narratives, which, as I will illustrate in this chapter, can actually work to enhance the documentary's truth-value.

While there is a considerable body of scholarship on Palestinian films, very little has been written to on the films I consider to date – what has been written is primarily to be found in the form of online reviews. Further, student activism has not often been highlighted in literary/cultural studies. There are a number of studies which consider student activism in various contexts, including the UK (Rheingans and Hollands 2013; Cammaerts 2013), the United States (Franklin 2003), Kenya (Klopp and Orina 2002), and Senegal and Zimbabwe (Zeilig and Ansell 2008). However, these studies focus on socio-political dynamics; to date, little to no work has been devoted to concrete analyses of how film screenings are manifest in student societies with activist aims.

I will first outline relevant scholarship regarding theories of documentary films. Then, I will briefly set out what characterises 'Palestinian' cinema. Following this, I will analyse the three films from the perspective of documentary theories and human rights. I argue that the films each employ the documentary medium in creative, self-reflexive ways, foregrounding their indexical footage to construct a Palestinian subject, asserting their presence. This assertion

of presence articulates calls for the right to exist. Further, I argue that the films draw on 'expert' voices, often from Palestinian interviewees, to both augment their sense of authority as well as to enable access to Palestinian voices. However, it is not always transparent how communication with the interviewees developed, problematising an uncritical viewpoint on this. The films are testimony to civil resistance initiatives, articulating the right to speak and to land while presenting a picture of day-to-day life that moves beyond the sensationalist representations in the news, providing a more suitable framework for human rights discourses.

The above factors allow for the films to be taken up within activist contexts, as they provide an undeniable imprint of what is happening on the ground while illustrating the effect of civil resistance. The films find a space of reception in these student societies, who use them as their main way of drawing in support. The films visibly make an impact, as screenings form the primary tool for generating awareness and attracting involvement. Further, the student societies enable access to Palestinian voices as Palestinian students also participate within these spaces, contributing to the discussion.

The Status and Potentialities of Documentary Films.

Documentaries have become the most important shaper of public perceptions in the last few decades. In her *New History of Documentary Film*, Betsy McLane describes the contemporary world as one "blanketed – perhaps smothered – by moving image information and opinion" (363). Documentary footage in particular holds a great degree of authenticity. As Gilberto Perez outlines, television reporters are now normally situated at the scene of the news, as the presence of the reporter and the camera on-site lends an "aura of truth" to the report, cast as a reliable witness (29). McLane further states that documentaries are one of the most effective media to promote social change, as no other medium "can so fully reveal one part of the world to another" (364).

I must note that the film medium holds a complex position within cultural information networks, as films have traditionally contributed to Orientalist discourses. Yosefa Loshitzky argues that cinema "provides one of the major filters for images of the world's 'other'", and that it "constructs the imaginative space of the other in the Western spectator's mind" (51). Film is a prominent site for the negotiation of racial discourses, she argues, as issues of colour come to the fore strongly in a visually oriented medium based on a creative play of light and darkness (51; see also Bernstein and Studlar 1997). As I outlined in the introduction, Trinh Minh-Ha criticised the trend of 'giving voice' to groups perceived as 'Other' through the documentary medium, which has often been created by Western actor who paternistically 'allow' the Other to 'speak', usually framed by a scientific-humanistic narration (60).

In response to these depictions, however, film can also be employed by Palestinians as an emancipatory medium. In chapter 1, I outlined the concept of invisibility and its resonance within the Palestinian context. Film, as a medium, is the most obvious method to counteract this reality. As Edward Said outlined in his preface to the book *Dreams of a Nation: On Palestinian Cinema*,

> Palestinian cinema provides a visual alternative, a visual articulation, a visible incarnation of Palestinian existence in the years since 1948, the year of the destruction of Palestine, and the dispersal and dispossession of the Palestinians; and a way of resisting an imposed identity on Palestinians as terrorists, as violent people, by trying to articulate a counter-narrative and a counter-identity. (3)

Cinema forms a prominent site for Palestinians to construct a counter-discourse and undeniably assert their presence. Palestinians have long employed cinema, particularly documentaries, as a political instrument. Anastasia Valassopoulos analyses two documentaries, from 1969 and

1971, to outline how the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) employed "innovative rhetorical strategies in documentary film-making to argue for the international status of the Palestinian struggle" (150). The cinema of this era (from 1968-1982) is often dubbed as the cinema of the revolution; Nurith Gertz and George Khlefi state that this cinema "was the offspring of the resistance movement", employed by Palestinian organisations as a tool to advance their cause (22; cf. Yaqub, forthcoming).

Indexicality and Experimentation.

Many scholarly works have been devoted to the history and current manifestations of documentaries. McLane differentiates documentary films from fictional types of film through five characteristics: their subjects generally concern something specific and factual that is current; their purpose is to record social, cultural, natural or political phenomena to inform viewers about certain people, events, or places; their form is generally limited to actuality, derived from what already exists; their production methods use non-actors and shooting on location; and finally, they aim for a two-fold response from audiences, including an aesthetic experience of some sort as well as an effect on attitudes, possibly leading to action – since, in general, they are about *communication* rather than expression (1-4).

Documentaries, understood in the traditional sense, establish a relationship with the world we inhabit for an audience which is expected to trust that what they are viewing is, at least at its core, not fictional. In his book *The Material Ghost*, Perez discusses documentaries from the perspective of earlier theories on photographs. He outlines how a photograph is both an 'icon' and an 'index'. It is an icon "because it gives an image, a likeness, of the subject it represents", and it is an index "because it has a direct connection with that subject, as a footprint with a foot" (32). By contrast to paintings, photographs gain credence due to their lack of an authorial signature; a photographic image draws its power from having the aura of a "remnant",

stemming from "the original particularity, not of the picture but of the referent whose emanation it captures" (32-33).

Similarly, documentaries draw their power from their iconicity and indexicality, constructing a relationship between the images on screen and actual subjects and placees. Perez argues that the images produced by the camera are neither a reproduction of reality nor an illusion of it, but rather a "construction", derived from reality but distinct from it (17). "The images on the screen," he states, "carry in them something of the world itself, something material, and yet something transposed, transformed into another world: the material ghost" (28). Although there is a difference between film and reality, films "can carry a *charge* of reality unattainable in the theatre" due to the camera's "involvement with actual things" (38). It is this charge of reality that provides the documentary medium with a persuasive force in order to impact viewers.

Despite this indexicality, audiences and documentary makers in the last few decades have become increasingly wary of uncritical pictures of objectivity. Linda Williams outlines how the age of postmodernism and the increased ability of digital media to fake or manipulate images has brought with it an increased uncertainty in the objectivity of the camera (60). This is accompanied by an increased recognition that, as Paula Rabinowitz states, while documentaries purport to be neutral sources of historical truth, documentaries have and present values; "they are persuasive, not simply artifactual" (7; cf. Corner 13). Yet, according to Williams, there is still "a remarkable hunger for documentary images of the real"; and moving images have retained their capacity to move audiences to new appreciations of previously unknown truths (60).

Documentary studies have increasingly moved to analysing experimental, self-referential modes of documentaries; Kate Nash argues that one way of looking at the documentary's present is "through the lens of experimentation" (1). There is now an emphasis

on how, as Perez outlines, every film "has an aspect of documentary and an aspect of fiction" (43; cf. Renov 7). Despite the fluidity of documentaries as a medium and how, as Perez and others have noted, no film can avoid fiction completely, documentaries remain largely distinguishable as they establish a meaningful relationship between the documentary and fictional aspects to that the documentary aspects may come forward in some significant way (43). Thus, documentary studies increasingly revolve around how experimental forms and traditional understandings of 'documentaries' intertwine.

I should note that these theorists are usually situated in, and work on case studies from, Western – specifically Anglophone – contexts. However, the above outlined information on indexicality and the use of experimentation still applies. In my analysis, I will pay attention to how the films articulate claims to human rights through the documentary medium, based on the strands of rights I have set out in the introduction. To reiterate, these are: the right to exist (contesting the historical erasure of Palestinian life and culture); the right to land (contesting the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land); and the right to speak (contesting historical representations of Palestinians which do not account for their wishes).

The Nature of 'Palestinian' Documentary Films and the Question of Voice.

In this section, I will engage with the production of the films, drawing out their similarities and setting up my discussion of 'who speaks' for each film below. In *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma and Memory* (2008), Gertz and Khlefi outline how, in the 1980s and 1990s, there was an absence of any support system for cinema and television within the Palestinian Authority. Therefore, external funding was required – primarily from production companies from "Europe, the USA, and even Israel" (31). They state that, as a result of the occupation and limited means to engage in the production and dissemination of cinematic products,

> an absurd situation evolved in which Palestinian movies stirred up a lot of interest at international festivals and were shown commercially around the world, but had difficulty in reaching their "target audience" in the West Bank, the Gaza Strip, and Israel proper, as well as their natural national audience in the Arab countries. (36)

Today, many film productions remain symptomatic of transnational dynamics, more-so than of 'national' ones. *Roadmap to Apartheid* was directed by Ana Nogueira, a white South African journalist, and Eron Davidson, a Jewish Israeli filmmaker. The film was distributed by *Journeyman Pictures*, who are unspecific as to where they originated, but whose registered office is situated in the UK. However, the *IMDb* page for *Roadmap to Apartheid* states that it was released in the USA ("Roadmap to Apartheid."). Upon reaching out to the directors, Davidson explained that this geographical label is due to the fact that they first circulated the film in the US film festival circuit, before distributing it more widely (Davidson, personal correspondence). *The Wanted 18* was a co-production by a Palestinian, Amer Shomali, and Paul Cowan, a Canadian filmmaker. In the "Country" column, *IMDb* lists Canada, Palestine, as well as France ("The Wanted 18 (2014)."). The project was conceived by Shomali, who met Ina Fichman when she travelled to Palestine. Fichman put Shomali in contact with Cowan to enable the project's realisation (Brownstein, n.p.). The various origins of the directors and countries where the films were released illustrates the mobility of Palestinian cinema.

Particularly the production of *5 Broken Cameras* was structured by the conditions of Palestinian life: as Kay Dickinson outlines, "roadblocks, curfews, and checkpoints render cinematic production and dissemination uniquely difficult" in Palestinian films (138). *5 Broken Cameras* is no exception to this – as will become clear in my analysis of the film. Beyond this, there were other, transnational forces at work to enable the project. Guy Davidi, co-director of *5 Broken Cameras*, stated in an interview that, in terms of the funding:

> We had great cooperation with the Greenhouse Development Project. It's a Mediterranean development project, initiated by an Israeli foundation, but it's sponsored by Europeans. So it's a European project. (…) Then we got European funding from French and Dutch television. And then the New Israel Fund came on, and then Israeli television came on board. (Robbins, n.p.)

Davidi himself is also an Israeli filmmaker, who joined forces with Emad Burnat in producing *5 Broken Cameras*. The film is thus informed by the occupation and the possibilities it enables or disables, different transnational flows of funding, and a cooperation between two co-directors. Along with the general difficulty of defining what a 'documentary' is, this complex interplay further eludes getting a grasp on 'Palestinian' documentaries. However, paradoxically, these transnational flows are also precisely what appears to commonly constitute Palestinian films. Further, it enables these films to reach Western audiences. I will engage with the question of how the involvement of international actors affects the ways in which each films may be said to 'enable access to voice'.

Documentary Techniques and Human Rights in Roadmap to Apartheid *(2014).*

In my analysis, I will start off with *Roadmap to Apartheid* as, out of the three, it is the most 'conventional' documentary, in the sense that it is highly informative and differs from the personal narrative of *5 Broken Cameras* and the aesthetic innovation of *The Wanted 18*. The film is described by the *Electronic Intifada* as "the first documentary to offer an in-depth exploration of parallels between the South African and Israeli forms of apartheid" (Greenhouse, n.p.). Narrated by Alice Walker, the film is an introduction to the Palestinian occupation and its primary goal is to draw comparisons between South Africa and Israel.

Roadmap to Apartheid employs various techniques typical of documentaries to present itself persuasively and articulate a call for Palestinians' rights. I will start off with how it asserts Palestinians' presence, articulating the right to exist and the right to land.

Framing the Palestinian situation as marked by similar conditions as South African apartheid works towards articulating rights claims. The film compares the two countries on a range of issues, including the fact that, much like early Zionists, the Boers saw themselves as victims escaping religious persecution, who had a God-given right to the land of South Africa. Beyond this, other comparisons include land grabs, restrictive travel defined by ID cards accorded on a racial/religious basis and regulated through checkpoints, and house demolitions. Finally, one issue which is highlighted is the use of language: in the Natives' Land Act of 1913, black South Africans were labelled "foreign natives". The Israeli Absentees' Property Law of 1950 employed equally paradoxical terms, including "present absentees" (*Roadmap to Apartheid*).

In its visual presentation, the film switches between images from South Africa and images from Palestine. Occasionally, a split screen is employed to demonstrate the identifiable parallels between the two countries. A review of the film on the *Middle East Monitor* notes this, pointing out how the split screen is used to depict similar events occurring: "Bulldozers destroying homes; soldiers checking identification; displaced refugees living in tents; civilians showing their scars after being beaten by police and soldiers; tanks spraying tear gas rolling through the streets" (Smith, n.p.; see Figure 1).

Figure 1: Split screen from Roadmap to Apartheid *illustrating the parallels between South Africa and Israel/Palestine. (Stills taken from film with permission from Eron Davidson.)*

This use of visuals re-enforces the primary project of the film: to situate the controversial discourse of Israeli apartheid within a framework of racial discrimination that is familiar to the majority of people, highlighting the urgency of recognising Palestinians' rights. The comparative focus of the film articulates the right to exist and to land by highlighting the unsustainability of the conditions, presenting images of corporeal suffering. As I outlined in the introduction to this thesis, inverse imagery is often employed to highlight the need for

human dignity. *Roadmap to Apartheid* does this within a comparative framework, which embeds the Palestinian story into wider historical narratives.

The use of this historical embeddedness is to incorporate Palestinian narratives into histories of racial discrimination. Comparing the Palestinian context with an earlier one in which the right to exist and land were denied to a people draws on a recognisable framework to articulate rights claims. Edward Said stated that the task of "the intellectual" is "explicitly to universalize the crisis, to give greater human scope to what a particular race or nation suffered, to associate that experience with the suffering of others", not to detract from historical specificity, but to "[guard] against the possibility that a lesson learned about oppression in one place will be forgotten or violated in another place or time" (44). The film presents images from both contexts in order to 'universalise' the crisis, asserting Palestinians' presence as human subjects who, just as the black population in South Africa, are living under a system in which their right to exist and to land (including free movement and self-determination) are not granted to them. The film draws on a recognisable framework to convey its human rights articulations to people who consider the apartheid era as an infraction of human rights that should not have occurred, but who may not have considered Palestine as a similar matter.

The film asserts the right to speak by drawing extensively on 'expert voices', which both re-enforces its authority as a documentary as well as foregrounding Palestinian voices. The footage is complemented by a narrative framing which shapes the events into a coherent whole, compact enough to fit within the length of the film. The review on the *Electronic Intifada* stresses that the film "is packed with insights from the world's leading authorities on both South African and Israeli apartheid" (Greenhouse, n.p.). Drawing on expert voices to authenticate the primary argument is a common feature of documentaries. In *Documentary Films: A Very Short Introduction,* Patricia Aufderheide states that all documentary conventions

"arise from the need to convince viewers of the authenticity of what they are being told", including experts vouching for the truthfulness of the analysis (11). There is a broad range of interviewees in *Roadmap to Apartheid*, including a representative from the South African Foundation for Human Rights, a veteran journalist who worked in apartheid South Africa, someone from the Israeli Human Rights Group, a former legal advisor to the PLO, and a representative from the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions. All of these constitute a network of 'expert' voices, primarily consisting of figures who are directly engaged with the matters discussed in the film and have first-hand experience of the crisis.

Not only are interviews employed to lend credence to the narrative, they are also used to assert the right to speak. The *Electronic Intifada* review continues: "Perhaps more importantly, the film includes just as prominently the voices of many ordinary South Africans and Palestinians who are experts on apartheid in their own right, by virtue of suffering, surviving and resisting it through the course of their own daily lives" (Greenhouse, n.p.). An example of this includes a man who remembers his experience of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza (2008-2009), when he had to flee the bombings with his kids. He states that 21 days passed before they returned to "collect what is left of our lives", as the film shows images of the man walking through the ruined home (*Roadmap to Apartheid*). The move away from authors and legal representatives adds a more personal dimension to the film, which increases its affective potential. Moreover, the representation of figures who were or are directly implicated in the systems under discussion enables viewers to listen to their voices. *Roadmap to Apartheid* asserts the presence of its interviewees as subjects who call for the end of systemic oppression, asserting their right to speak.

This is specifically illustrated during a segment in which the contemporary movement of Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) is discussed. Two people are seen and heard: first, a representative from the "US Campaign to end the Israeli Occupation"; and following

this, Omar Barghouti, who was born in Qatar to a Palestinian family and is co-founder of the BDS movement. The segment on BDS illustrates how varying sources are consulted; crucially, one figure with Palestinian roots himself, who helped initiate the global boycott campaign. While naturally, only a limited selection of Palestinian voices can be represented, the film does well at avoiding a sense of seemingly 'speaking for' by foregrounding Palestinian voices. Despite this, the film still constitutes an 'outside view'. It remains crucial to remember that, as I have noted, the film is produced by non-Palestinian actors, who mediate these interviews. Further, there is no information on the website dedicated to the film about how communication with the interview participants emerged or developed afterwards; for instance, whether the participants got to see the end product before its release. While this by no means negates the project, the lack of transparency somewhat problematises the claim that the film enables access to voice without distortion. The film highlights a necessary viewpoint; however, any film produced by outside actors is limited in its authenticity. As I will now go on to argue, a personal angle, with the camera in the hands of a Palestinian, is the most apt at *self*-representation.

Self-reflexive Materiality and Family Dynamics - The Right to Exist in 5 Broken Cameras *(2011).*

5 Broken Cameras is a documentary film which relates the struggle of the people of Bil'in, in the West Bank. After the Second Intifada broke out in 2000, Palestinian suicide bombings increased, resulting in Israel's decision to build a separation wall, construction of which started in 2002 (Pearlman 150-151). Several villages along its route launched atypically organised, unarmed demonstrations to protest against this. "The result", as Pearlman outlines, "was ongoing demonstrations that involved men, women, and children, representatives of different political factions, and also sympathetic Israelis and foreigners" (163). In Bil'in, several representatives of different factions and social institutions were gathered, forming the

Committee of Popular Resistance against the Wall and Settlements, which organised at first daily, then weekly protests, and gathered popular support (Pearlman 163-164). Despite the fact that many of these demonstrations were non-violent, Israeli soldiers retaliated with tear gas, beatings, and sometimes shooting and killing (Pearlman 164).

5 Broken Cameras is situated in this context. Emad Burnat, a native of Bil'in, records what happens around him on film, revealing what life is like in Bil'in – and more generally, under occupation. As I have argued elsewhere, *5 Broken Cameras* bears witness to the occupation by laying bare occupational practices, including the Separation Wall and further land grabs (Van Gils and Shwaikh 2016). I will focus my analysis of *5 Broken Cameras* on its assertion of presence, which articulates the right to exist. Asserting presence also contains an implicit call to the land, as I will discuss more explicitly in relation to *The Wanted 18*; here, I will focus on the film's construction of subjecthood, which it achieves through its self-reflexive engagement with the materiality of the cameras, as well as a depiction of family life.

The film carries its testimony and calls for the right to exist through its structural features highlighting its own mediality. Embedded within the very structure of the film are repeated references to the inscription tools which enabled its production – the five broken cameras. The operational life spans of the cameras structure the production, as each camera may be seen as a section of the film. Guy Davidi echoes this sentiment, as in his synopsis of the film, he states that "[e]ach of the 5 cameras tells part of [Emad's] story" (Davidi, n.p.) These sections are demarcated by a momentary departure from the recorded footage to a black screen upon which it states how long the camera which recorded the past section remained operational. Through this framing, the cameras are made to provide narrative as well as temporal order.

Within the film, Emad's cameras are presented in an ambivalent manner with respect to bodily integrity and safety. On the one hand, the cameras assist the villagers in processing

trauma; but on the other hand, they continuously put Emad at risk. The former point links with the demonstrations. As I have argued elsewhere, an important trope in the film relating to asserting presence is healing (Van Gils and Shwaikh 452). Emad remarks in *5 Broken Cameras* that healing "is a victim's sole obligation. By healing, you resist oppression" (*5 Broken Cameras*). Healing should be seen in both a material and a spiritual sense. Particularly in the latter case, the cameras are instrumental. Emad states that his filming assists the villagers to work through the events. On occasion, he plays recorded footage to groups of people, which he states allows them to create distance from the events and reflect upon them. "Forgotten wounds cannot heal", Emad states, thus the visual aid of the camera allows for remembrance and processing the events (*5 Broken Cameras*). His documentation of the events therefore has a profound effect on the villagers, who can process their trauma due to the cameras.

Further, at one point in the film the camera Emad is holding physically protects him from harm, as a soldier shoots a bullet which is lodged in the camera, breaking it in the process. Emad states that the bullet in the camera serves as a reminder of the "fragility of life" (*5 Broken Cameras*); a pertinent statement to my argument. The film repeatedly stresses the fact that Emad's recording makes him a target of the soldiers, who attempt to stop him from filming. This puts him under constant threat, which comes into stark focus when the camera described above is shot. The cameras' breaking is significant: the fragility of the cameras highlights corporeal threats, drawing the filmmaker into the product itself through a haunting awareness of his physical presence behind the screen; a presence which is perceived to be in danger. *5 Broken Cameras* highlights the difficult processes which enabled the film by foregrounding the role of the camera as well as Emad's precarious position as the one who wields the cameras. The very need for five different cameras, which all break by the end of the film, forms a powerful testimony to the conditions of life for the people of Bil'in (Figure 3).

Figure 3: Emad with his five broken cameras. (Still taken from 5 Broken Cameras *with permission from Emad Burnat.)*

Thus, in order to articulate the right to exist, *5 Broken Cameras* constructs a relationship between the Palestinians who are represented and the media by which this act of representation is made possible. In other words, it stages a negotiation between the materiality of the medium and materiality of the Palestinian body to highlight a sense of political urgency, drawing attention to the necessity of recognising Palestinians' rights by foregrounding the army's use of force against civil resistance. This self-reflexive employment of the documentary medium is employed to assert the Palestinians' presence; and as a result, their right to exist.

Beyond this focus on corporeal integrity, which is also employed in *Roadmap to Apartheid*, the right to exist is conveyed through a deeper framing of Emad's life as 'grievable' by creating a developed picture of Emad as a husband and a father. The film's articulation of subjecthood is embodied in how *5 Broken Cameras* often puts the occupation within a familial framework. Near the start of the film, Emad films his wife hanging out the laundry to dry, which is interrupted by sounds of gunfire from the village. Rather than panicking, she simply

tells Emad to not let the children outside (*5 Broken Cameras*). This use of violent sounds clashing with domestic visuals juxtaposes normative life with the 'extraordinary' circumstances of the occupation.

Emad's children form an important part of the film, as he records them growing up in Bil'in marked by the wall and the occupation. Emad records innocent images, including his youngest son, Gibreel, celebrating his third birthday. On the other hand, Gibreel's childhood is marked by the occupation. Emad states at the start of the film that Gibreel was born in 2005 on the same day that the wall was built around Bil'in. Emad captures Gibreel's early speech on camera, which includes words such as 'wall' and 'army' (*5 Broken Cameras*). At a young age, Gibreel starts to join the weekly demonstrations (Figure 4). Gradually becoming sensitive to the world around him, Gibreel depicts the confusion of growing up under occupation. Emad states that the only protection he can offer Gibreel is to let him see the occupation and resistance with his own eyes, and recognise his vulnerability (*5 Broken Cameras*).

Figure 4: Children leading a demonstration in Bil'in. (Still taken from 5 Broken Cameras *with permission from Emad Burnat.)*

Through this focus on the next generation, prominently including Gibreel and his experience of life under occupation, family dynamics are an integral part of *5 Broken Cameras*. In depicting images of family life which is disturbed by the occupation, *5 Broken Cameras* provides a framework for empathising with the Palestinian characters, humanising them and framing their lives as grievable. Combined with the testimony of the indexical footage of the documentary medium, providing an indelible image of Palestinian subjecthood, and its depictions of the demonstrations which assert the right to self-representation, *5 Broken Cameras* poignantly articulates calls for human rights by highlighting the tension between the public and private spheres.

Finally, I wish to discuss the issue of *self*-representation in the film. The primary feature setting *5 Broken Cameras* apart from the other two films is that all footage is recorded by one person; a Palestinian. In a two-part interview with co-directors Emad Burnat and Guy Davidi, both stress that Emad was the only villager with a camera. Davidi specifies that while there were many journalists present, Emad was the only one permanently present and thus able to film instances of soldiers coming in the night (Robbins, n.p.). The two co-operated in the construction of the film years after Emad started filming, and Davidi states that, as an Israeli, "it was clear to me that I would need to be empowering his voice, to put him in the film as the protagonist" (Robbins, n.p.).

Davidi did a lot of work on the script, condensing the hundreds of hours of footage into a narrrative string. According to Davidi, his outside point of view helped Emad make sense of the way he had grown – and Emad told Davidi that his interpretations were "completely right"

(Robbins, n.p.). While the international cooperation emerged by 'accident' because the two were friends, rather than an attempt at making a political claim (Robbins, n.p.), it does, as Davidi admits, add a complicating dimension. In the end product, Emad's narrative is what is foregrounded, as it is his story, filmed through his camera. Presenting a personal story, *5 Broken Cameras* is an expression of Emad's voice, and he himself holds the camera. Davidi's cooperation enables access to this voice through his co-direction and editing work. At a meta-level, *5 Broken Cameras* forms an assertion of the right for Palestinians to self-representation.

A Story of 'Revolutionary Cows' – The Wanted 18 *(2014).*

The Wanted 18 is set in the first Intifada, at a time when the citizens of Beit Sahour (near Bethlehem) attempt to become a self-sufficient community: by, for instance, tending to their own vegetable gardens, raising chickens and rabbits, and forming neighbourhood committees. As part of this initiative, the town buys 18 cows from an Israeli Kibbutz so they will no longer need to buy milk from Israel. The village had never had cows; in fact, as a university student who speaks in the film states, Palestine did not have a culture of cows in general. Purchasing the cows from the Kibbutz was considered a big step in realising, as one interviewee states, their "dream of freedom and independence" (*The Wanted 18*). The town successfully initiates a project of civil resistance and boycott against Israel. Unhappy about the town's self-sufficiency and worried that Beit Sahour may become a model for other places, the Israeli authority takes measures. In the film, it is shown that a military governor comes by, photographs the cows, and tells the farmers that they have to remove the cows. When asked why this is, the governor says: "these cows are dangerous for the security of the state of Israel" (*The Wanted 18*). Following this, the people of Beit Sahour hide the cows rather than giving them up and an 8-day long search campaign for the cows is issued, including hundreds of

soldiers and even two helicopters. The film highlights the absurdity of the events it concerns, as a herd of cows literally becomes 'wanted' and a search ensues for them.

The film asserts the right to exist through its self-reflexive engagement with the documentary medium, which combines animated segments with recent interviews. *The Wanted 18* immediately calls attention to its status as in part an imaginative effort at the start of the film. Shomali, co-director and primary narrator of the film, recalls the year 1987, when he was 6 years old living in a Syrian refugee camp with his Palestinian family. Although he had never been in Palestine and only saw it in the news, he "knew [he] was Palestinian" (*The Wanted 18*). This suggests, as I have outlined in my introduction, an active 'commitment' to Palestinian identity. In this camp, Shomali states, he read a comic on the story of the 18 cows. The film forms Shomali's attempt at reconstructing the narrative and 'capturing' the events on camera.

Throughout the film, the visuals consist of archival footage from the first Intifada, re-enactments, interviews, and animated segments. By employing the framing of the narrator who hears the story, and drawing extensively on animated segments, *The Wanted 18* self-consciously positions itself as a reconstruction. Despite this, the combination of animated segments and recent interviews, which are interspersed with one another, allow the viewer to 'see through' the film's absurdist, comical presentation of the events, leading to an uncanny sense that, despite the comic nature, one is looking at actual people, under real oppressive circumstances (Figure 5). As such, following Perez, the film negotiates its fictional aspects juxtaposes them with the other footage in such a way that it re-enforces the film's authority as a documentary. Due to this framing, the Palestinian interviewees are given an undeniable presence in the film.

Figure 5: Animation (or 'claymation') of a cow in hiding from the Israeli soldiers in The Wanted 18*, followed by an interviewee talking while accompanied by a comic-like image of a townsmeeting including a cow. (Still taken from film with permission from Amer Shomali.)*

The animated segments are in themselves also employed to discursively articulate Palestinians' right to exist. In the film's narrative framing, the cows are metaphorically used to

depict Palestinians. When Shomali is speaking at the start, he states: "Maybe you think that cows are all the same, and they are stupid and lazy. (…) Maybe you should think again" (*The Wanted 18*). Soon after, when the animated cows are introduced to the viewer, one of the cows is stated to not like Palestinians. The cow, who is reading a newspaper, states: "Palestinians would prefer to riot than work" (*The Wanted 18*). This sequential invocation of stereotypes of homogeneity and laziness satirises the international characterisation of Palestinians. The cows may be seen as an abstract embodiment of Palestinians, and viewers should "think again" about what it means to be Palestinian.

It is noteworthy how, through the animations, the cows are turned into active agents in the framework of the civil resistance initiative the film represents. The animations are used to provide a focal point for the cows to 'speak' – although this is obviously only enabled by human imagination. While, as I outlined above, the film clearly asserts the presence of the Palestinians who are interviewed themselves, the cows are equally 'alive', as viewers follow their narrative on the screen, rather than them talking about what happened. The cows are given a personality, and at one point, an emotional scene takes place in which one of the cows dies upon giving birth. The farmers who were present at the time recall this event, and how they stayed with the cow while she was clearly in pain. The woman states: "It moved me deeply – as if she was human" (*The Wanted 18*). Interestingly, while the farmers express their voices in recollecting the event, it is the cows who generate the emotional weight of the scene. Through these scenes, *The Wanted 18* shows how cows, too, are grievable. Due to the parallels between the cows and Palestinians I outlined, this grievability of the cows by extension contributes towards empathy for the Palestinians who were involved in the same events.

Finally, with respect to the right to speak: the very presence of the interviewees is significant in relation to the right to speak. As in *Roadmap to Apartheid*, enabling the townspeople to

narrate their own viewpoints puts the Palestinians centre-stage and asserts their right to spread their narrative. Further, at the level of production: Shomali considers himself Palestinian, and it was his idea out of which the film emerged, through the cooperation of Fichman and Cowan. His role as the one who reconstructs the narrative therefore seems apt at 'enabling access to voice' of the townspeople.

While this is true to some degree, it should be problematised. Despite Shomali's position as a 'Palestinian', he still mediates a narrative which to he was not himself an active participant. He refers to Beit Sahour as "my town" (*The Wanted 18*), which has ambivalent effects. On the one hand, his active involvement in reconstructing the narrative understandably gives him a sense of being part of the community, by staging a mental connection with them. On the other hand, the use of the possessive risks 'claiming' the struggle, taking it away from the people who really parttook in it. At the end of the film, when the cows are transported away following the end of the Intifada, one young cow escapes. In the present, twenty years later, Shomali is recorded walking by a group of caves, looking for the missing cow. This symbolically illustrates his willingness to take up the legacy of the people of Beit Sahour. While the film usefully highlights the project of civil resistance – as I will expand upon below – Shomali presenting himself as the sole agent searching for the cow to continue the struggle appears problematic. On the whole, the interviewees take up most of the focus, though the act of seemingly claiming the narrative somewhat undercuts this.

The Films, the Right to Land, and Promoting Civil Resistance.

In *The Wanted 18*, the narrative feature of the cows is intimately bound up with the film's articulation of the right to land. The primary driving force of the film is to bear witness to the attempt by the community in Beit Sahour to attain self-sufficiency, which is forcefully suppressed. As a review by the *Huffington Post* states, the film "shows how the Palestinian

right to develop, which is a basic human right, is denied" (Tartir, n.p.). The film articulates a call for the right to land by depicting the quest of achieving self-determination, as well as stressing the sense of absurdity permeating the suppression of this attempt. Following the quote by the military governor above that the cows were a security threat to Israel, an interviewee who recalled the event states: "I don't understand. How can 18 cows be dangerous for the security of the state of Israel? That's very strange" (*The Wanted 18*). The narrative of the cows which are literally 'wanted' by the Israeli army, framed by a comic book at the start of the film and satirical comments by the interviewees, highlight the absurdity of the events. That the cows are deemed a threat to security illustrates the defiance inherent in the notion of Palestinian self-determination. Through its depiction of the project of civil resistance, the film articulates a claim to the townspeople's right to cultivate the land for themselves.

As I have illustrated, all of the films focus on civil and economic forms of resistance: *Roadmap to Apartheid* through the focus on BDS; *5 Broken Cameras* through the testimony to the demonstrations, and *The Wanted 18* through the story of the cows. The representations of civil resistance are significant in relation to articulating human rights. As I have outlined in chapter 1, one of the primary manifestations of Palestinian invisibility, particularly today, revolves around the maintenance of the Israeli 'state of emergency' and the discourse emerging from it, which frames Palestinian resistance as threats to security, justifying use of force. Within this framework, as Shwaikh and I argued elsewhere, one of the most efficient tools of resistance is to record instances of non-violent resistance which are suppressed through disproportionate force. Peaceful resistance asserts Palestinians' claim to the land and problematises the authority of Israel, as they must either concede the land to those who inhabit it, or employ force to drive them out, which risks international exposure of human rights violations (460). Thus, the documentary medium emerges as a powerful medium to provide a counter-discourse to the rhetoric of 'emergency', and more generally the international

representations of Palestinians as a violent people. The representation of demonstrations in *5 Broken Cameras* and *The Wanted 18*, and on a meta-level, the testimony of the films which are circulated transnationally, provide an undeniable assertion of the Palestinians' presence and right to the land outside the constraints of the occupation.

The films all valorise civil forms of resistance by pointing to its efficacy. *Roadmap to Apartheid* highlights how economic boycott played a large role in ending apartheid in South Africa. *5 Broken Cameras* and *The Wanted 18* highlight the success of their initiatives: towards the end of *5 Broken Cameras*, the wall is pushed back; a victory for Bil'in. Further, it is stated that they will continue to resist the existence of the new wall. In *The Wanted 18*, the interviewees repeatedly give off the impression that the people of Beit Sahour made an impact. "Nothing seemed to be impossible for Palestinians at the time," states one interviewee – and then, further highlighting the absurdity of their lack of self-determination, he continues: "not even milking a cow" (*The Wanted 18*). Another interviewee states that "the occupation was taken by surprise" by the level of community organisation displayed in Beit Sahour at the time (*The Wanted 18*). Despite the shift in tone towards the end, when the film outlines the disillusionment following the Oslo accords, when Palestinians did not get nearly as much as they wanted, the positive impact of the initiatives are highlighted. Thus, all films promote the use of civil resistance initiatives in the present, asserting the right to land. This focus makes them particularly suitable for screening within activist contexts, as I will now go on to outline.

Screening the Films in UK Student Societies.

In this section, I will analyse screenings of the three films in UK student societies who are concerned with Palestinian activism. As I have noted, the films in this chapter were chosen according to research on event pages of various Palestinian-related societies, out of which it emerged that these three were shown most prominently. In my research, I have held four

interviews. Three of these interviews were with representatives from the universities of York, Glasgow, and Exeter. The fourth participant is currently also on the committee of the Friends of Palestine Society at Exeter, but had studied at the universities of Cambridge and East Anglia prior, where he was also involved with their respective Palestinian-related societies and the film screenings they held.[3] All participants were asked for their preferences with regard to anonymity. Respecting their wishes, I only use their universities, and for those who gave me permission, their first names.

I will start off by outlining the representatives' thoughts on the place of film screenings within their societies. All participants agreed that for student societies, film screenings are an important – even the main – tool in drawing people into the society's activities or Palestinian activism more broadly. The representative from York, who expressed a wish to stay anonymous, stated that people usually get their information from the news, which is only when a particularly significant development occurs. The day-to-day life of Palestinians is not highlighted this way, he states, and films which provide this personal angle are crucial to building support. In online reviews, *The Wanted 18* has been praised for its depiction of Palestinian resistance which moves beyond the First Intifada as "an era too-often simplistically depicted with stone-throwing Palestinian youth facing armed soldiers" ("The Wanted 18."). An anonymous representative from the University of Exeter stressed that a combination of facts and figures and the depiction of spontaneous moments of daily life are helpful in making people empathise. These statements connects with what I argued above about the films as drawing their strength from presenting a larger picture (as *Roadmap* does), or providing a more personal narrative (as *5 Broken Cameras* and *The Wanted 18* do).

[3] The University of Glasgow is the odd one out in the group, since Scotland has quite a different historical and current relationship with Palestine than England, as I will discuss in the next chapter. Scott, the participant from Glasgow, noted that while he does not have a broad outlook on the differences between the two national contexts, he does believe that there tends to be more moderation in England with regard to their demands and rhetoric. However, he states that a binary framework falters as, naturally, regional differences occur in both countries.

All participants believe in the power of film screenings to impact people's perceptions. Scott (Glasgow) also noted that, naturally, responses differ: out of the people who were not yet involved in Palestinian activism prior to the screening, some who attend the film screenings are not too interested and will not return, while others wish to get involved more. Although it is impossible to determine how exactly film screenings impact membership rates, particularly Gabriel and the anonymous representative from Exeter expressed that there is a notable trend at Exeter where people who attended film screenings would often express a desire to get involved and could subsequently be seen to return at other events. Scott remained more abstract, but stated that generally anyone who joins the society "has been to at least one screening", and that screenings are the society's main way of getting people involved. The participants' focus on generating empathy and building support illustrates how, as McLane argued, documentaries are expected to engender a twofold response: part aesthetic and affective, and part an effect on viewers' attitudes.

Reflecting on the position student societies hold within Palestinian activism more generally, all participants responded that student societies have an important role to play. The representative from York stated that, particularly in the UK, student movements form a large part of the wider activist network. To varying degrees, the participants agreed that student societies play a role in getting people involved with Palestinian activism for a sustained amount of time. Although the anonymous representative from Exeter emphasised that it strongly differs per individual, all participants did see student societies as a suitable place to get people involved – what the representative from York referred to as "ideological training ground". Nearly all participants emphasised their society's involvement with BDS initiatives, which, even if their support only has a minor legal impact, is important in building support at a local level. This is not to say that they are not involved in national networks: Gabriel (speaking for Exeter) and Scott (Glasgow) stated that their student societies received support from or collaborated with

national movements (such as the Friends of Al-Aqsa and the Scottish Palestine Solidarity Campaign, respectively). This illustrates how screenings by student societies not only lead to an increasing number of people actively participating in Palestinian solidarity networks, but also to external activists in turn communicating with student societies to help educate people and raise awareness.

The Choice of Films – Material, Aesthetic, Socio-political.

The students all reflected on the differing perspectives the films allow for human rights claims. The choice of films was framed part in terms of material and practical considerations. The representative from York stated that there are not too many documentaries out there which are of high quality, and Scott (Glasgow) emphasised that if a committee member already had access to a film, or if they could get cheap access to it, they were likely to screen it. The anonymous representative from Exeter further emphasised the process of getting a license to screen a film. Further, global distribution and debates informed the choice of films as well: the Exeter representative emphasised that they considered whether the film had been screened in many places before and if it generated much discussion. The anonymous representative from York stated that media attention plays a large role in the disparity between films – for instance, the Oscar nomination for *5 Broken Cameras* means that this film is often chosen instead of other films. As the above illustrates, the global distribution and popularity of the films – informed by the relative difficulty of producing films in Palestine – profoundly affected the local, student-led events.

However, this issue of 'relevance' also came up more explicitly from a human rights perspective: the participants expressed that certain points in the academic year are particularly suitable for film screenings. Gabriel (Exeter), stated that the annual Israeli Apartheid Week was a suitable juncture to screen films – this year, they screened *Roadmap to Apartheid* for the

event – as they could easily be connected to contemporary events. Scott (Glasgow) stated that their society tended to show *5 Broken Cameras* during Apartheid Week, and in general that film screenings tend to attract more attention if they can be linked to current events. As I have emphasised in my analysis above, all films strongly relate to contemporary Palestinian activism: *5 Broken Cameras* as it was set in the years after the Second Intifada, concerning a struggle which is still on-going; and *Roadmap to Apartheid* and *The Wanted 18* relate strongly to current BDS initiatives. The comments from the student societies indicate that relevance to events, such as Israeli Apartheid Week, is an important consideration in deciding which films to show and at which juncture. This indicates the focus on employing these films to promote human rights initiatives, as they operate alongside global events designed to raise awareness and protest. The films are employed as 'introductions' to Palestinian life an activism, during specific times of the year when their subject matter aligns with global initiatives.

The atmosphere at film screenings was reported to generally be highly positive. Gabriel, who, as I have stated, has been involved in film screenings at three different universities (Exeter, Cambridge, and East Anglia), noted that people always tend to pay close attention and that, if the screening was well-promoted on social media or through leaflets, a considerable amount of people tended to show up. Afterwards, he states, there is often a 'shocked silence'. While the other participants largely agreed, the anonymous representative from Exeter stated that it depends per film, and points attention to the differing modes of human rights articulations in films. From their experience, a personal film such as *5 Broken Cameras* had greater impact as the footage is "real and shocking", and due to the personal angle people tend to be more open to it. This contrasts with *Roadmap to Apartheid*, which the representative from Exeter perceived largely as an educational film with less emotional impact. There are notable regional differences in this: the student from York expressed that *Roadmap to Apartheid* actually tended to be the most effective film they screened, and people would mention it until

months afterwards. Scott, from Glasgow, did not express a value-laden judgment about the differences in impact between the films, but rather expressed the view that *Roadmap to Apartheid* "is perhaps superior in terms of providing a legal and human rights framework", but *5 Broken Cameras* tends to be more "personally poignant". This illustrates how there are multiple ways in which calls for human rights may be articulated, and how the reception of these various angles differs per individual.

Enabling Access to Voice?

Significantly, Gabriel (Exeter, Cambridge, East Anglia) states that there were Palestinian students present at most events – including, but not limited to, film screenings. Some of those are members of the diaspora who do not have Arabic as their first language, whereas others do speak Arabic as their first language. The implications of this, according to Gabriel, is that native speakers of Arabic in particular enjoy seeing films that are (partly) in the Arabic language, as it is a way of "reaching out to them and making them feel at home in our activist spaces". Most pertinently for my project, the presence of Palestinians at the events enables them to provide their own viewpoint on the matters raised in the discussion. Rather than being a group of non-Palestinian students representing and discussing Palestine, these events are often the very spaces in which Palestinian voices may be heard in person. Gabriel states that the presence of Palestinian students is a way for non-Arabic native speakers "to remember that the struggle is about Palestine and what is happening on the ground in Palestine first and foremost". The presentation of the films already works towards this reminder; but the presence of Palestinian students in particular connects the films to real-world people within one's immediate surroundings, who can provide their own viewpoint and express their voice. Due to this dialogic setting, the film screenings enable access to Palestinian voices.

Conclusion.

As I stated at the beginning of this chapter, I opened with documentary films as they are currently the most prominent for raising awareness. The student societies highlighted how these documentaries differed from news media by providing personal narratives and crucial insights into day-to-day resistance beyond outbursts of violence. As I have shown, documentary film is the most apt medium at asserting presence, through which the rights to self-representation and self-determination are also articulated.

I highlighted how each film was structured by different modes of production: *Roadmap to Apartheid* is a documentary initiated by outside actors, who present the narrative of Israeli apartheid by drawing on interview material and archival footage. *The Wanted 18* is Shomali's attempt at reconstructing the narrative of Beit Sahour during the First Intifada, and similarly draws on interviews. While both films are apt at seemingly avoiding to 'speak for' anyone, I argued that they are mediations, and the lack of transparency of how communication with interview participants developed problematises the viewpoint that they merely enable access to voice. The film which truly represented an act of self-representation is *5 Broken Cameras*, as the camera was in the hands of Emad. The film remains symptomatic of transnational dynamics in Palestinian cinema, as filmmaker Davidi enabled the production of the film; but it is Emad's narrative which is front and centre.

In the next chapter, I will shift the focus to the poetry anthology *A Bird is Not a Stone* (2014), which was circulated and performed in Scotland and England. By contrast to the documentaries in this chapter, in which the presence of Palestinian subjects is undeniably asserted through an imprint of embodiment, the poems articulate the right to exist more symbolically, by depicting the elasticity of Palestinian life. Rather than achieving a likeness with news media but departing from them, poetry constitutes its own site of dialogue, in which cross-cultural dialogues can emerge and stereotypes of Palestinians may be contested.

Chapter 3

A Bird is Not a Stone: A Poetry Anthology in Performance

Whose
Berlin Burd
faced an absurd
obstacle?
(Which the burd keeked over
And The Wall keeled over)
– Liz Lochhead, qtd. in "The Berlin Burd."

"Surely translating poetry is impossible? Of course. (…) But still, something deep will always communicate. Only poetry has the absolute ability to transcend borders and cultures, connect human beings" (viii). Thus speaks Liz Lochhead, national poet of Scotland from 2011 to 2016, who was involved in the conceptualisation and realisation of the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology. The above quotation is taken from the second foreword to the anthology, in which Lochhead relates the trip she and others – including Henry Bell, one of the editors of the anthology – took to Palestine in the summer of 2012. She describes the experience of staying in a 'temporary' refugee camp in Bethlehem that was established in 1948 – the year of the Nakba – which ranges from little joys such as children playing, to a lack of water for several days, a phenomenon which occurs every three weeks or so according to the inhabitants, to the

terror of tear gas and rubber bullets in response to the weekly peaceful demonstrations against the wall in Nil'in (vi). In response to these experiences, Lochhead asks: "How does poetry deal with such a reality? What else but poetry has the beauty, truth and courage to try" (vii).

In this chapter, I will engage with the capacity of poetry to negotiate life under occupation and convey a sense of shared humanity, containing an implicit or explicit call for the recognition of Palestinians' human rights to a Western audience. I will do so by analysing a number of works in the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology and discussing its circulation and reception. Whereas in chapter 2, I focused primarily on the documentary films' capacity for raising awareness among a Western audience, this chapter will delve into literature's capacity to construct cross-cultural *connections* between groups. As I stated in my last chapter, I opened with documentary films as they are widely considered the most influential medium in shaping public perceptions, along with news media (see McLane 364, Abu al-Hayyat iv). In this chapter, I turn to poetry, which, according to Roger Allen, served until recently as "the predominant mode of literary expression among those who speak and write in Arabic", and was even considered the "register of the Arabs" (Allen 65; cf. Salti 39). Crucially, Arabic forms of poetry have historically had a strong performative dimension, as poetry "has been more often than not a *public* phenomenon" in the Arabic context, which has remained the case in the present day (71).

Firstly, I will provide background to the emergence of the anthology and the readings. Then, I will analyse the *A Bird is Not a Stone* poetry anthology and the ways in which it frames Palestinian human rights through a construction of subjecthood. I will demonstrate how the anthology symbolically constructs a sense of Palestinian subjecthood, in which their lives are framed as 'grievable', following Butler. I use the term 'symbolically' to differentiate the poems' techniques from the documentary medium I focused on in chapter 2. I argued in chapter 2 that, in the documentary films, Palestinian subjecthood is asserted by presenting a visual

articulation of their embodied existence and depicting instances of civil resistance, in which they attempt to gain self-representation and self-determination. In the analysis to follow, I will investigate how the poems in the anthology engage in a project of self-definition through linguistic means. Finally, I will discuss the series of readings that was held in Scotland and England subsequent to its publication in 2014, outlining how the anthology enabled cross-cultural connections. In my analysis of the anthology, I take the position of an English-speaking reader, with no access to the Arabic originals. Therefore, while I will discuss the politics of translation inherent in the work, I will not engage with the linguistic or cultural differences between the Arabic and English versions and focus on the English poems.

I shall argue that the anthology must be situated in the context of the strong relationship between Scotland and Palestine. In the context of the Scottish independence referendum in 2014, there was a more profound interest in the Palestinian struggle in Scotland, as issues of 'national' sovereignty were prevalent in society. The poems within the anthology contain two primary interventions: firstly, the poems work towards a project of self-definition, where a complex Palestinian subject not marked by violence or always occupied with resistance is presented. Secondly, through asserting one's presence as a complex human subject who is either undeniably present on or may stake a claim to the land of Palestine, the poets articulate their right to land ownership to realise the unfulfilled conditions needed to properly sustain life. Furthermore, many of the poems in the anthology exemplify the inherent paradox of human rights: the poems contain either implicit or explicit calls for the recognition of Palestinians' human rights, while they also express either lament or fierce critiques at the status quo in which these calls are not (yet) sufficiently recognised, and change can appear unlikely in the face of Western complicity with Israeli policies. The circulation of the anthology through the launch events and the tour formulates political claims through the multi-lingual presentation of the

poems, which constructs transnational ties between Scotland and Palestine and jolts English-speaking audiences, raising awareness to their historically privileged position.

Background to A Bird is Not a Stone *(2014).*

In this section, I will outline the developments which resulted in the emergence of the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology. Parts of the information that follows emerged from personal correspondence with Liz Lochhead via e-mail. She states that, in June 2012, Henry Bell, who was then about to graduate from Glasgow University, organised a small, informal party of Scottish artists – primarily poets, but also singers, performers, and a filmmaker – who all had an interest in Palestine, to visit Palestine personally and bear witness to the occupation. This included visits to the Aida Camp in Bethlehem, Jerusalem, Hebron, Nil'in, and rebuilding projects in the Jordan Valley. Eventually, in the House of Poetry in Ramallah, a group of Palestinian poets talked to them about the scarcity of Palestinian poetry in English translation, besides monumental figures such as Darwish. At best, parts of their poetry had been translated in academic or political essays – which "wasn't the thing, it was about the thing" (Lochhead, personal correspondence; "Foreword", vii).

Nearly everyone present agreed that poetry should be translated by poets. Thus it was that the seed was planted for the idea of a new anthology of contemporary poets who are less well-known outside of Palestine. Sarah Irving, editor of the anthology alongside Henry Bell, confirmed in an interview, which may be found on the *ArabLit* website, that the primary purpose of the collection was "to give wider exposure to the work of some Palestinian poets who haven't been or who have rarely been translated into English" (Mlynxqualey, n.p.). The poems were translated using a 'bridge' method, where the Arabic originals were first translated to English literally, including as wide a range of possible words in the target language and

explanatory footnotes.[4] These translations were then passed to Scottish poets, who created new 'versions' of the poems in English "that would retain the spirit of the original whilst also becoming works of art in their own right" (Kaye, n.p.). My use of the word 'versions' stems from this fact that the translated poems are twice removed from the originals due to the bridge method. I will expand on the translational processes and the accompanying issues of voice and ownership in the second part of this chapter.

The trip that these Glaswegian and other Scottish – or Scottish-involved – artists took was not without context. This trip was embedded in an existing relationship between Scotland and Palestine; in particular, the 'twin city' relationship between Glasgow and Bethlehem. On the website of the Glasgow City Council, Twin Cities are described as part of "a growing trend for cities to join transnational networks with the aim of exchanging experience and learning from best practice" ("Twin Cities.", n.p.). The web site lists eight cities Glasgow is actively involved with – including Turin, Nuremberg, Lahore, and Bethlehem. The Friendship Agreement with Bethlehem was signed in 1992, and the web site states that despite the ongoing political situation "there have been an increasing number of cultural, educational and artistic projects between Glasgow and Bethlehem in recent years" ("Bethlehem, Palestine.", n.p.). These projects include educational links to co-construct curricula and thus improve the conditions for children and young adults in Bethlehem. Furthermore, the two cities share a "cultural partnership", which has included musicians participating in Bethlehem's Bet Live Music Festival ("Bethlehem, Palestine.", n.p.). According to Sarah Irving, the 2012 trip organised by Henry Bell was supported by Glasgow's official twinning program with Bethlehem (Irving, "Road Movie.", n.p.). Bell himself states that, due to the existent links between the countries, "it seemed a natural extension to try and build connections between the

[4] Credit to the various bridge translators is given on this web page: https://abirdisnotastone.wordpress.com/whos-who/bridge-translators-and-proofers/

poetic communities" (Bell, personal correspondence). In this chapter, I analyse the anthology as both symptomatic of and constructive towards the relationship between Scotland and Palestine. As such, in the second part of this chapter, I will discuss the differences between the Scottish and English audiences during the tour of readings.

The Transnational Flows in the Anthology.

The title of the anthology, 'A Bird is Not a Stone', is inspired by the 'Berlin Burd' by Scottish artist George Wyllie. Wyllie created his 5-metre tall stainless-steel bird in Scotland before transporting it to Berlin, to "keek over" ('look over' in Scots) the 4-metre tall Berlin Wall – which came down only weeks later (Wyllie and Patience, n.p.; Patience, n.p.). Authorities in West Berlin were reluctant to allow Wyllie to install the Burd, and in response Wyllie told them that "a bird is not a stone" (*ein Vogel ist kein Stein*) and students would not throw it in demonstrations (Wyllie and Patience, n.p.). Commenting on the reasons why this was chosen as the title for the anthology, Sarah Irving states that there are "obvious parallels" between the Burd and Palestinian poets, "with the situation of Palestinian poets having to 'keek' over real and metaphorical walls which have been constructed around them" (Qualey, n.p.). Furthermore, Irving states that the imagery of birds forms a suitable homage to Darwish's line "where should the birds fly after the last sky" from "The Earth is Closing on Us" (Qualey, n.p.).

The reference to Wyllie's artwork is eminently suitable, as it imbues the anthology with transnational connections. It retains a situatedness both in Palestinian poetry, due to the reference to Darwish, as well as Scottish art, due to the reference to Wyllie's Burd, for a local resonance. Created in Scotland and transported to the Berlin Wall to generate political debate and promote human rights, Wyllie's Burd went on to inspire a group of Scottish artists involved with Palestinian poetry. As Irving's comments above indicate, the connection with the Berlin Wall also adds a layer of meaning. The Berlin Wall has at various junctures been used as a

reference points for Palestinians, who face their own Separation Wall in the West Bank. In 2014, while people across the world celebrated the 25th anniversary of the fall of the Berlin Wall, a group of Palestinian activists knocked a hole into the Separation Wall in a symbolic gesture "to remind the world of their struggles", as was reported on by various news agencies (Sabin, n.p.; Atassi, n.p.). Furthermore, on a part of the Separation Wall near Bethlehem, graffiti is visible quoting President John F. Kennedy's famous line of solidarity, '*ich bin ein Berliner*' (*Figure 1*).[5]

Figure 1: Graffiti on the Separation Wall referencing John F. Kennedy's famous line. (Photo taken by Marc Venezia)

The above illustrates how the very title of the anthology is imbued with significance through transnational dialogues, which, in the example of the Berlin Wall, has involved attempting to generate empathy in a European audience by putting the Separation Wall within a familiar framework. The poetry in the anthology employs various themes to similar effects of highlighting the necessity to recognise Palestinian rights. In my analysis below, I shall focus

[5] The Berlin Burd and graffiti on the wall are further illustrations of different types of artworks whose project is to promote international solidarity – as do the poems I analyse in this chapter.

on a number of poems, most of which were also performed during the tour of readings. As I have outlined in chapter 1, I divide the claims to human rights in the works under analysis into three strands of rights, broadly speaking: the right to exist (contesting the historical erasure of Palestinian life and culture); the right to land (contesting the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land); and the right to speak (contesting historical representations of Palestinians which do not account for their wishes). In this chapter, I will first discuss the right to exist and the right to land, before moving to a meta-analysis of the right to speak at a later stage, in relation to the performances.

The Right to Exist – Constructing a Palestinian Human Subject.

In the following section, I will be concerned with the ways in which the poems in the anthology represent, in Lori Allen's words, "appeals to human rights [that] help to constitute a human subject with certain kinds of rights that are seen to arise not from a political status but from the state of (human) nature" (161). As I stated above, I will demonstrate how the anthology symbolically constructs a sense of Palestinian subjecthood, out of which emerges a picture of grievable life.

Firstly, many poems in the anthology respond to Palestinian conditions by highlighting and contesting the physical and psychological violence under occupation, articulating a call for human rights through, as Pramod Nayar phrases it, a picture of "corporeal unmaking and abuse" (xiii). One example of a work in the anthology that focuses strongly on occupation is Uthman Hussein's "Camp Block 5", which describes the experience of the narrator during a bombing raid in Gaza. The work opens *in medias res*, with the narrator stating: "I have to go, I said: I have to go. The barbarians are besieging time and place, besieging this rapid breathing in the side-alleys of frustration's long journey" (Hussein 58). As a whole, the work is laden with images of violence, including such lines as "Explosions ripple, fear controls the situation";

"A father carries his children and rushes like a missile out of what shortly will be a pile of cement"; "Explosions silence the call to prayer" (58-60). Through these images, the occupation is given an undeniable presence in the work. It is noteworthy that Hussein applies the vocabulary of war to sentences in which this is out of place, as with the father who rushes 'like a missile' out of his house. This illustrates how the occupation pervades every aspect of their being, particularly in the outburst of violence he describes. The work also calls explicit attention to the asymmetrical power balance between the Israelis and Palestinians: "They monitor us and we monitor them and we besiege their glory with our weakness" (58). A striking line, Hussein juxtaposes the words 'besiege' and 'weakness' to underscore Palestinians' limited capacity for struggle, which is nonetheless met with forceful responses.

However, rather than simply focusing on the occupation, the anthology draws its strength from representing many aspects of daily life – which often involves juxtaposing the 'ordinary' of normative scenes with the 'extraordinary' of the occupation. I gestured towards this juxtaposition in chapter 2, where I argued that *5 Broken Cameras* depicts family life within the framework of the occupation. In this chapter, I wish to put this aspect of the anthology on centre stage. Many of the poems in the anthology focus on Palestinian life beyond occupation. This is primarily manifest in the poems of Maya Abu al-Hayyat; her poems in the anthology include a poem on the experience of motherhood, which describes her making the beds in the house, reading stories aloud, or "look[ing] up the best way to remove oil stains" (208-210). Another poem by Abu al-Hayyat describes the experience of love, and yet another describes various ways to smile (217-218, 202-204). These poems depict sceneries of normative life, providing a construction of subjecthood which is not based on the images of corporeal unmaking I described in relation to "Camp Block 5" above.

Rather than expanding on these poems further, I will analyse the ways in which the anthology combines a view on the ordinary and the extraordinary. The anthology mirrors what

Amir Nizar Zuabi poignantly calls the "absolute elasticity of mankind" that is visible in Palestine. He states:

> In the span of one day, you might find himself reading a book in the morning, then in the afternoon be involved in what feels like a full-scale war; by dinner you and your wife have a lengthy discussion about the quality of that book, and just before you slip into bed there is still time to witness another round of violence before you tuck the children into bed. (Zuabi, n.p.)

The structure of the anthology as a whole reflects this elasticity. On one page, a poem by Tareq al-Karmy's is presented which is about love; however, immediately following this is his poem "Meeting With The Ground", which describes the moment of death in which one falls on their face "Opening his arms / Wide – to embrace the whole earth" (al-Karmy 8). From one page to the next, or even within the same page, the anthology can make a shift from poems about love to poems which describe life under occupation.

A number of individual poems display the range of Palestinian life by juxtaposing ordinary scenes with imagery of the occupation. One poem which poignantly exemplifies this is "Above the Carnations" by Yousef al-Mahmoud. The poem starts with a description of a house, before shifting to darker imagery:

> Her house is above the carnations
> on the path to the wind-swept hills…
> At evening we sought refuge there
> watching out for the guns and the aeroplanes. (al-Mahmoud 84)

The house that is described starts out embedded within a normative description of homeliness, being situated within a landscape of carnations and wind-swept hills. Immediately following this, however, the homely sense is disturbed by the 'interruption' of guns and aeroplanes. The poem continues this trend of juxtaposing ordinary scenes with the 'extraordinary' of the occupation. The narrator states how:

> The crack of bullets followed our coffee
> and smashed into our conversation.
> The crack of bullets and the bark of artillery
> came near to the flowers inside the windows (84)

Such depictions of private life that are disturbed by sudden eruptions of violence contest the stereotypical imagery of Palestinians as violent Others. As outlined in chapter 1, Palestinians are often depicted in images of large groups representing rage and misery, which removes a sense of individuality and presents a one-sided picture. Poems such as "Above the Carnations" resist such a one-sided presentation of Palestinian life as marked only by the occupation and resistance, presenting a more complex picture of what it means to be 'Palestinian'. Furthermore, a strength of the poem is that it does not present violence against Palestinians as security measures or retaliations, but as something which violently interrupts their daily life.[6]

Another poem which employs similar framing is one at the start of the anthology: Tareq al-Karmy's "About the Wee Girl", which concerns the narrator's short monologue about a young girl who was shot. The poem starts off with the lines: "Man, you saw how the soldiers

[6] While it is not my project here to situate the works in the anthology within Palestinian literature as such since I focus on a few recent case studies, I will note that this technique of juxtaposing ordinary life with the extraordinary of the occupation is a more common feature of Palestinian works, as well as war literature more generally. For instance, in Darwish's poem "A State of Siege", after providing imagery of the occupation, Darwish shifts his tone: "You there, by the threshold of our door / Come in, and sip with us our Arabic coffee / [you may even feel that you are human, just as we are]" (Darwish, n.p.). This is a similar technique as employed by al-Mahmoud.

shot the wee girl / straight through what / would have become her left breast?" (al-Karmy 4). The opening words ('man' and 'you') evoke conversational dialogue, as it is framed as a personal address. Through this register, the start of the poem represents a call to bear witness to the event the narrator describes. The description of the girl being shot through 'what would have become her left breast' evokes the location of the heart, the part of the body that is most intimately associated with life and love. Additionally, the framing of "what would have become her left breast" when referring to a young girl invokes a sense of unrealised maturity.

In the second part, the poem continues this trend by employing a vocabulary that displays a focus on familial relations:

> I am beholden to her, my sister,
> my daughter who will never give birth,
> my wife I can never marry,
> my Maryam, my sacred one,
> my mother forever. (4)

The references to the inability to give birth or marry once again emphasises unrealised potential of the girl whose life was taken. To achieve this effect eloquently and, following Butler, frame her live as 'grievable', the poem uses a technique of spinning webs of significance by placing the girl within a familial framework, labeling her as "daughter" and "wife". The narator links himself to the girl by locating himself in various performative roles – brother, father, husband, son. The poem thus generates affect for the murdered girl by emphasising unrealised maturity and putting her in a familial framework. Through this framing, which focuses on a fundamental aspect of normative life, the poem asserts the girl's – and by extension, the Palestinians' – right to exist.

Such depictions in which these Palestinian poets engage in a project of self-representation remain crucial within the overarching goal of achieving Palestinian self-determination. The complexity of Palestinian life displayed in the poems – the elasticity of daily activities and the webs of significance that are spun by invoking familial relations – construct a picture of Palestinians as part of the wider category of human subjects, who are worthy of existing on the same discursive planes when it concerns human rights discourses. Following Butler, the poems frame Palestinian lives as 'grievable', as they represent corporeal suffering without reducing Palestinians to just that, representing also moments of joy and juxtaposing the occupation with ordinary life. This presents a picture of what life should and also *can* be like, but which is unrealised in the present, as the right to exist is not given to them without question.

The Right to Land - "Shading the Names of the Martyrs".

In addition to this construction of the human subject, the poems often emphasise the right to land in particular as a basic articulation of their rights. This is not based on a reductive claim to 'citizenship', which assumes the necessity to belong to an internationally defined political entity, but rather establishes a deep relationship with the land one feels connected to. In chapter 1, I outlined how Palestinians have historically been framed as not having a legitimate relationship with the land. In a number of poems in the anthology, such a relationship with the land is precisely what is articulated.

One example of this includes Majid Abu Ghoush's short but powerful poem "Returning". The poem opens by describing a woman who returns home in a dramatic fashion:

> the woman was dragging her feet
> and what remained of her children

towards what remained of her home

(…)

towards what remained of the heart (Abu Ghoush 138)

The poem does not explain in explicit terms what occurred, although the repeated phrase 'what remained of' suggests it was a bombing raid which she and her children were forced to flee. Wiping away a tear with her hand, the woman meets someone on the way back who asks, "why are you going back?", to which she only responds: "to water the jasmine tree / to shade the names of the martyrs" (138). The manner in which the woman answers the question suggests that, in her belief, her civic duty towards the land cannot end as a result of the tragedies that have occurred. The simplicity of her response moreover indicates that she considers it an unquestioning relationship: it should not have to be justified in explicit terms, it is simply what she must do for the land where she belongs.

Further, the "names of the martyrs" in the poem are a more common feature in the anthology. This relationship between martyrs and the land is visible in the poem "Here Lies Amjad" by Samih Faraj, which is dedicated to "the martyr Amjad who stood against the occupation" until death (Faraj 48). The poem describes the soil around Amjad's grave, establishing the grave's presence on the land through a repetition of the line "Here lies Amjad" (48, 50). Amjad's grave is imbued with meaning through its presence within the soil, where it is accompanied by a lemon grove. The poem states: "Carrying lemons means you cannot die / or grow tired" (48). This indicates how Amjad's body continues to sustain the life of those who were close to him, through "carrying" the lemons they cultivate. The site of Amjad's grave with the accompanying lemon grove continues to hold significance for the people who knew him, as is indicated by the following lines:

Here lies a lemon grove we weed and dig
till it has made us happy as children
and carried us miles away

Here lie the days that grow from our flesh
grow from our blood

Here we mourn

Here we stay (48)

An intimate connection is formed between Amjad and the soil, as well as the present inhabitants who imbue the soil with significance. A reciprocal relationship is established where the grove feeds the inhabitants, and in turn, the inhabitants give back to the land by cultivating it – which is further established through the imagery of the days "growing" from their flesh and blood. The repeated usage of the word "here" solidifies the presence of the inhabitants on the land, and it is there that they mourn Amjad's loss, and 'stay' in the face of occupation.

The theme of 'staying' which is displayed in both "Returning" and "Here Lies Amjad" is a common occurrence in Palestinian works of literature and film. To many Palestinians who make the choice to stay in Palestine, asserting presence is an important part of resisting the occupation; as is also illustrated in works such as *5 Broken Cameras*, discussed in the previous chapter. One poem which displays this attitude is Salim al-Nafar's poem "Drawing Class", in which the narrator emphasises the need to continuously assert one's presence, as it states:

When we stop

life becomes memory.

When we sleep,

our only exit is exile. (220-222)

In the face of the threat of erasure, the narrator states that life will 'become memory' if they 'stop' – by which they presumably mean stop resisting. Against their obstacles to being visible and being considered as 'grievable' subjects, many Palestinians attempt to assert their presence and resist the fate of exile.

The Right to Return and Frames of Scepticism.

Despite my focus on works which are set within Palestine in this thesis so far, it would be wrong to suggest that exile is 'final', and that authors who are no longer situated on the land are unable to speak. Quite the contrary: Poetry that is produced in exile can equally articulate the existence of Palestinian life and culture and stake a claim to the right to land – where the latter is manifested through an articulation of the right to *return*. This articulation is found in Yousef Abu Loz's "Last of the Century", in which the narrator describes the experience of exile, "always checking over my shoulder / (…) looking around: paranoid" (Abu Loz 164). Abu Loz articulates a desire to return in such lines as "wait for me, my country, I am lost" (164). At the same time, the narrator highlights the impossibility of actually returning, as is captured in the final lines of the poem: "I've become older, I know my life / is behind me. Where I cannot fly" (164). There is a striking ambiguity in these lines: both space and time are invoked here, as the narrator speaks of a distant land as well as having grown older in exile. Therefore, the inability to fly to his life 'behind him' could refer to the physical inability to travel into the past, or it could refer to his inability to return to Palestine in current conditions.

The poem thus display a strong focus on the emotional desire to return, but laments the impossibility of realising this right.

The experience of nostalgia in exile is further exemplified in Omar Shabanah's "The Poet", in which the narrator continuously localises himself as "Here, / on the tenth floor" (Shabanah 100, 106, 108, 110, 112, 116, 122), in exile, haunted by memories (108, 110, 118). The poet repeatedly emphasises the imprint which time has left on him, as he grows older; however, he repeatedly articulates a continued desire to return to his homeland. This is exemplified in passages such as:

> An old man
> tries to bring back childhood,
> and bring back trees,
> and a field that stings him with the heat of the Jordan Valley (108, 110)

The reference to 'trees' in particular is evocative not only of 'rootedness' in general, but also of the cultural prominence of trees in Palestine. The memory of childhood is further localised in Palestine through the reference to the Jordan Valley.

Beyond this articulation of the right to land, "The Poet" employs the articulation of the right to return to also assert the right to speak. The poem outlines the poet's role within his new context, as he articulates his desire to raise awareness of his predicament and inspire change. Soon after first mentioning his exile, the poet states:

> he sketches all over his city
> scraps of memory,
> and a shining darkness filled with martyrs. (108)

Through this passage, as well as a later passage where he articulates a desire to talk about his exile (116-118), the poet asserts his presence as a grievable human subject who desires to return to his homeland. Although he is no longer able to be part of the struggle on the ground itself, this does not prevent him from discursively producing himself in his new context as a human subject with a nostalgia towards his roots. Within this spirit, the poet states about himself:

> I am the bird that will see
> the end of the flood
> and come carrying the branch of liberation. (122)

The above indicates that the poet sees himself as a 'messenger', one who can mediate the Palestinian struggle to a Western – particularly an American – audience to push for change. One suitable example within the poet which resonates with an American audience is when the poet powerfully evokes the sufferings of Native American populations: "He cried for peoples like the Iroquois, / who were destroyed" (120). The poet constructs a transnational link between the Native American and Palestinian peoples, likening their struggles concerning land ownership and sustainable living conditions. Through this framing, the poet mediates the Palestinian struggle to a Western, and primarily American, audience, asserting both his right to land and his right to mediate this desire ('speak') in his exile.

At the same time, linked to this location in exile, a profound sense of scepticism is visible in certain poems with respect to the role of the West in Palestine. In "The Poet", Shabanah writes:

> He cried over a sun blacked-out by metal hawks advancing

from the west of his existence

from merchants of weapons and morphine. (120)

The mention of the "west" evokes the 'West' on Earth, from which Israel receives military support. The line referring to "merchants of weapons and morphine" invokes a dual intervention by Western countries of at once sending aid ('morphine') while also aiding the settlement of Palestine through weapons. In "Drawing Class", the narrator states that, following the distortion of Palestinian history and the destruction of Palestinian lives, "the murderer's footsteps still lie in the sand" (222). This powerfully evokes the lack of action taken against human rights atrocities. The morphine described by Shabanah merely eases the feeling of pain, but cannot improve the situation as a whole. The poems are thus critical of the role of Western countries in enabling Palestinians' suffering.

Placing the above analysis within human rights discourses, then, it is clear that two primary interventions may be found: firstly, the poems work towards a project of self-definition, where a complex Palestinian subject not marked by violence or always occupied with resistance is presented and framed as 'grievable'. This speaks against the historical definitions of Palestinians which was constructed by other actors than Palestinians themselves. Secondly, through asserting presence as a complex human subject who is either undeniably present on or may stake a claim to the land of Palestine, the poets articulate their right to land ownership – which, in certain poems, is manifest through a focus on the right to return which is more explicitly addressed to a Western audience. Many of the poems in the anthology exemplify the inherent paradox of human rights: as I have outlined, while they are presented as 'rights', they in fact constitute a *promise* more-so than rights. The poems above contain either implicit or explicit calls for the recognition of Palestinians' human rights, but they also express lament or fierce critiques at the status quo in which these calls are not yet sufficiently

recognised. Furthermore, they criticise the fact that change can appear unlikely in the face of Western complicity with Israeli policies.

Spreading Wings – Circulating and Performing the Anthology.

Having discussed the rights articulations within the poems themselves, it is time to turn to the circulation of the anthology, and how the issues discussed above were manifest in the tour of readings. To do so, I will first briefly discuss the success of the anthology itself; then, I will turn to the politics of language in the anthology and its process of translation; and lastly, I will turn to the question of performance and audiences. I already implicitly touched upon 'the right to speak' in the above sections by stating that the poems work towards self-representation; in the paragraphs to follow, I will investigate how the anthology as a whole constitutes an assertion of Palestinians' right to speak.

As I have noted at the start of this chapter, one of the primary aims of the anthology was to provide exposure for Palestinian poets who are not well known outside of Palestine. In a personal interview, Sarah Irving stated that mainstream publishers tend to assume that poetry does not sell, particularly when it is translated (Irving, personal interview). Furthermore, Abla Oudeh, lecturer of Arabic literature at the University of Exeter, who worked as a text checker for the anthology, similarly stated that the anthology fills a 'gap' because poetry does not have the same status in English as it does in Arabic cultures, and also because Palestinian poets besides Darwish have rarely been translated (Oudeh, personal interview).

When Freight Books published the anthology, the success was surprising: the first print run sold out within three months, after which the anthology was reprinted (Irving, n.p.). Christine de Luca, a Scottish poet who was involved in the tour of the anthology, stated in an email that the anthology being reprinted was "beyond [their] wildest dreams" (De Luca, personal correspondence). Considering the relatively marginal status of poetry in English

compared to Arabic and the unknown status of the poets in the West, the sales figure are indeed, as the website of *A Bird is Not a Stone* states, a terrific achievement (Irving, n.p.). Beyond being successful in its own sales, *A Bird is Not a Stone* also set a precedent. In November 2017, another anthology of Palestinian poetry was released, *A Blade of Grass*. The editors of this anthology were inspired by *A Bird is Not a Stone*, as Naomi Foyle, editor of the new anthology, states that *A Bird is Not a Stone* was an "inspiring resource" and Sarah Irving assisted her in contacting Maya Abu Al-Hayyat to submit her work to the anthology (Viene, n.p.). In an advertising page for a launch event of *A Blade of Grass*, the website *British Writers in Support of Palestine* refers to *A Bird is Not a Stone* as a "landmark" anthology ("A Blade of Grass."). Beyond this, the anthology received rather considerable media attention, as a number of media outlets promoted and published reviews on the anthology (see Davies, n.p.; Byrne, n.p.; Small, n.p.). By way of an example: the *Electronic Intifada* states how, thanks to the anthology, "the Palestinian song will sing on, and will be heard wherever people care enough to listen" (Deane, n.p.).

Who Speaks? On Translation and the Politics of lLanguage.

In this section, I wish to discuss the issues of voice and agency through the prism of translation. I will interrogate to what degree the translation of the poems problematises the attempt at enabling access to the authors' voices; since, in the process of translating the works and performing them, there is a risk of seemingly 'speaking for' the poets. This is an important element to dwell on, given my claim that the anthology asserts the right for Palestinians to speak. I will draw on online interviews, as well as blog posts by various translators involved in the project, as well as material from personal interviews I conducted with certain people who were involved in the anthology's production – including the editors Henry Bell and Sarah Irving, as well as Abla Oudeh.

The anthology employs a multi-lingual layout where, in most cases, the Arabic original of the poem is presented on the left-hand pages of the book and the English, Scots, Gaelic or Shetlandic translations are on the right. However, the presentation is vastly heterogeneous throughout the book. Many poems are only translated into English, but many others are translated into two languages. In this case, the Arabic original is presented on the left-hand side, one of the translations on the right side (generally English first), and then upon flipping over to the next page, the other translation is visible. Sometimes, the Arabic original is again presented on the left page; sometimes, they are not, and the second translation begins on the left page instead. In some cases, where two translations of the same poem fit within one page, the Arabic original is on the left and the two translations are on the right. What is noteworthy here is that, despite the difference in what translations there are or how they are presented, the Arabic originals are always presented first.

Through this method of presenting multiple different versions of the poems, usually on different pages, the anthology foregrounds its own translational dimension. Dominic Davies argues that this is "a productive layout that allows even non-Arabic speakers to visualise the poetry in its original form" (Davies, n.p.). Irving stated that one of the purposes of presenting the Arabic originals alongside the translations is "a way of demonstrating how the passion and beauty of Arabic poems can transfer over – in varying ways – to other tongues" (Irving, n.p.). The method of bridge translations, Irving speculates, might allow the Scottish poets greater freedom in working to find the 'spirit' of the poem, and communicate this spirit in their own register and rhythm (Irving, n.p.). This resulted in the various languages in the anthology, as certain poets chose to work in their native tongues to better capture the spirit of a poem. De Luca states that she felt that Abu al-Hayyat's poems would read well in Shetlandic "as it has a muscularity and an immediacy born out of the lack of abstract nouns" which fit the poem well (De Luca, n.p.). Harry Giles, another translator who worked in Scots, states that he felt that

"Scots' natural rhythms and palate of sounds was surprisingly consonant with the music of the Arabic original" (Giles, n.p.).

Translations always contain inherent power dynamics, as there is the question of dominance of whatever language a text is translated into. During our interview, Irving stated that while it is helpful to have English as a lingua franca, English has largely 'colonised' the global linguistic scape (Irving, personal interview). The anthology attempts to combat this linguistic colonisation in a number of ways. As the translational processes behind the book are clearly visible due to the bilingual presentation, readers are brought in contact with works which are made legible to them, but which they can see was not initially written in their language. By retaining the originals, the anthology puts the languages *alongside* one another, rather than privileging one over the other. This presentation has two effects: firstly, the antology foregrounds the inherent untranslatability of the poems, which could stimulate readers to look into the Arabic poems and attempt to understand them better.

Secondly, there is a political claim inherent in presenting the languages alongside one another. As a blurb on the inside of the cover of the anthology states, both are in significant ways two 'versions' of the same poem. The method of bridge translations is meant to retain the integrity of all languages involved whilst communicating the works of the poets to a new audience. As an article on *ArabLit* website states: "The result is a beautiful paradox wherein the Scottish versions exist as poems in their own right – but they must also be described as Palestinian poetry" (Qualey, "The Paradox.", n.p.). In his blog, Giles states that he considers his translations "versions", to make clear that there is a lot of his own ideas about poetry in there (Giles, n.p.). The goal, according to him, was not to provide word-for-word translations, but to "create fluid, poetic versions of the Arabic originals that conveyed a sense of Palestine and the art that exists under its occupation", which involved using personal interpretation (Giles, n.p.).

Giles himself notes the dangers in translating the poems, as there is a risk of imposing one's own interpretation onto the work, which is "especially important to remember given that the aim of the project was to bring marginalised voices to a wider audience" (Giles, n.p.). While the danger of distortion remains a factor in translating the poems, translation is also the most effective way to bring the works to a wider, transnational audience. Jona Fras, one of the bridge translators, states that translating always "ends up being a kind of betrayal; but in this case I would argue that it's important to make the effort" as Palestine has much to offer in terms of artistic production and other expressions of voice (Fras, n.p.). Further, it is not the case that the bridge translated poems were given to the poets as a final, one-way exchange. Giles outlines how he ran his translations by Arabic speakers to ensure he did not make grave errors; and Fras states that he collaborated with the poets themselves while producing his bridge translations (Giles, n.p.; Fras, n.p.). De Luca and Giles state that they listened to recordings of the Arabic originals in order to get a feel for the "music and flow of the poems" (De Luca, n.p.; Giles, n.p.).

Despite the untranslatable qualities in the poems, the assumption in many of the blog posts is, as Lochhead states, that "something deep will always communicate" (viii). De Luca states: "I knew I couldn't replicate sound patterns or rhythms but at least I could render meaning and, I hoped, the 'tone' of the source poems" (De Luca, n.p.). Fras argues that, while the translations in the anthology were obviously incapable of carrying all the meanings over, *A Bird is Not a Stone* "provides a valuable glimpse" into Palestinian artistic expression (Fras, n.p.). While in the anthology, the Palestinian poets cannot truly 'speak' to a non-Arabic speaking audience, the blog posts illustrate that the translators made efforts to convey the poetic voices of the poets, allowing some degree of access to them.

Finally, I would like to mention the issue of 'ownership'. In April of 2014, *A Bird is Not a Stone* had a Kickstarter campaign online attempting to raise funds to spread the anthology

in Palestine – "at schools, universities and community centres" as well as libraries ("Support this project."). This is a part of the transnational dialogue the anthology constructs: rather than forming an East-to-West stream where the poetry is simply consumed by readers, there is emphasis on bringing something back in return. Oudeh stated in our interview that it is important to let Palestinians know of ongoing international solidarities and retain a sense of 'partnership'. Furthermore, sending the anthology back ensures that the poets retain a sense of ownership over their works (Oudeh, personal interview). Bell stated that sending the book to Palestine "opens up opportunities for the poets included" to circulate it themselves and play a role in their own international exposure (Bell, personal correspondence).

A critical view on the process of circulation sees the poets having their works translated and circulated by other actors inherently distorting the meaning of the works, as well as the poets' artistic 'autonomy'. The concept of artistic autonomy within economically-driven settings is inherently questionable; despite this, transnational circulation further complicates the question of 'ownership', as well as the degree to which the poets may be said to speak. As I have shown, while the anthology primarily circulates through Western actors, this process emerged out of a dialogue with the poets themselves. Further, they are given a degree of control back as they are sent the anthology in Palestine. *A Bird is Not a Stone* and the agents who produced it display a critical attitude towards their own efforts, but nonetheless stand by their project. Despite all the risks which must be kept in mind, it is as Scottish poet Henry King states: "it's high time a bit more exposure was given to Palestinian poetry" (King, n.p.).

A Cross-Cultural Dialogue between Scotland and Palestine.

A Bird is Not a Stone is both symptomatic of, and constructive towards, cross-cultural connections between Scotland and Palestine. I use the word 'symptomatic' in reference to the existing ties between Glasgow and Bethlehem which enabled the initial trip out of which the

idea of the anthology emerged. Further, it is 'constructive' towards these ties because, as I will argue below, the anthology enabled reciprocal reflections on issues of cultural and political sovereignty in Palestine and in Scotland. While I will primarily focus on the representation of Palestine in Scotland – as well as England – I will also mention the reciprocal dimension.

First off, I will outline the relationship between Scotland and Palestine as perceived by people involved in *A Bird is Not a Stone*. Abla Oudeh stated in our interview that she always felt "hidden ties" between Scotland and Palestine, as some people in Scotland still see their current national status through the prism of historical occupation (Oudeh, personal interview). These ties are manifest in the activist scene in Scotland: the review of the anthology in the *Oxonian Review* emphasises that "both Palestinian and Scottish national identities have embarked on new struggles in their attempts to come to terms with themselves and the world, not to mention their more economically and, at least in Palestine's case, militarily dominant neighbours" (Davies, n.p.). Henry Bell states that overall, at the time of the antology's release and the tour, "it was easier to find a positive reception for Palestinian voices in Scotland and Ireland than in England" (Bell, personal correspondence). The relationship is further visible in Scottish organisations, such as the *Scottish Palestine Forum*, which aims to promote "knowledge and understanding of the Palestinian people" and encourage public discussion on the conflict ("About the Forum.", n.p.).

At the political level, Scottish government officials have been more pro-active at recognising Palestinians than the UK government. A 2014 article in the *Sunday Herald* outlines how External Affairs minister Humza Yousef "urged Westminster to recognise Palestine as an independent state and invited the nation to establish its first European Consulate in Edinburgh" ("Palestine consulate.", n.p.). In 2016, the Scottish National Party accepted UN Security Council Resolution 2334, which condemns settlements in the Occupied Territories ("The Scottish National Party.", n.p.). The above illustrates how within the UK, the Scottish social

and political spheres were more accepting to recognise Palestinians' rights. While many of the comments above focus purely on the notion of kinship, Bell complicates this narrative by stressing that the relationship between Scotland and Palestine is more complex, "encompassing Scotland as Palestine's former coloniser, but also as a country in the process of creating itself" (Bell, personal correspondence). It is unclear to what degree this aspect of Scotland's colonial history in Palestine is recognised among Scottish activists; on the "History of Palestine" page of the *Scottish Friends of Palestine*, there is no mention of Scotland's role in Palestine specifically, as the page refers primarily to "Britain" as a whole ("History of Palestine.", n.p.). In the remainder of my analysis below, I will also focus on the aspects of solidarity and kinship, though this complicating dimension should be kept in mind.

The ties between the countries were particularly felt in the moment the anthology was released, as this coincided with the lead-up to the Independence Referendum. While this contemporaneity was coincidental according to Oudeh, it does add a layer of significance to the transnational dialogue between the two, which was more deeply felt in the spirit of the moment. Bell corroborates this: he states that many of the Palestinian poets involved in the anthology took a profound interest in the Scottish Referendum. He recalls an encounter he had on the streets of Palestine, where someone asked him why Scots had not voted to be "free", as Palestinians would have voted yes had they had a vote (Bell, personal correspondence).

The presence of Scottish languages in the anthology alongside Arabic reinforces the sense of kinship between the two nations. In an interview which has now been taken offline, Giles emphasised the political dimension of writing in Scots due to the imperial role England had in both Scotland and Palestine at different moments in history (Deane, n.p.). From this perspective, writing in Scots, Gaelic and Shetlandic rather than only in English serves as a cultural validation. Within the context of the anthology, the resonances between the Scottish languages and Arabic I outlined above, as well as the questions of political and cultural

sovereignty which Scottish people were grapling with, are constructive towards a dialogue on Palestinian issues. Abla Oudeh stated that the use of different languages "gives depth to the Palestinian cause [for Scottish and English readers] and constructs ties between Palestinian issues and other global issues" (Oudeh, personal interview). As I have already outlined, the anthology situates itself within a transnational network by connecting with global issues such as the Berlin Wall (in the title of the book) and by comparing the Palestinian struggle to that of the Native Americans (in Shabanah's "The Poet"). For Scottish readers who understand Scots, Gaelic or Shetlandic, the resonances are more clearly felt. Through the linguistic modes of the anthology, the appeal for Palestinian human rights finds reception in Scotland.

Performing the Anthology – The Right to Speak and Cross-cultural Connections.

In this section, I will be concerned with how the issue of Palestinian rights and the cross-cultural connections outlined above were manifested in the readings in 2014. Accompanying the publication of the anthology in late May 2014 were launch events in Glasgow and Edinburgh on 2 and 3 June, respectively, a tour consisting of a series of readings in late 2014, and an appearance at the Palestine Unlocked Festival in Oxford, 2015. When I inquired as to which poems they tended to select for performances, Oudeh replied that at the events – as in the anthology itself – they wished to steer away from focusing solely on the occupation, rather choosing to read out poems about everyday life. Poetry is not all about the cause, she states; it is also about real human beings who live in Palestine (Oudeh, personal interview). Henry Bell corroborates this statement, emphasising that they tried to make sure that there were poems about love or family as well as those about resistance, martyrdom and oppression. As a result, some of the poems which emerged as being received well at the events included "About the Wee Girl" and "Above the Carnations", which I analysed in this chapter, as well as Abu al-Hayyat's poems (Bell, personal correspondence; Irving, personal interview).

As I have already outlined in my analysis of the anthology, the emphasis on the project lay on constructing a complex Palestinian subject, not focusing on either the occupation *or* ordinary life. This leads to a balance between raising awareness to the conditions under occupation, while also framing the Palestinians' lives as 'grievable' and highlighting their human rights. I should note that Henry Bell states that Abu al-Hayyat told attendees at the Liverpool readings that "she didn't want to be there as a Palestinian, for that night she wanted just to be a poet" (Bell, personal correspondence). While this is a fair point, one of the core assumptions of my thesis is that the very act of producing and spreading culture for Palestinians is an act of resistance. From this perspective, it is noteworthy both from a human rights perspective as in the framework of the anthology that Abu al-Hayyat came over to perform her own poetry. This reveals how it was not only agents living in the West who performed the poetry, but that one of the Palestinian poets took charge of reading her own work in the Arabic original. Performing at the reading events is an implicit assertion to her right to speak and represent herself; perhaps even more-so due to the fact that she did not want to perform "as a Palestinian", which demands that she be treated the same way as any other poet and accorded the same right to represent herself the way she wants.

Mirroring the linguistic structure of the anthology, the poems were performed in both Arabic and English or a Scottish language. Rosemary Kaye and Pat Byrne both reflect positively on their experiences at the Glasgow launch event. Kaye states how, whenever a poem was read in Arabic and Scots, "many of us probably didn't understand either set of words, but the sounds they made still resonated like a spell" (Kaye, n.p.). Byrne states that it was a "magical event with the venue filled to capacity", and when Abla Oudeh read the original poems in Arabic, the language "never sounded more beautiful" (Byrne, n.p.). While these statements carry a risk of over-Orientalizing the experience of listening to Arabic poetry, it is visible that the events attracted crowds and the experience was clearly positive. Oudeh

corroborated this in a personal interview, where she stated that she could see in people's eyes that the performance spoke to people, even as they could not understand the words as such (Oudeh, personal interview).[7]

On August 18, poems from the anthology were performed at the Edinburgh International Book Festival, including by Lochhead and Abu al-Hayyat. By all accounts, this was a highly successful event; the audience encompassed around 350 people, many of whom were there for the literary aspect and had therefore not come into contact with Palestinian or Arabic poetry before (Qualey, n.p.; De Luca, personal correspondence; Irving, personal interview.). Although the Book Festival took place in Edinburgh, many of those present were tourists whose only working language at the event was English. As with the launch event, the audience appreciated hearing Arabic, English, and the Scottish languages on the same stage. Irving believes that the emotional impact of hearing the poems read is "aesthetically and emotionally powerful" and is more memorable than simply reading them. Furthermore, experiencing the poems as the native audience would constructs a stronger connection with the Arabic context – which ties in with the historically performative dimension of Arabic poetry. Irving states that, although most of the audience cannot understand the words, they are given a sense of how the rhythm operates in Arabic, thus allowing them some level of access to the original versions of the poems (Irving, personal interview).

With respect to the poems in Scottish languages, Irving states that they become easier to understand when they are read aloud (Irving, personal interview). An anonymous student, who attended a reading in St Andrews and wrote about this in a student newspaper, admits that they did not read the non-English translations until they heard De Luca's performance of her Shetlandic versions, after which they went back to read them ("A mingling of cultures.", n.p.).

[7] When I inquired if there were no speakers of Arabic at the events, Oudeh replied that she did not remember speaking to any. Which means that, while speakers of Arabic might well have been present, they did not significantly alter the dynamics at the events during public discussions.

Beyond presenting the Arabic poems to readers of the anthology, as I highlighted above, the people involved in its production made use of the performative nature of Arabic poetry to spread the works in the anthology to a wider audience. This also enhanced the readability of the Scottish-language poems for those who attended the events.

Reflecting on the launch event in Glasgow, Irving emphasises the interest there was at the time about discussing the Scottish independence referendum, which steered part of the discussion (Irving, personal interview). This further illustrates what I outlined above with respect to the transnational dialogue the anthology fosters. The launch events in particular formed a suitable forum for discussion on these issues, as Scottish audiences were first exposed to the multi-lingual performance for emotional force, before building on this linguistic cross-contact with live discussions on issues such as political and cultural sovereignty. Irving states that this climate resulted in a "reciprocal interest", where people considered both how Palestinians look at the referendum, which some of the Scottish audience perceived as bearing on an oppressed nation voting for independence ("whatever you may think of this", she added). Further, an important point of discussion was constituted by a Scottish point of view on issues of oppression and political sovereignty in Palestine (Irving, personal interview). This illustrates how the socio-political climate in the lead-up to the Independence Referendum opened up possibilities for reflection on Palestine, as the questions of political and cultural sovereignty held more profound resonance.

One cannot uncritically claim that each audience member got the same out of the events; there is the risk that certain people focused more on how to use the Palestinian context to frame their own Referendum, 'claiming' it, as it were, for themselves. However, as with the student societies I discussed in the last chapter, the presence of Palestinian voices assists in focusing the discussion on Palestine, reminding people of whose voices they came to listen to.

Decentring English Audiences.

At the linguistic level, Irving states how Scottish languages are increasingly part of the environment at events such as the Edinburgh Book Festival and the Edinburgh Book Fringe the day after, so there were limited comments of surprise. At the events in England, however (such as Liverpool and Oxford), Irving states that audiences tended to display more surprise at hearing Scots or Shetlandic rather than English. During the tour, audiences were confronted with the 'shock' of encountering unfamiliar languages, as they were used to hearing only English at reading events (Irving, personal interview). Far from a negative experience, however, similarly to the events described above, audiences were generally sympathetic both to the linguistic mode and the contents of the events. S. Shah, who attended the Palestine Unlocked event in Oxford in 2015, stated that while listening to the Arabic and Scots, they realised two things: "Firstly, the balance of dominant-language speakers in the audience was subtly shifted, echoing the power struggles in which this compilation is rooted. Secondly, without the burden of meaning, I was free to lose myself in the dreamy cadences of speech" (Shah, n.p.).

This shows how English audience members felt a sense of 'displacement', which may have been uncomfortable initially but simultaneously – and necessarily – confronted them with the political aspects the anthology foregrounds. Namely, at these events, performing the poems to international audiences not only communicates the Palestinian narrative to people abroad; due to the use of different languages, English listeners were confronted specifically with their own position within this transnational network. Forcing English audiences to re-evaluate their position within a network of 'Britishness', where more languages than only English is spoken, raises attention to the Scottish angle of English supremacy. According to Irving and others, this provided a space where the Palestinian context could resonate more clearly with the audiences. Thus, not only did the anthology and the tour foster cross-cultural relations between Scotland

and Palestine, it also enabled them to address an English audience, raising awareness to their historical position within colonial networks.

Conclusion.

The anthology and the subsequent events emerging from it are wonderful examples of assertions of the right to speak; for Palestinians to be allowed to narrate their own experiences. Although translation always involves a sense of distortion, the actors involved in the anthology have done marvellous work in mediating the poems to a Western audience in a way that decentres, rather than reinforces, English historical imperialism – primarily due to having Abu al-Hayyat over to perform her own work. *A Bird is Not a Stone* constitutes a transnational exchange, displaying how, as Lochhead said, poetry is able to cross borders and connect human beings. Like George Wyllie's Berlin Burd, the poems 'keek over' the walls around Palestine to articulate Palestinian rights abroad. The following quote from the *Oxonian Review* ties together the title of the anthology with its primary project:

> Stones may bounce off armoured cars and scatter away into the dust, ineffective. But the poems, thrown like stones from the hands of their poets, grow wings that are like pages, and fly away, liberated, readable and translatable beyond the borders of Occupied Palestine. (Davies, n.p.)

As with Wylie's Berlin Burd, few would consider using the anthology as a physical weapon to throw. However, it has a more important role to play; that is, in the discursive production of Palestinians internationally. In my next chapter, I depart from the UK focus in the last two chapters, turning to the reception of Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* within American reading groups during the 2015 'One Book, Many Communities' event.

Chapter 4

International Solidarity in Contemporary Literary Cultures: Reading Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (2010) at the 'One Book, Many Communities' Campaign

> Part of the allure for readers who participate in shared reading events is connoted by the name of the most widely adapted [mass reading event] model—One Book, One Community—a name that extends a promise of belonging. – Danielle Fuller and DeNel Rehberg Sedo. *Reading Beyond the Book*, 2013, p. 210

In this chapter, I will discuss Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* and its reception within an annual, international literary campaign which has generated some media attention over the years: 'One Book, Many Communities'. This campaign involves an international dialogue on one Palestinian novel each year, manifested in numerous reading groups. The event was conceptualised by the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine, "a network of self-defined librarians, archivists, and information workers in solidarity with the Palestinian struggle for self-determination" ("Who We Are.", n.p.). The organisation (henceforth: LAP) selects one novel for discussion each year, and stimulates "readers, librarians and others" to organise gatherings to discuss the novel, "at a library, university or school, at a local non-profit organisation or community center, in your living room, or at a bookstore" ("About 'One Book'.", n.p.). According to the organisation, the campaign is designed "to introduce readers to the richness of Palestinian literature, and create a broader awareness and understanding of Palestinian history and the struggle for self-determination" ("About 'One Book'.", n.p.).

The campaign began in 2015, and thus far has covered the following works, respectively: Susan Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin* (Bloomsbury, 2010); Suad Amiry's *Sharon and my Mother-in-Law* (2006); Ghassan Kanafani's *Returning to Haifa* (1969); and Ahlam Bharat's *Code Name: Butterfly* (2016). The first 'One Book' event drew the greatest amount of attention, and *Mornings in Jenin* is a highly popular work in general, making the 2015 campaign the most suitable one for discussion. Compared to the previous chapters, my methodology in this chapter does not include an analysis of interview material. There are a few blog posts online by people who participated in reading groups in America, which I will focus on in this chapter. I reached out to the LAP for certain clarifying comments, but received no response (which is understandable, as they coordinate several campaigns). Due to this focus, this chapter goes more in-depth to the availability of online information on the reception of the works under consideration at shared reading events, as well as how online platforms such as Twitter can constitute their own site of dialogue.

As I will discuss in this chapter, the use of the term 'communities' by the organisation dovetails with scholarship on literary cultures of shared reading events. In chapter 2, on documentary films, I largely focused on spreading awareness of the geo-political issues in Palestine. In chapter 3, I zoomed in on a cross-cultural connection between Scotland and Palestine enabled by the *A Bird is Not a Stone* poetry anthology, which also crucially addressed English audiences. In this chapter, I turn to a more global constellation of 'communities' shaped by a literary work, though my main focus lies on US groups. As I have stated in my introduction and will return to in the conclusion, all these are different aspects of a literary-cultural project of achieving transnational solidarity through human rights framing – although naturally they display considerable overlap.

I will first provide context to the emergence of the campaign, before turning to an analysis of the novel and the ways in which it thematises Palestinian rights within the

framework employed throughout this thesis. Then, I will provide a discussion of the 2015 'One Book' event, drawing on online materials relating to the novel's reception in various reading groups. I will focus my analysis on a few American groups, and the ways in which these groups emphasised how the novel altered their perceptions of the news. Further, I shall link the event to literary-cultural practices of 'One Book' events and discuss more generally the implications of reading as an act of solidarity, constructing transnational communities.

'One Book, Many Communities' and Contemporary Literary Cultures.

On the LAP website, it is stated that, in 2013, a delegation of librarians and archivists ("from the US, Canada, Sweden, Trinidad & Tobago, and Palestine") travelled to Palestine to bear witness to "the destruction and appropriation of information, and the myriad ways access is denied" ("2013 Delegation Solidarity Statement.", n.p.). In other words, the trip aimed to learn "how Palestinian voices and information about Palestine do—or do not—reach us, and how Palestinians can—or cannot—access information under Israeli settler colonialism" ("Our History.", n.p.).[8] Their solidarity statement outlines where they travelled, what events they bore witness to – including the Separation Wall in the Aida refugee camp in Bethlehem which separates the community from the nearby olive groves; and a school library in Lyd which was removed to make way for a police station – and that they made steps to create "a network of information workers" in order to support access to information in and about Palestine and Palestinian self-determination ("2013 Delegation."). The primary goal of the organisation is to foster Palestinians' right to access information and preserve their cultural heritage.

One example of an ongoing campaign by the LAP is *Matloub* (Wanted), in which the LAP will compile a wish list of books desired by participating Palestinian libraries which lack

[8] It is not made clear on the website when exactly the organisation was formed, but as their active Twitter account was established in December 2012, it may be assumed that the founding of the organisation preceded the delegation, rather than following from it ("Librarians2Palestine", n.p.).

the resources to gain access to these books. The same website will enable people to donate to help ship these books to the libraries. This campaign, according to the LAP, is designed in order to "raise awareness globally about the issues facing libraries in Palestine and the political context in which they operate – while at the same time offering material support for collection development in Palestinian libraries" ("Matloub/Wanted.", n.p.).

Beyond these campaigns which relate explicitly to material information structures, the LAP also hosted literary campaigns to generate awareness in Western countries. Melissa Morrone, from the LAP, stated in an interview that, during the 2014 attacks on Gaza, they wished to "do something that expressed our horror and outrage while deploying our solidarity group's unique skills and experience" (Qualey, n.p.). Two campaigns emerged out of this discussion: firstly, the group organised readings of excerpts of Palestinian literature on the subway in New York City in August 2014, as was reported on in *Mondoweiss* and *The Electronic Intifada* (Mermelstein, n.p.; Irving, n.p.). According to a statement by the group, which can no longer be found on their own website, reactions were "mostly positive: some passengers applauded, some posed for pictures with the group, and others engaged in conversation. In all, LAP distributed almost 400 bookmarks" (Irving, n.p.).[9]

Further, out of their discussion emerged the notion of organising a shared reading campaign. As I have stated, the LAP selects a book each year and stimulates librarians and readers to host their own 'One Book' events. The LAP makes available a 'toolkit' on their website, giving advice for people who wish to organise their own 'One Book' event, linking to templates for flyers and bookmarks to publicise the event, and encouraging people to reach out to LAP to tell them about the events.

[9] Inspired by this campaign, the *London Palestine Action* group organised a similar reading event shortly afterwards on the London Underground (London Palestine Action, n.p.), exemplifying the transnational reach of the organisation.

Morrone states that for the campaign, they drew inspiration from the "one book, one town" idea ("About 'One Book'.", n.p.). 'One Book, One Community' events are the focal point of Danielle Fuller and DeNel Sedo's *Reading Beyond the Book* (2013), in which the authors discuss the contemporary trend of hosting "mass reading events". The authors outline how, in the late 1990s, radio programs such as *Canada Reads* and televised book clubs such as The Richard & Judy Book Club and, most prominently, Oprah's Book Club, were on the rise. Further, these programmes were direct inspirations for the emergence of 'One Book, One Community' events (3-4). The first city-wide reading programme was initiated in Seattle in 1998, and ever since, they state, the model

> has been widely replicated and adapted, not only in the United States and Canada, but also in the United Kingdom, continental Europe, Singapore, and Australia. Although it is impossible to provide an exact figure, we estimate that more than 500 "One Book" programs take place annually around the world" (4).

As I suggested in my allusion to radio and TV programmes above, these events often have a cross-medial dimension to them; and, as Fuller and Sedo outline, from 2010 onwards, 'One Book' events also entered the "Twittersphere" (4).

The LAP's campaign of 'One Book, *Many* Communities' is one such adaptation of the model. The notion of 'many communities' expands the scope of the campaign and mirrors the territorially disperse nature of Palestinians as a result of the occupation, as well as the global scope of Palestinian activism, as I shall argue in the second part of this chapter. For now, having contextualised the LAP's campaign, I will move to my analysis of the framing of Palestinian rights in *Mornings in Jenin*. I shall return to the relationship between 'One Book, Many Communities' and other 'One Book' events in the second part of this chapter.

In the part that follows, I will analyse *Mornings in Jenin* from the perspective employed throughout this thesis. To reiterate, these include: the right to exist (contesting the historical erasure of Palestinian life and culture); the right to land (contesting the ongoing occupation of Palestinian land); and the right to speak (contesting historical representations of Palestinians which do not account for their wishes). I will discuss the right to exist and the right to land together, focusing on the novel's references to temporality and the historicization of Palestine. This historicization constructs an intimate relationship between the characters and the land they inhabit – or, for most of the novel, used to inhabit – and validate their presence. For the right to speak, I will focus on the character of Yousef, and the novel's psychological evaluation of a character who ends up as a face on TV, representing evil and terror in Western countries. Following this, I will elevate the right to speak to a meta-level in my discussion of the reading groups in the second part of this chapter.

The Right to Exist and to Land – Historicizing Palestine through Generations.

Mornings in Jenin tells the story of Amal, whose family was forcibly removed from their native village of Ein Hod following the inception of Israel in 1948. While the novel largely centres on Amal, the story spans four generations and is told chronologically, meaning that the novel starts years before Amal is born. The first chapter opens in 1941 with the Abulheja family working on the harvest and interacting with surrounding villagers. As one review of the novel summarises: "The pastoral opening crams into 40 pages a cross-faith friendship, a love story (both brothers fall for Dalia, who marries the elder son, Hasan), a death, the Zionist invasion of the village, and the theft of one of Hasan and Dalia's sons, the infant Ismael, by an Israeli soldier" (Joseph, n.p.). Exiled from their village, the family moves to a refugee camp by Jenin,

where they hope their stay will be temporary; eventually, however the tents "turned into clay" after years of remaining in place (Abulhawa 41).

Amal is born in the camp, in July 1955. The reader is told about her youth in a few pages, including an account of her meeting her life-long best friend Huda. Throughout the novel, the reader follows Amal through the experience of military occupation; her mother's deterioration following an attack on the camp, when Amal and Huda were forced to hide under the kitchen floor for days; her education at an orphanage in Jerusalem; and then her moving to the US. Her brother, Yousef, joins the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) to resist the occupation. When Yousef has a child, Amal travels to Lebanon to meet her niece. She meets Majid, whom she ends up marrying. Amal returns to the US due to rising tensions between Israel and Lebanon, but Majid, a doctor, refuses to join her for the time being. Majid resides at the hospital where he works, but contrary to his expectations, Israel bombs the hospital and kills Majid. Lacking the will to live, Amal gives birth to her daughter Sara (who had been conceived in Lebanon) but largely neglects her growing up. Towards the end, Amal and Sara travel to Jenin so that Sara may see her roots. During their stay at Jenin, the camp is attacked, and Amal catches a bullet for Sara, dying in the process. Near the very end, Sara attempts to visit her great-grandparents' house in Ein Hod, but is refused entry by the Israeli resident.

Mornings in Jenin, being a novel, has more space devoted to family dynamics and other relationships, depicting character growth, love and trauma. The novel presents a picture of Palestinians operating within normative frameworks before they are interrupted by extraordinary circumstances of the occupation. I described this juxtaposition between family life and the occupation last chapter in relation to *A Bird is Not a Stone*. Due to the form of *Mornings in Jenin*, this dynamic is even more explicitly visible here. I will provide one example from the novel: after the reader has gotten a chance to get to know the villagers of Ein Hod and the refugee camp, the novel comes to the 1967 six-day war. The people in the camp hear on

the radio that Israel has attacked Egypt and Arab armies are mobilising, resulting in a sense of hope and a perceived opportunity to take back the lost villages. Amal's father is revealed to have had a stash of weapons hidden in the kitchen, which he now takes out to distribute among "would-be fighters", whom Amal states she "had until then only known as fathers, brothers, uncles and husbands" (65). The novel thus presents the Palestinians as family members foremost, and as fighters second, only following their occupation and exile.

I wish to focus my analysis on the novel's historicization of Palestine, which constructs an intimate relationship with the land while painting a picture of family life. The novel asserts the historical presence of Palestinians through repeated invocations of temporality. The very scope of the novel exemplifies this: rather than merely focusing on Amal's life in the refugee camp and subsequent exile to the US, the novel opens with her father, uncle, and grandparents working the land. At the start of the novel is a family tree depicting all relevant family members appearing throughout the story. The inclusion of a family tree from the very start evokes a sense of rootedness; a representation of family life which is interrupted by their forced exile.

After Ein Hod is attacked and the family flees to Jenin, the novel states: "So it was that eight centuries after its founding by a general of Saladin's army in 1189 A.D., Ein Hod was cleared of its Palestinian children" (34). Yehya, Amal's grandfather, calculates how many generations "had lived and died in that village" and he came to forty; a task made simple due to the Arab system of naming their children to tell the story of their genealogy. The novel continues:

> Forty generations of childbirth and funerals, weddings and dance, prayer and scraped knees. (…) Forty generations with their imprinted memories, secrets, and scandals. All carried away by the notion of entitlement of another people, who would settle in the vacancy and proclaim it all (…) as the heritage of Jewish foreigners. (35)

References to history such as this one permeate the novel: when Amal travels to the orphanage in Jerusalem, she describes the building as marked by arched doorways typical of Palestinian architecture (142). These references ground the presence of the villagers, as well as Palestinians more generally, within history; a history that is still visible in the present through names and architectural forms. Further, the invocations of "childbirths and funerals, weddings and dance" depict the bonds of family and love which formed on the land in those generations.

As I have stated, the first chapters form a depiction of pre-1948 life for Palestinians. It discusses, for instance, the family working on the harvest, as well as Yehya's friendly relationship with their neighbour, Haj Salem, who would later tell Amal and other children stories of Palestine before the arrival of the Zionists (77-78). The first chapter opens with the following lines:

> In a distant time, before history marched over the hills and shattered present and future, before wind grabbed the land at one corner and shook it of its name and character, before Amal was born, a small village east of Haifa lived quietly on figs and olives, open frontiers and sunshine. (3)

As I have stated, opening with a family who go about their daily business prior to the foundation of Israel (although the presence of Zionists is already made visible at various junctures) is a powerful assertion of the presence of Palestinians on their native land. The novel employs poetic language in order to heighten the tension, as the passage above refers to "history march[ing] over the hills", shattering present and future, as well as wind shaking the land of its name and character.

Contesting this coming history, where the land would be seized, various comments throughout the novel construct an intimate relationship between the Abulheja family and the land they inhabit. Beyond the outline of the harvest mentioned above, for instance, Amal's dad presents a relationship with the land when he tells her that one cannot 'own' land: "It can belong to you, as you belong to it. We come from the land, give our love and labor to her, and she nurtures us in return. When we die, we return to the land. In a way, she [Palestine] owns us" (62). Outlining their cultural notions of what 'land ownership' entails, Amal's father describes a mutually beneficial relationship between Palestinians and the land. The fact that Palestine "owns" the people, instead of the other way around, is powerfully evoked throughout the remainder of the novel, where the characters experience the desire to return subsequent to their forced displacement.

At one point after the villagers have been displaced, Yehya returns to Ein Hod to check on the village and collect supplies, in a defiant move against the Zionist settlers. On his return to the camp after sixteen days, Yehya reports that the olive trees are still there but are in need of care "from people who knew how to care for them" (46). Yehya goes on to criticise the Zionists for having no attachment to the land and no knowledge of how to care for the olives, which he and his neighbours love dearly. Following this, Yehya lists several pieces of knowledge about how the trees must be taken care of; fact which his hands knew "from a lifetime devoted to trees and their earth" (46). Doing so, Yehya forms a poignant implicit critique of the historical assertion, which I described in chapter 1, that Palestinians did not cultivate the land properly, so that it lacked "meaningful or authentic history" until the return of the Jews (Piterberg 32). Yehya contests this notion and in fact reverses it, presenting him and his people as the ones who truly know how to care for the olive trees.

The novel explicitly speaks against historical discourses at another juncture: soon after Israel declares its independence, the novel states that Ein Hod, along with three adjacent villages, form a yet "unconquered triangle" in the new state. The novel states:

> They repulsed attacks and called for a truce, wanting only to live on the land as they always had. For they had endured many masters – Romans, Byzantines, Crusaders, Ottomans, British – and nationalism was inconsequential. Attachment to God, land, and family was the core of their being and that is what they defended and sought to keep. (27)

The novel further historicizes the presence of Palestinians on the land by naming consecutive 'masters' which came and went as successive generations of Palestinians remained on the land, cultivating it. What is most noteworthy is how the novel states that nationalism is 'inconsequential': this statement consciously positions itself against discourses which de-legitimise Palestinians' relationship to the land by emphasising the lack of a Palestinian state. This includes Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir's famous assertion in 1969 that Palestinians as a people "did not exist" historically, asking: "when was there an independent Palestinian people with a Palestinian state?" (Bunton 12). *Mornings in Jenin* foregrounds the relationship the villagers hold with the land to validate their right to exist on it, over any artificial questions of polities and borders, which are "inconsequential" to them.

Further speaking against historical discourses, the asserting of Palestinian's presence is powerfully re-enforced when the novel references the famous phrase I discussed in the first chapter – a land without a people for a people without a land – and contests its truth-value. Following the event where Ismael is taken, one chapter is devoted to Moshe's perspective of the event. At one point, it is stated that Ismael's mother, Dalia, and her screaming face when

Ismael is taken were to leave an indelible imprint on Moshe's brain, haunting him with regret until his death. Then, the novel states: "To chase people from their homes, [Moshe] had been commissioned by an omnipotent edict. *A land without a people for a people without a land*. He said it until he could have believed it, but for that Arab woman. But for Dalia" (38; emphasis original). This quote reveals the complex psychological processes in a soldier's mind. On the one hand, the firm belief in his project (commissioned by an "omnipotent edict") and the haunting memories of Jewish persecutions pervade his consciousness. Moshe tries to convince himself that he is doing right. What prevents him, however, is the image of Dalia's screaming face. Unable to pretend that the child he has stolen was authentically theirs, Moshe is haunted by images of the woman who has lost her possession.

Through its historicization of Palestine, *Mornings in Jenin* articulates a dual perspective of rights, connecting the right to exist – includes a focus on family dynamics and cultural practices – with the right to the land which the villagers have inhabited for centuries. In significant ways, the novel formulates specific critiques of various discursive stereotypes of Palestinians which have existed historically.

The Right to Speak – Exploring What is Behind the 'Face on the News'.

Beyond undeniably asserting Palestinians' presence and articulating their right to exist and to land, *Mornings in Jenin* asserts the necessity for Palestinians to represent themselves. Further invoking stereotypes of Palestinians, the novel states that the Jenin refugee camp had been portrayed as a "breeding ground of terrorists" by international media (190, 291). At the end, the official UN report on Israel's attack on the camp, in which Amal and many others were killed, states that "only militants" were killed in the "operation" (317). Beyond the novel's depiction of family dynamics which runs counter to this stereotype in general, as I discussed above, the novel inserts itself within the discursive formations around Palestinians by critiquing

the representation of a 'face' on the news. The novel is at various points punctured with a sense of betrayal from all around. Israel forms an obvious source of suffering for Palestinians throughout the novel. Beyond this, one of Amal's friends in the orphanage also states that Arab leaders betrayed Palestinians "just like the British", as her father was assassinated for lecturing about King Abdullah of Jordan's dealings with Golda Meir (147). Furthermore, when the camp in Jenin is attacked after Amal returns towards the close of the novel, she expresses her perception that "[t]he world cannot possibly let this go on", to which Huda scoffs and states that the world never cared about them (304).

Amal's brother Yousef is the primary embodiment of an invisible subject, unable to represent himself. Yousef is seen growing up in the camp; including one scene where he is beaten up at a checkpoint by his long-lost brother Ismael, who grew up as David unaware of his heritage, but who sees the uncanny resemblance between the two of them. Through his suffering, Yousef eventually gets caught up in the resistance movement. At one point, while Amal is in the US, Yousef calls her and tells her, while sobbing and yelling, that his wife and unborn child have been murdered (227). Later, he calls her again, stating that he wished to talk to her once more before "this was over" (231). When Amal inquires what he means, Yousef states that he had left the PLO, and that "Yasser Arafat is a coward who leads his people to slaughter with the rope of American lies" (231-232). He breaks off the call and the chapter ends speaking of "broken promises of superpowers" and "the world's indifference to spilled Arab blood" (232). In the face of Palestinians' suffering, the novel stated at an earlier point, endurance and resistance became markers of their identities. However, the price they paid was that the prime alternative to suffering became a celebration of martyrdom as the only way to freedom, the ultimate defiance (108).

One day after the phone call, Amal sees on the news that someone had driven a truck with explosives into the US embassy in Lebanon, killing 63 people and wounding many more.

The FBI and CIA visit her home and question her, as they believe that Yousef had done it. In a bar, Amal witnesses an American man who sees the news of the bombing and yells "fucking terrorists!" (238). On the next page, the novel provides a description of Yousef's youth, as "a boy who walked the hills of Tulkarem and drank from the water springs in Qalquilia", who played backgammon with Amal, and had a smile "that melted away many a Mediterranean heart" (239). The novel states: "He was denied, imprisoned, tortured, humiliated, and exiled for the wish to possess himself and inherit the heritage bequeathed to him by history" (239). Then, the novel states that Yousef's picture was being broadcast on screens all across the country, so that "Yousef became the poster boy of all things vile and evil in the world" (239).

This face on American television, that to nearly everyone who sees it only stands code for 'terrorist', is provided with a voice in Abulhawa's novel. *Mornings in Jenin* provides a psychological evaluation of the character Yousef, whom the reader does not see as a face on the news, but rather as a brother who is caught within the occupation and becomes involved with the resistance, only to face betrayal from all sides. The novel shows how, in the face of occupation and international media narratives which accord little space to Palestinians to express themselves, the only way some people see to retaliate against the murder of loved ones and make themselves visible is manifested within acts of violence.

At the very end of the novel, it is revealed that Yousef in fact did not commit the act. He planned to do it but changed his mind, as he did not want to desecrate his late wife's love or besmirch his father's name. The group he is with, who are not identified, states that although Yousef will not do it, the act will "go through him" (321). In other words, although someone else performed the act, Yousef was framed for it. As he states, "I'll live this pain but I'll not cause it" (321). Beyond everything described above that Yousef faced in his life, up until the very end he had no power to represent himself, since he did not commit the act the world knows him for. Carrying a legacy that is not his, Yousef is unable to even reach out to Amal, out of

fear that she will face trouble if he contacts her. Eventually, he posts a message to Amal on a website that was created by Sara to record her experiences of Jenin. However, as this website is created after Amal has died, she will never read it. Yousef is the prime embodiment in the novel of an invisible subject, who was continuously repressed and misrepresented, unable to 'speak'.

Critiquing international stereotypes of Palestinians and their lack of self-determination, *Mornings in Jenin* expresses the need for the right to represent oneself. Fictional characters such as Yousef allow the author to imagine the developments occurring in Palestinians' minds, and impart this imagination onto readers so that they may understand how there is more to a character than the face appearing on the news. How this narrative then circulates globally depends on how the novel is received and, as is the focus of this thesis, manifested within shared reading spaces.

Circulating Mornings in Jenin *in American Reading Groups during the 2015 'One Book, Many Communities' Campaign.*

Beyond the novel's assertion of the right to speak for Palestinians, the novel itself also forms a real-world object that asserts the right for Palestinians to be represented by Palestinian voices. Abulhawa was born in Kuwait to Palestinian refugees, moved to the US an infant, and, mirroring Amal's trajectory, she lived in an orphanage in East Jerusalem for several years before moving to the US again. In Jerusalem, Abulhawa states, she discovered her roots in a way most Palestinian refugees cannot ("Susan Abulhawa.", n.p.).

In the Author's Note at the end of the novel, Abulhawa states: "Although the characters I this book are fictitious, Palestine is not, nor are the historical events and figures in this story" (325). Emphasising the real-world Palestine, the novel consciously positions itself as an intervention into real-world discourses. In providing a literary voice for Palestinians in English,

Mornings in Jenin was a relatively new phenomenon. A review of *Mornings in Jenin* by *The Independent* states that it is "the first mainstream novel in English to explore life in post-1948 Palestine" (Joseph, n.p.). *The Hindu* echoes this claim, stating: "The Jewish version of the Israel-Palestine story has found a place in English fiction umpteen times; the most popular being Exodus by Leon Uris, a book that generated a huge wave of sympathy in the U.S. for the state of Israel", but that there was no novel of mass appeal from the Palestinian perspective in English until Abulhawa released hers (Khan, n.p.).

That the Palestinian perspective was a radical insertion into mainstream literature is illustrated in the novel's publication process. Abulhawa conceived of the idea for the novel when, upon becoming frustrated with the portrayal of Palestine in the media, she travelled to Jenin in 2002 and stayed with a family in the refugee camp represented in the novel. When she wrote the novel based on her experiences in Jenin, she received "rejection letters galore" from publishers (Walker, n.p.). Although several editors told her they loved the story, they did not want to publish it since it was "too much of a 'hot potato'" (Walker, n.p.). The novel was finally published in the US under the name The Scar of David in 2006, by "a small publishing company that would soon fall to bankruptcy" (Walker, n.p.). Only a few copies of the work circulated, but according to Marcia Qualey, the book was picked up by a French publisher and translated into French. "From there," Qualey notes, "it made its way into several other languages, and was so well-loved that it attracted English-language attention", until in 2010 Bloomsbury released a fresh edit, with the current name (Qualey, "The strange path.", n.p.).

The above narrative, beyond demonstrating the difficulty for Abulhawa in having her work released, again illustrates the transnational processes behind the production and circulation of works of Palestinian literature which we have seen throughout this thesis. How the novel's trajectory developed after the initial obstacles is an indication of the novel's popularity. The novel is consistently praised: for instance, *The Independent* calls it

"unforgettable", and states: "Friendship, adolescence, love: ordinary events, offset against extraordinary circumstances, make the story live" (Joseph, n.p.). The *Princeton Book Club* states that the book is "written with passion" and "Kindle owners will find themselves highlighting many poignant and insightful passages that give keen insight into the human condition" ("Mornings in Jenin.", n.p.). Hannah Mermelstein, from the LAP, notes that the novel was selected for the first 'One Book' campaign partly due to its popularity, and because it is a "good introduction to Palestinian literature and to Palestinian history" (Irving, n.p). This dovetails with the campaign's aim of introducing readers to the richness of Palestinian literature and understanding the Palestinian story.

For the 2015 'One Book' campaign, the LAP website states that a total of 36 groups met during the month of January, in some places consisting of around 5 attendants, and in others of over 20 ("2015: Mornings in Jenin.", n.p.). The majority of meetings was held in the US (in New York, Grand Rapids, Los Angeles, Dearborn, etc.) followed by Italy (Genova, Bologna, Rome, Bari), and Canada and Sweden. In general, the LAP states, feedback from participants was "uniformly positive", with participants writing to the LAP that reading *Mornings in Jenin* changed their perceptions, and that they were glad to be "part of something global" ("2015.", n.p.). The discussions varied widely: some groups focused their conversations on the book as a work of literature, analysing it in terms of narrative style and prose structure; others, however, centred their discussion around the history and contemporary struggles of Palestinians. This not only differed between groups, but also between individuals within groups, as one participant from Brooklyn explained: "Several people were moved by the story and the characters; some were more interested in the political and historical information" ("2015.", n.p.).

In the US, a large focus was given to how the novel informs people's reading of the news. A report from a reading group in Grand Rapids emphasised how the novel encourages

people to "stay/be aware of how actions are presented by government and media" (Librarians and Archivists, 4 February). H.H. Barlow, whose precise location is unclear, states in a blog post about their discussion group that many participants expressed frustration with the mainstream North American media portrayal of Palestine and the conflict, in which Palestinian voices are still often ignored (Barlow, n.p.). Debra (last name unknown) similarly stresses on her blog that the novel is a great "alternative" to mainstream US media (Debrab, n.p.).

Both Barlow and Debra outline how non-fiction works are prominently available which provide much needed historical and political information. However, a large part of the public shies away from these works, making a novel such as *Mornings in Jenin* a suitable starting point for people to hear Palestinian voices (Barlow, n.p.; Debrab, n.p.). Neither the LAP website nor any of the online blogs about the 'One Book' event mentioned if there were people present who expressed interest in becoming activists. This is revealing of the primary goal of the campaign: it is not meant to draw in any sort of membership for an activist organisation, as, for instance, was more visible in the film screenings by student societies I discussed in chapter 2. Most importantly, people are invited to change perspective, exchanging reflections with one another. That people indeed changed their perspective is highlighted in the general observations on the LAP website, as well as in a specific comment from the Grand Rapids group: "A few of us knew the history but most were not aware of it, given the American news blackout about Palestinian suffering" (Librarians and Archivists, 14 February). On one of the LAP's Facebook posts, a 'One Book' participant comments from Ithaca, New York, that it had been a pleasant way to be educated about Palestine and to "discuss our troubling times" (Zapala, January 19).

The focus on how the novel relates to news media is unsurprising, given the perception that Palestinians are underrepresented in US media in particular. As I have outlined in my analysis of *Mornings in Jenin*, the novel eloquently articulates the necessity of approaching the

news with a critical eye through its representation of Yousef, who becomes a face on TV representing evil and terror, which is juxtaposed with the novel's explication of his youth and his development under occupation. It is through the shared reading spaces created by the 'One Book' campaign that people are stimulated to engage in a dialogue about how the novel relates to the representation of its subject matter in their own media environments. The engagement with the novel from the perspective of one's own background causes reflection on one's own global position. More importantly, it leads to a broader awareness of Palestinian experiences and the necessity of hearing Palestinian voices.

As the comments above suggest, a novel is a suitable medium to intervene within news media narratives, as people seem more willing to listen to voices which are not explicitly academic or politically oriented but arise out of personal experiences. The medium of the novel as compared to the poetry in the last chapter is perhaps more suitable for a Palestinian-American author, as the novel is traditionally a Western form of literature. By contrast, the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology arose from the original creations of Palestinian poets, and acquired profound resonance with audiences due to the performative dimension of the tour. The poems were a suitable medium through which to establish cross-cultural points of contact due to the multi-lingual nature of the anthology, which novels do not lend themselves to as much as the compact, performative medium of poetry.

Literature and Community-building.

The human rights framing of the 'One Book, Many Communities' event is drawn out powerfully through the notion of 'communities' it gives rise to, which promotes practices of solidarity through discussing a work and generating empathy. The relationship between reading and community-building is addressed in Fuller and Sedo's *Reading Beyond the Book* (2013). In studying the model of 'One Book' events, the authors state, "We explore the pleasures to be

experienced *beyond* rather than between the covers, as a book is mediated through a series of live activities, broadcast and staged entertainments, public spaces, and other people" (3; emphasis added). The book contains various chapters: including on televised book clubs, radio programmes, the role of commodification, reader experiences, and the materiality of the book. For the purposes of this chapter, I shall focus on their observations on readers, and how communities are formed between readers.

Fuller and Sedo state that the title of 'One Book, One Community' at the outset is alluring to people as it "extends a promise of belonging" – what they refer to as becoming "citizen readers" (210-211). The basic principle is that forming an attachment to a particular book, either through reading it or participating in an activity related to it, entails sharing common ground with other people (211). Partaking in shared reading events is popular as it allows one to re-experience the book through the presence of other readers – perhaps also the author – and engagement with other media, turning reading into "a social and shared, intellectual, and even a somatic activity" (206).

This basic principle is the same for the 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign, as readers come together to discuss a common book. However, the LAP campaign differs from conventional 'One Book' events in at least two significant ways. Firstly, Fuller and Sedo emphasise the entertainment-value of 'One Book' events, stating that "the pleasure of this type of shared reading is more about social relations and the experience of moving within the social network produced by the ['One Book'] model than it is about textual hermeneutics"; and moreover, that these events do not necessarily depend on having read the book (243, 205). In the LAP campaign, it is also the case that not each participant had finished the book, as Barlow states about their discussion group (Barlow, n.p.). Furthermore, as I stated above, discussions were not only centred on politics and also concerned the novel's narrative style. Despite this, contrary to certain events where the social activity is the most important aspect, with the books

being secondary, for the LAP campaign the book is the central point around which the events are structured, informing most of the discussion. Further, the enjoyment-value of the book discussion often takes a backseat compared to politically oriented discussions.

Secondly, Fuller and Sedo state that some 'One Book' participants articulate their sense of belonging as a reaffirmation of their national affiliation. Most, however, derive other forms of affective attachments from the events – "to place, to region, or to a cultural community, for example" (211). Most 'One Book' events are relatively localised: for instance, within Birmingham, Toronto, Chicago, etc. The 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign, however, is not localised in any particular geographical entity. Not only are the events situated in multiple areas across the globe (including the UK, the US, Italy, Sweden, and Palestine), but the LAP also ensures that the books they select are available in multiple languages. In the *ArabLit* interview with Morrone, she states that *Mornings in Jenin* was selected for various reasons, one of which is that it is available in several translations (Qualey, n.p.). According to the Author's Note in the novel, it was translated into twenty languages (Abulhawa 325), and the current Bloomsbury author biography states it was translated into 26 languages ("Susan Abulhawa."). Beyond the linguistic reach of the novel itself, Morrone states that "we want this initiative to truly be global, so we'll be providing flyers and bookmarks in multiple languages so that people in non-English-speaking locations (we've already got Sweden covered!) can plan and promote book discussions in January" (Qualey, n.p.). This illustrates the attempts the LAP makes to extend the scope of the campaign as far as possible.

The primary focal point of Fuller and Sedo's book is somatic experiences of shared reading, since, as they state, the possibilities for social connection enabled by 'One Book' events allows readers to "see" what would otherwise remain an imagined community (208). However, they also state that readers' expressions of belonging to communities due to their shared reading experiences is "both locally realized and more broadly imagined" (34). In the

LAP campaign, the imagined communities constructed by the campaign form a bigger part of the campaign than in other 'One Book' events, as many groups across borders and oceans come together within the time frame of a few weeks set out by the LAP. Through the Twitter hashtag and the information uploaded on the LAP website, participants can share in the information of what was discussed in other groups and stage a mental connection with these groups, both nationally and internationally.

Whereas in the last chapters I focused on the relationship between Western audiences to the works and the Palestinians these works represent, in the LAP campaign, the relationship *between* different Western groups also comes into play. The territorially dispersed nature of the campaign raises awareness of the global nature of Palestinian activism, or at least global feelings of solidarity. As I have stated, *Mornings in Jenin* was considered a suitable 'introduction' to Palestine by the organisers, and many of the participants were not explicitly activists or very involved with Palestine at all. To share a somatic reading experience with others, many of whom have similar knowledge of Palestine, as well as to imagine a common ground with other groups with similar knowledge, enables readers to feel part of a global network. This is reflected in the statement from one participant, whom the LAP quotes stating: "Though our group was small, we were glad to be a part of something global" ("2015.", n.p.).

The Author's Voice and Multi-lingual Discussions.

With respect to the question of 'enabling access to voice', it is worth noting the author's involvement with the campaign. The LAP selects the novels they find most suitable among themselves; however, they do reach out to the authors of the works. Abulhawa stated: "I actually wasn't involved with them coming up with this at all. I was contacted by Librarians and Archivists with Palestine after they had made their decision. I'm very flattered" (Walker, n.p.). On the LAP's overview of events, they state that Abulhawa participated in the campaign

on three separate occasions: during the launch event in New York, in person; and then in the Dearborn discussion group and a discussion group in Trieste, Italy, via Skype ("2015.", n.p.). At these events, Abulhawa talked about the novel's background and performed readings from her work. The author herself is thus given representation within the campaign. This is further re-enforced through the LAP's toolkit for the event: the toolkit includes a video where Abulhawa talks about her work. A Facebook post by the LAP quotes a reading group in Stockholm, who mention that they watched this video prior to the discussion (Librarians and Archivists, 6 February).

Similarly, in 2016, Suad Amiry participated in the launch event when her book *Sharon and My Mother-in-Law* was discussed. She also participated in a reading group in Ramallah, through Skype. A reading group in Bologna took a TEDx talk by Amiry as the basis for their discussion ("2016.", n.p.). Ahlam Bsharat, author of *Code Name: Butterfly*, met with a reading group in Ramallah in 2018 ("2018.", n.p.). This illustrates how the LAP makes efforts to enable access to the authors' voices, rather than merely circulating the novel. The most problematic year in this respect is 2017, when late author Ghassan Kanafani's work *Returning to Haifa* was discussed. For this year, the only way for the LAP to enable access to his voice was by promoting his work, as they do for all authors. Further complicating this aspect, this was also the one year in which a work not originally written in English was at the focus, and the process of translation puts the work read by English-speaking audiences at a remove from the original.

Despite this problematic aspect, one must wonder if lack of access to the author's original voice should prevent attempts at circulating or discussing it. As I argued in relation to *A Bird is Not a Stone* in chapter 3, so long as attention is paid to the risks involved in translation and mediating someone else's work, the distortion inherent in these processes cannot prevent international circulation of Palestinian narratives entirely. That in 3 out of the 4 years the authors were involved shows the LAP's efforts to enable access to author's voices, with the

sole exception being the year in which the work of Kanafani, a monumental figure of Palestinian literature, was discussed.

Finally, linkin back in with the question of communities, the online information on the Dearborn gathering addresses an aspect which other reports did not: the presence of Arabic readers within the discussion groups. I have already alluded above to the fact that Palestinian readers, in Ramallah, also had their own reading group during the campaign. As there is no report available from their group, it is impossible to gauge how the discussion developed and differed from discussions in other countries. While the Dearborn community does not state that they had Palestinian readers present, the organiser does emphasise the cross-cultural, dialogical nature of their group, stating:

> I want this [library] to be a place where people from all different backgrounds can come together and share dialogue with each other and also, read each other's history and literature. Libraries are proprietors of knowledge and education, and the books we have on our shelves help to break down stereotypes and cultural barriers so we can see all the things we have in common as human beings on this planet. (Walker, n.p.)

On the advertising page of the event, it is stated that the discussion will be conducted both in Arabic and English ("Dearborn Public Library.", n.p.). While there is no information available about how this multi-lingual discussion ensued and was received by those present, and I thus cannot go into this, it is worth noting that not all of the US events took place in one language, nor were they only centred on a notion of raising awareness of what is happening 'over there' in Palestine. The Dearborn group in particular emphasises a transcultural *dialogue* which comes to life in the embodied space of the shared reading event, while still being centred

on the Palestinian issue. Similarly to the other case studies, the presence of Arabic speakers remind attendants of the central voices that need to be heard. The complex dynamics of the different communities that are constructed all interweave within the LAP's 'One Book' campaign, which inspires readers globally to connect with one another in the process of learning about Palestine through the reading and discussion of a Palestinian voice.

Conclusion.

Mornings in Jenin articulates the necessity to recognise Palestinians' human rights in myriad ways. In this chapter, I focused on the novel's historicization of Palestine and the intimate connection between the villagers and the land they inhabit. Further, the right to speak is manifested in Yousef, who is not accorded any space for self-representation. The only manner in which Yousef is made 'visible' is in the international media, where he is thoroughly misrepresented. *Mornings in Jenin* allows readers to imagine the story behind the faces one sees on the news. Only through an imaginative project is Yousef's narrative made visible.

As one would expect of a historical narrative, the novel lends itself to a discussion of Palestine's people and history. The representation of Yousef clearly struck a cord with American audiences which the novel reached through the 'One Book' campaign, as the online information on the events often emphasised how the novel alters people's readings of the news. My discussion of the 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign in this chapter has more explicitly raised the question of communities, which I have addressed in the previous chapters as well, but which nowhere is more explicitly visible or as complex as it is here. In my conclusion, I shall provide an overarching discussion of how rights articulations were manifest in the various works; as well as a discussion of the role of literary forms in the constellations of news media that pervade many people's lives.

Conclusion

Counter-acting Palestinian Invisibility

In this conclusion, I will provide an overarching argument based on the analysis I presented throughout my thesis. I will first reiterate the primary arguments of my chapters, paying special attention to how they relate to each other in their articulations of human rights. Then, I will turn to a discussion of the place of literature and film within a socio-cultural climate pervaded by news media. Finally, I will provide some directions for future research as well as a global reflection on the question of self-representation.

Reiterating the Primary Arguments.

As I have illustrated throughout my thesis, contemporary works of Palestinian literature and film frequently articulate claims to human rights. I differentiated between the right to exist, the right to land, and the right to speak. As my analyses illustrated, there is considerable overlap between these strands of rights: for instance, in chapter 4, I argued that *Mornings in Jenin* asserts the right to exist and the right to land simultaneously, through the novel's historicization of Palestine and its depiction of family life as bound up with cultivating the land. Further, in chapter 2, I argued that the documentaries assert the presence of the interviewees, and connected this both to the right to exist and the right to speak.

Despite the points of overlap, it emerged within each chapter that assertions of the right to exist are often contingent on framing Palestinian lives as 'grievable', by embedding the characters within familial frameworks while also painting a picture of precarious life. The documentary films I discussed in chapter 2 undeniably assert the presence of Palestinians, as well as images of corporeal suffering and resistance. Particularly *Five Broken Cameras* connects the Palestinian body with the medium that enables its representation, by presenting the cameras under threat. The films present emotional appeals to human rights through the presentation of a family narrative in *5 Broken Cameras*, and through the cows in *The Wanted 18*, which are made 'grievable'. In chapter 3, I further delved into the presentation of family life through my discussion of the representation of the 'ordinary' vs the 'extraordinary' in several poems in the *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology. I illustrated how the poems display the elasticity of Palestinian life, constructing complex human subjects whose lives are disturbed by the occupation. In chapter 4, I mentioned that the right to exist was manifest similarly through the *Mornings in Jenin*'s explication of family dynamics, as the novel spans four generations and is, in many ways, a story of family and love.

With respect to the right to land: the family dynamics in *Mornings in Jenin* are inextricably bound up with the right to land. As we saw, the novel historicizes the family's presence on the land, reaching back forty generations up until their forced displacement. Cultivating the land was considered the core of their being. Presenting family life as bound up with the land validates their presence, asserting their right to live on the land. In chapter 2, the articulation of the right to land was manifested in the documentaries through their testimonial project, bearing witness to the occupation as well as the resistance this system gives rise to. Particularly *The Wanted 18* articulates this right strongly through its representation of the cows, and how the townspeople's attempts at economic self-determination was suppressed. In chapter 3, I illustrated how many poets construct an intimate relationship with the land, particularly

through their focus on martyrs who nourish the land, which in turn sustains the present inhabitants. Further, certain poems explicitly located themselves within a position of exile and articulated the right to land rather through a focus on the right to *return*, expressed through a sense of nostalgia.

Finally, the right to speak was manifested in the documentaries through the presence of Palestinian voices. On the level of production, *5 Broken Cameras* was filmed by a Palestinian himself, and Davidi assisted in the filmmaking. *Roadmap to Apartheid* and *The Wanted 18* seemingly avoid 'speaking for' due to their representation of Palestinian voices; however, it is important to remember that the directors mediated the interviews, and there is no transparency as to how communication with participants developed, which means that it is not always clear where the lines blur between the Palestinians' voices and the directors' ideas. They somewhat make up for this in their scope, as they present themselves as providing a larger picture on events (or in the case of *The Wanted 18*, as being Shomali's attempt to come to grips with the narrative), rather than pretending to represent any one's personal views faithfully. Within the film screenings, I outlined how often, Palestinian voices are present at these events, providing a space for them to represent themselves. Thus, the student societies enabled access to Palestinian voices through their screenings.

In chapter 3, I primarily considered the right to speak at a meta-level, arguing that the circulation and performance of the anthology constitutes an assertion of the right to speak. Due to the process of translation, a sense of distortion is impossible to avoid. Despite this, the multi-lingual nature of the anthology and the tour recognises how the translated poems are different 'versions'. Further, the editors made efforts to send the anthology back to Palestine to enable the poets to retain ownership over their works. Finally, in chapter 4, I showed how *Mornings in Jenin* asserts the right to speak through the character of Yousef, who is betrayed from all sides and cannot represent himself, becoming instead a face on the news, representing evil and

terror. By stressing Yousef's humanity, the novel provides a counter-picture to this simplistic narrative. The 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign provided international exposure to the novel, and crucially, Abulhawa was consulted and participated in a few events herself.

Overarching Argument – The Role of Literature in Articulating Human Rights.

As my discussions of the right to speak in all the case studies shows, underlying each of the case studies I analysed throughout this thesis is an attempt at enabling access to Palestinian narratives. My overarching conclusion is that the works I analysed, and particularly the shared reading spaces centring around the works, form a site where Palestinian invisibility may be counter-acted. This occurs through the acts of discussing the stories, empathising with them, and negotiating Palestinian human rights. Literary forms are the vehicles that enable these interactions to take place, as the events are centred around the various works.

An important question that remains following my above argument is the overarching question of the intervention of Palestinian literature and film in a network of information cultures where the news shapes many people's perceptions of global events. I shall engage with this question by way of a conclusion. In each of the shared reading events, salient aspects of the works which I highlighted in my analysis formed part of the climate in the discussions. For chapter 2, the documentary films lend themselves to circulation in activist spaces, due to the indelible images they provide, and, as I highlighted, their focus on civil resistance and its efficacy. This links to the societies' primary aim of generating support. For chapter 3, the poetry anthology was particularly effective at highlighting the elasticity of Palestinian life; and as I noted in my discussion of the tour, the organisers ensured that works would be read covering normative aspects of life, including love and family, as well as poems on the occupation. Further, the multi-lingual nature of both the anthology and the tour fostered cross-cultural connections between Scotland and Palestine. For chapter 4, Abulhawa's *Mornings in Jenin*

provides a poignant critique of American media through Yousef's character. As I illustrated in my analysis of blog posts, US reading groups focused on their disillusionment with representations in American news media.

The above illustrates how each medium was taken up to different ends, as they allow for various points of insight into Palestinian narratives which differ from news media, which most people focus on. In general, as has become clear from my analyses, literary works constitute a site where Palestinian subjecthood can be negotiated – in other words, where they can express their voice and in which their lives are framed as grievable. Literary works carry more popular appeal than non-fiction works on Palestinian perspectives, as well as greater emotional resonance. Through these features, literary works intervene within the media constellations which pervade, if not control, many people's daily lives.

This is not to say that literary works by themselves can bring about political change. However, this is not the immediate project of the actors involved in my case studies – with the exception of the student societies, who are more oriented towards activism. The *A Bird is Not a Stone* anthology and the 'One Book, Many Communities' campaign emerged primarily out of a recognition that Palestinians have stories to tell, and that these stories should be heard. These campaigns were not primarily based around attracting a membership for activist organisations. For the student societies, although they are more activist-oriented, not everyone explicitly remains within activist circles following the film screenings; however, this does not mean that seeing these films did not give people cause for reflection. In all of my case studies, it emerged that constructing transnational dialogues and enabling people to reflect on Palestinian narratives was a large part of the goal.

There are those who contest the value of narrative representation. The anonymous representative from the York Palestine society I interviewed stated that some people consider film screenings or other literary forms as merely a "middle-class distraction". Henry Bell, one

of the co-editors of *A Bird is Not a Stone*, stated that, while the project of the anthology was very well received on the whole, certain negative comments were sparked. He recalls one episode in which a Scottish activist told him that "Scotland should be sending Palestine machine guns, not poems" (Bell, personal correspondence). However, aesthetic forms of narrative representation and economic or military forms of resistance should not be seen as a binary. It is noteworthy that many of the agents enabling the projects are involved with Palestinian activism in other ways. The student societies have many other campaigns going on, prominently including generating support for the BDS movement at local levels. The Glasgow-Bethlehem 'twin city' relationship enables other funds, working towards educational improvements in Bethlehem, among other things. As I already outlined in chapter 4, the Librarians and Archivists with Palestine are at their core dedicated to enabling networks of information and cultural heritage preservation. Beyond this, Susan Abulhawa founded Playgrounds for Palestine, "which builds play facilities in Palestine and refugee camps in Lebanon" (Yaqoob, n.p.). Further, Abulhawa and many, if not all, of the actors involved in *A Bird is Not a Stone* are active supporters of BDS.

This illustrates how literature is part of a wider network, in which cultural and economic forms of resistance cooperate in order to mobilise change. My above argument that cultural efforts often do not revolve around quantifiable memberships does not mean that cultural perceptions do not drive political change over time. Global perceptions are crucial in defining the development of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict and its potential resolutions. Spreading Palestinian narratives aids in levelling the playing field: so long as one party has its narrative largely recognised but the other does not, there is no hope for a resolution in which everyone has equal representation.

In order to enrich the empirical basis upon which my observations are based, future research would benefit from investigating how other works of literature are circulated and received in various spaces. As I noted in my introduction, I concern myself with a broader outlook on how Palestinian narratives have been transmitted to articulate claims to human rights. Future projects may consider how documentaries such as *Roadmap to Apartheid* are received at the US film festival circuit; or how audiences in Ireland engage with Palestinian works of literature, as compared to Scottish and English audiences. This would add to the growing body of scholarship on Palestinian arts while crucially addressing the dimension of circulation, which is still usually overlooked or only mentioned in passing. As Edward Said argues, it is our imperative

> to provide a counterpoint, by storytelling, by reminders of the graphic nature of suffering, and by reminding everyone that we're talking about *people*. (…) One has to keep telling the [Palestinian] story in as many ways as possible, as insistently as possible, and in as compelling a way as possible, to keep attention to it, because there is always a fear that it might just disappear. (187; emphasis added)

The case studies I have analysed all contribute to making visible Palestinian narratives. In order to drive home the calls for rights they articulate, these narratives must be told again and again, and circulated within shared reading spaces, where the narratives may be linked to global events and action. If the case studies in my thesis have made one thing abundantly clear for those who wish to make Palestinian narratives visible through future efforts, it is that Palestinian voices should be made front and centre. Only through self-representation – whether initiated by oneself or by transnational actors enabling access to voice – can the right to narrate one's story, which Palestinians have historically been denied, be realised.

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[BACK COVER]

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