The Alexandria Review

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The Alexandria Review

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The Alexandria Review, sponsored by the Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies, is a bi-annual online international affairs journal that focuses on Eastern Mediterranean, North Africa and Middle East. Inspired by Alexandria, which has witnessed West-East interaction in the region for more than 2,300 years, The Alexandria Review is a medium where undergraduate students with different identities who are interested in the region can present their ideas and analyses about contemporary developments of the region.

Editorial Team's Message:

Dear Reader,

We are thrilled to introduce the first issue of the Alexandria Review. In this first step of a long journey, we present thought-provoking ideas, perspectives, and stories.

Ibn Khaldun, a prominent historian and sociologist, notes "geography is destiny." Of course, there are many ways to interpret Khaldun's intriguing remark. However, we believe Khaldun implies that how we understand our society defines the future. This valuable teaching lays the foundation of the Alexandria Review.

In the creation of the Alexandria Review, we want to express our gratitude to Professor Terril Jones, Professor Lara Deeb, the Keck Center for International and Strategic Studies' directors, Professor Hilary Appel and Dr. Evis Mezini, and our always supportive faculty advisor Professor Hicham Bou Nassif.

Our three selected works for the first issue reveal the dynamism and multiplicity of the region. The first work, which has a creative aspect, touches on notions of secularism, religiosity, and political symbolism in Türkiye. The second piece counters Orientialist evaluations and misconceptions of homosexuality in the Middle East. Our final work discusses the intricacies of educational pursuits in Palestine during the first intifada, from 1987 to 1993.

Finally, we want to thank our readers who help the Alexandria Review to be a bridge between different ideas and passions.

Warm regards,
Arda Aslan
Founding Editor-in-Chief

"Geography is destiny."
Ibn Khaldun

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Timesickness
Kyla Walker

In this creative piece, Kyla Walker touches on the deeply entrenched sociopolitical issues in modern Türkiye. Walker constructs her story by reviewing ethnographies about Kemalism and Islamism in Türkiye. The piece is an excerpt from a larger story and includes two sections, Şükrü and Deniz.

Author's Biography:

Kyla Walker is a Turkish-American writer. She studied creative writing at the New York State Summer Writers' Institute in 2021 and majored in English as an undergraduate at Pomona College. While at Pomona, she was mentored by Professors Mary Gaitskill and Jonathan Lethem, wrote bi-weekly articles as The Student Life's music columnist, and co-hosted an underground radio show for KSPC 88.7 FM.

Keywords:

Political nostalgia, Kemalism, Islamism, the micropolitics of clothing, generational differences.

Author's Message:

This piece was inspired by my memories of Istanbul and my academic research for a class called "Anthropology of the Middle East." In my short story, I focused on two characters coming together from disparate generations. These characters question the divides between longing and belonging, what it means to be simultaneously modern and pious, the politicization of a woman's body and her fashion choices, and how progressive liberalism might coincide or interfere with religious beliefs. I would like to dedicate this work to my mother who grew up in Istanbul and then moved to the U.S. at 24 years old, alone and afraid, but filled with a determination to build rockets and send her creations towards the stars. She has achieved this dream and much, much more. Thank you.

Introduction:

Inspired by Caramel (Lebanese film), Lissa (creative nonfiction/graphic novel set in

Egypt and the USA), and Wadjda (Saudi Arabian film), I felt drawn towards the creative ways

that academics and filmmakers have intertwined anthropology with art. For my final project for

Anthropology of the Middle East class, I read and contemplated three ethnographies that focused

on the notion of secularism and modernity in Turkey throughout the 20th century. Some of the

questions that recurred throughout my reading included: What does political nostalgia mean in

Turkey? Are one's religious beliefs commonly tied to their political leanings? Is there a general

sense of longing for a return to complete secularism in Turkey, and if so, is it still possible?

The objective of my final project is to explore an important anthropological question

through language, narrative, dialogue, and authentic (though fictional) characters inspired by

academic research. In my short story, I focused on two characters coming together from disparate

generations. These characters question the divides between longing and belonging, what it means

to be simultaneously modern and pious, the micropolitics of clothing in Turkey, and how

progressive liberalism might coincide or interfere with religious beliefs. My creative project

answers my research question through honing in and narrowing on the life of a fictional Turkish

family inhabiting Istanbul in the 1990s. These themes of familial tension and female liberation

were inspired by another story we were assigned and discussed in class—the film *Wadjda*. I

believe literature, like film, opens up perspectives and can be situated alongside anthropological

research in our understanding of certain moments and societal transformations. Also, I hope that

focusing on the individual within a culture could be crucial to learning more about and exploring the larger political/ideological movements occurring in this society.

In most countries, especially Western nations today, there is a growing force of separation of church and state. However, in Turkey in the late 1990s, there was a rise in political Islam that challenged (and continues to challenge) Kemalism—the official ideology of the Turkish Republic founded by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk in 1923, which supported freedom of religion while keeping Islam in a private sphere and outside of governmental impact. While analyzing three Turkish ethnographies and other related sources that we have read and discussed throughout our course, I sought out an investigation in my writing that asked several things such as: How does secularism vs. politicized religion in Turkey become transparent in citizens' daily practices, debates, and identity construction? Within the context of rising nationalism and a dominating Islamic culture, what is the purpose or function of nostalgia? And how do state ideologies penetrate private and intimate choices through micropolitics in addition to larger scale political movements?

In the three Turkish ethnographies I focused on, each author approached these notions of thought through different techniques. Professor Özyürek focused on the details that usually get skimmed over in newspapers, history textbooks, and political case studies. Her research-based narrative describes how Turkish citizens, especially octogenarians known as the first-generation Republicans, represented their affinity for Kemalism (and its West-oriented foundations) through the small things—how they organized their domestic space, decorated their walls, told their life stories, and interpreted political developments. These aesthetic preferences and behavioral habits add up as she analyzes the sum of Turkish culture to see which beliefs are found.

Through symbolism, interior design, memory, and anecdotes from people that have a longing for the past, Özyürek displays how state ideologies penetrate the smallest of choices as well as larger evolutionary political movements. Her book *Nostalgia for the Modern: State Secularism and Everyday Politics in Turkey* made me recall the first ethnography we read in class, *Return to Ruin: Iraqi Narrative of Exile and Nostalgia*, as both authors use memory to serve as a lens into society's future desires:

"Despite their gray hair, the first-generation Republicans who took active roles in public are still called children or daughters of the republic. This name refers to their association with the mythologized early Turkish Republic, itself as a child of the country's founding father... forever infantilizes an entire generation and by doing so points to unfulfilled expectations set in the 1930s toward the utopia of a fully modern and Westernized Turkey" (Özyürek 32).

In my creative piece, I was inspired by Özyürek's interview with Meliha, a self-proclaimed first-generation Republican, retired teacher, and proud widow of an influential bureaucrat of the regime: "Meliha's story offers a typical but also a somewhat exaggerated example of the way many first-generation Republicans carefully undermined any details that may be considered *özel* (private) or *kişisel* (personal)" (39). Özyürek summarizes their conversation and retells Meliha's anecdotes, then she examines the social construction of identity, religious orientation, and generational divide in Meliha's society and her era of adolescence. Meliha told Özyürek: "Radical Islamists say that Mustafa Kemal abolished religion. No, he did not. I am still alive, older than eighty years old. But, thank God, I have my mind still with me" (42). Meliha was a significant influence on the character of Esin (the mother) in my creative piece. Similarly, the father of my story was greatly shaped by the authentic longing for another time that many first-generation Republicans feel as Özyürek points out: "Cahit Kayra (2002), a retired high-level bureaucrat born in 1917, says in his autobiography, 'Dreams are

usually about the future. Mine are the other way around. I wish I were a member of the 1908

generation and had died in the 1930s'" (32).

On a similar topic, but using a slightly different strategy of narrative, Alev Çınar explores

secularism in comparison with politicized religion in Turkey through analyzing citizens' daily

practices, debates, and identity construction within the context of rising nationalism and a

dominating Islamic culture that combated the older generation's Western orientation. In her book

Modernity, Islam, and Secularism in Turkey: Bodies, Places, and Time, Çinar discusses veiling,

liberation, and how physical representations can coincide or diverge from internal belief systems.

I learned of this author while reading *A Society of Young Women* when Le Renard referenced an

idea of Çınar's that involved the Turkish public gaze.

The concepts of fashion choice and how clothing represents political beliefs, as

expounded by Çınar, greatly influenced the underlying, subliminal codes in my short story:

"Third, interventions related to bodies through dress codes and regulations always operate
through categories of gender, which turn the body into a political field upon which subjectivities
are created, political agency is generated, and hierarchies of power are institutionalized... Such
gendering interventions identify the female body with the nation and portray it as in need of
protection, emancipation, and tutelage by effective leadership and management" (Çınar 58).

Çınar's insightful points on the private and public sphere displayed through the female body

shaped my characters' thinking and especially impacted Deniz (the young woman and daughter)

who liberates herself through her Western fashion choices and claims that this is in line with the

first-generation Republicans' goals: "...What better means could the new secularist Turkish state

find to distance itself from the Ottoman than by projecting images of women 'emancipated' from

the confines of the harem having a vivid presence in the public sphere wearing Western

clothing?" (61). Additionally, the choice of tight clothing, Çınar explains, disrupts the act of

prayer and reinforces a state of secularism instead of traditional Islamic routines: "Arslan argues that when jeans are worn during prayer, their tightness forces the body to be involuntarily hasty in its movements, thereby creating tension and disrupting the tranquility of prayer" (56).

Finally, the third book took on another approach by telling the story of religious healers in Turkey and how they interact with or obstruct its secularism. When I first read the title and abstract, I was confused as to why these two subjects were in the same sentence but I became intrigued by their uncanny relationship. Christopher Dole writes: "The relationship between what can be said and who can be heard, between the visible and what can be imagined as possible, is at once a relationship of inclusion and political recognition" (93). He goes into depth and writes a hagiography of Zöhre Ana—a modern saint and Alevi woman who cured people miraculously but was often in trouble with the government, as she was arrested multiple times, then escaped from what should have been impossible situations. Overall, this ethnography contributed to my creative project, serving as background context and providing insightful information for my story, while focusing on neglected Turkish voices and practices forced into exile as well as those often forgotten in discussion by both Kemalist and Islamic parties. In doing so, Dole's ethnography traces the personal narratives of suffering and affliction and comments on the modern state of Turkey through a particular point of view.

Şükrü:

There was a saint I knew in my better days. As a young boy, I thought everyone across Anatolia had heard of her. She cured and healed and begged on her knees, then prayed for invisible beings. She talked to the ghosts of bones that had already lived and left our Empire. All of the neighbors whispered that she was a djinn, one of the good and God-fearing ones, but still a djinn. I didn't believe them.

My daughter insists I tell you the story. So I do, but I don't like this particular genre. The saint had a name that started with a 'P' and rhymed with 'cumin' or some other spice of sorts. I don't remember things as well as I used to. It was around the time of the *Hat Law*, late November of 1925, I suppose. And the Muslim men were outraged that their fezzes and turbans were being legally prohibited and replaced by, well, a silly British-styled top hat. The punishment for disobeying the law was the death penalty.

"Just watch. Tomorrow, I bet they'll expect me to pull a rabbit out of my head," my father said.

"Did you hear the news, Baba? A week ago, they protested. A group of Easterners in Erzurum pelted their governor's building with stones," my oldest brother said.

Like little Romeos, eh?"

"More like Mercutios. The soldiers fired into the crowd and killed three. Then, the assaulters were detained. They're meant to be executed, Baba. Thirteen of them. One of them is even a woman."

"A woman? No, you're mistaken."

"I swear. Hakan told me this today at the coffeehouse."

What kind of woman would lose her life for a man's fez?"

"It's not the fez, Baba. It's the right to choose your own destiny and respect Allah if you wish. No man can take that away, or should be able to."

That's when I left the living room, but I swear my brother and my father argued about it all night. The thing is that I believe I knew the woman. Or at least, she knew me. Three days before the event, I had a dream of a dark, long-haired girl who wore a white robe and beckoned me to her. She said she was about to die and needed my help. I thought she was an angel. And I listened.

"You're going to have a daughter, Şükrü. Her name will be Deniz. I need you to tell her about fighting for faith. Yes, it was wrong to use stones, and I begged my husband to throw flowers instead, but alas. They do not listen. Still, every man or woman should wear what they'd like without being killed for it. Fashion is more than a fez. Don't you think, Şükrü?"

Deniz:

14 December, 1994. Istanbul, Turkey.

I was walking home after the last prayer call before dark. A thought occurred to me that the Turkish government and the people's religion sat on either side of a pendulum in a place they used to call an Empire. (Now a footstool has stolen its name, a footstool upon which American businessmen and European philosophers cross their legs and rest upon after a hard day's night, pondering what happened to their great nation and their fine skin. Respectively.) During each decade, Istanbul swung back and forth from secular to scarved. That year, they'd turned mosques into museums and faith into a far-away memory.

"Come, sit, Deniz," Baba said.

He was laying in the green armchair that overlooked the front yard, which was just a brick wall. I left the loaf of fresh bread on the kitchen counter.

"How are you?" Baba said.

"Fine. Nervous."

"Niçin?" he asked in Turkish. *Why?*

"There's something that doesn't feel right today."

"Ah, caught the evil eye?" he said, half-laughing. He once had curly hair. It became wiry through warm winters and lengthening summers on the Mediterranean. He twirled the ends with his fingers while reading receipts.

"I don't know. Maybe. But I don't believe that anyway."

"Is it Yusuf? Did he say something? Did he say nothing?" he asked.

"No, Yusuf's fine. I'm not sure if it's someone or something."

"I know what you mean," he said. "It always happens to me on Wednesdays. I usually wish that I'd taken the chance to learn Russian in primary school. That way I could read one of those big, hard novels by Tolstoy or Dostoevsky or the one with the gun. In the born language. In their real tongue. They always seem to have the right words, correct answers up there. Poetry and math live together. In those books, they do."

"And that would solve it? A Russian sentence could save you?"

"Probably not. But I like to think it could. Deniz, don't ever let me learn Russian."

I remember those conversations well. Even in that old language. Sometimes I wonder if it'sall a false memory. I'm the only one who has it anymore. But almost all of life could be pinned to sharing a memory with the dead. So, we go on.

Through the plastic shutters, a pale light shone after he spoke. It was a windless afternoon. I couldn't help but think of the irony. He was dying in the living room. It would be years before it happened, but we all knew he'd lived his life as if he'd be gone by middle age. This was just the bonus level of a video game. You see, Baba stopped drawing after my little sister was born. He used to always sketch scenes from what he called his "past lives." I think he got the English translation wrong and really meant his "young life" but it was almost lovely—this sentiment that his youth was someone else's. He added stars to each scene even in mid-day. Sparkling miracles, he said, guiding men on camelbacks and women with vulnerable wishes. But on paper, they were just white dots with famous folktales attached to a Latin name. I didn't tell him so. He doodled sometimes but never really drew. That habit must have become a relic of his past life too.

Lazing away the evening, he used his fingers to count the profits and losses from his green chair. The light in the living room disappeared and came back a second later, as if it were trying to communicate something in morse code. Baba moved on to the next receipt laying on the coffee table and almost pulled out a strand of fine, gray hair.

Soon, my mother walked in, heading towards the kitchen, but first she stopped and scoffed, presumably, at my outfit. She told me once I had too much of a tendency to want to be seen. On the days I felt slender and less purple-eyed than normal, I walked Istanbul for hours. Waiting for cars to slow and chauffeurs to gaze. I used to wear tight denim jeans and squares of fabric bought from online stores. They called them crop-tops. My mother would have called it laceless lingerie. She yelled at me and warned that I was going to get myself raped or arrested by the Turkish government. But I told her to read the newspapers. This is what her generation wanted now—for me to dress like Rachel Green from that show with the laugh track and no subtitles. Social equality, or publicizing the private sphere, they taught us. Like those dreams in America. Like those underground political tunnels dug out from above. But, my mother never understood that I showed my belly button and tangled hair for the principle of democracy.

"It's called secularization, An-nay," I said. "We're turning into the West."

"You're staying right here. No West for you."

"Ah, Esin. Let the girl wear what she wants," Baba said. "Fashion is more than a fez." Then, he looked at me and winked.

I think my mother must've missed the memo about Kemalism. She was old, but too young for the first-generation Republicans, born the day after The Hat Law of 1925 was passed.

Anyway, I was convinced my parents had a tragedy of their own. They made me think I was pre-ordained to be flawed because I wasn't the product of true love. I felt them wake up in the morning. Watched them in the middle of the afternoon. Heard their silence in the early evening. Already asleep. They couldn't end the day fast enough. Both were in bed before the sun finished setting. They were strangers who shared a last name and a chronic disease. Arranged in a marriage when they were teenagers.

I used to think it was pain of memory, but over the years, I noticed their anxiety towards a changing future and their agony over the stable, unchanging present. It was a catch-22. I called it *timesickness*. Undiagnosable, but more contagious than the flu. It was so hard to sleep next door to them. I could feel it crawling through the walls, seeping into the insulation, then onto my posters and pencils, making its way towards my bed. It would pull me apart eventually. I had recurring dreams of infection and a clock's hands that tickled before they ticked. By the time I was 16, the disease had crept into my lungs. *Timesickness*. It was as subtle as an end-of-Autumn cough.

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Queering Homosexuality: How Middle Eastern Subjects Counter Orientalist Tropes by Redefining Queerness

Loy Prussack

Western conceptions of homosexuality in the Middle East have been informed by imperialist and inaccurate understandings of "queerness" in the Orient. This paper provides an application of Edward Said's theory and practice of Orientalism to explain how homosexuality in the East has been framed in relation to and independently from the West. The author explores themes including fractal Orientalism, pinkwashing, and homonationalism through an examination of queerness in Beirut and Palestine. It is concluded that "queer" is an intersectional identity, a strategy, and non-normative description that may be invoked to respond to a variety of people and situations across space and time in the Middle East.

Author's Biography:
Loy Prussack is a junior at Scripps College majoring in anthropology and minoring in math. She is from Burlington, Vermont but much prefers the California climate. Loy enjoys books, the beach, and her cats. Her "Queer Science" and "Anthropology of the Middle East" classes simultaneously inspired this essay, and she hopes to pursue further learning in both disciplines.

Oftentimes, homosexuality is thought to be a Western phenomenon that is not accepted, and unnecessary, in regions of the world that are not as "developed" or "modern" as Europe and the United States. Construction of homosexuality as a Western concept stems from Orientalist tropes that Edward Said developed in *Orientalism;* the work delineates Western views of the East (the Orient). Orientalism, at the most basic level, describes how Western ideas of the East are developed in relation to the West and are essentialized to create a rigidly homogenous and intelligible – to the West – portrayal of all regions in the "Orient." Importantly, this construction of the Orient is static, leaving no room for "modern" developments – such as ideas of homosexuality. This essay will draw on the work of three queer anthropologists from the Middle East who examine queer subjects in Palestine and Lebanon (specifically Beirut). Their work demonstrates how homosexuality is present in regions of the Orient and has been constructed both in relation to and independently of Western concepts of queerness. The three ethnographies that I will compare are *Disruptive Situations* by Ghassan Moussawi, *Queer Beirut* by Sofian Merabet, and *Queer Palestine and the Empire of Critique* by Sa'ed Atshan. The first two ethnographies are centered around fieldwork in Beirut, with Merabet focusing on gay men, and Ghassan portraying the lives of female, nonbinary, and gender-nonconforming queer subjects. Atshan's ethnography focuses on queer Palestinians in general, centering queer groups and portrayals of queerness and queer activism in Western academia. Within these texts, *queer* does not just mean gay or gender-nonconforming; it is also employed by the authors to reference differences and disruptive acts. Further, *queer* is defined within each context and in intersection with other aspects of identity, situating all the texts within Middle Eastern studies and indicating the importance of race, class, religion, and gender-presentation in defining queer identities. In this essay, I will explore main themes within the ethnographies, elaborating on the

predominant theories employed by each author and demonstrating how these differing approaches can be used in conjunction with one another to better understand all three texts.

The first theme that I will explore is fractal Orientalism. Proposed by Moussawi, fractal Orientalism builds on Said's Orientalism by structuring layers of comparison rather than solely East versus West. In *Disruptive Situations,* Moussawi explains how Beirut is seen as more modern than Lebanon, Lebanon as more modern than the rest of the Middle East, and the Middle East as less modern than the West. Fractals display how binaries perpetuated in Orientalism "simultaneously operate on global, regional, and local scales" (Moussawi 8). Furthermore, this tri-part system with Beirut at its center challenges objective notions of modernity and development that are often employed by Western academics, helping explain how, in Western portrayals, places in the Middle East can exist both as exotic tourist destinations and as backwards, war-torn regions of terror. Before the Lebanese civil war began in 1975, Beirut was referenced as the "Paris of the Middle East" (2); post-civil war, Beirut is now the "Provincetown of the Middle East" (7). Both labels acknowledge Beirut as a desirable city to visit while reinforcing Orientalism by defining Beirut in reference to the city's Western "equivalent." They attempt to "exceptionalize" Beirut, to paint it as more modern and thus more desirable than other places in Lebanon and other cities in the Middle East, while still failing to depict it independently of its similarities to places that are more comprehensible in the West. Thus, these labels help demonstrate the importance of fractal Orientalism by showing how Beirut is only exceptional in its distinctness from other Middle Eastern cities and simultaneous inability to exist as a tourist spot independently of Western desires.

Moussawi's theoretical invention also lends itself to analyses of Palestine, complementing the idea of "pinkwashing" discussed by Atshan in *Queer Palestine.*

Pinkwashing is defined by queer Palestinian activists and allies as "drawing attention to a purportedly advanced LGBTQ rights record in Israel in order to detract attention from Israel's violations of Palestinian human rights" (Atshan 72). Pinkwashing is a tool utilized by the Israeli government to justify Israeli occupation of Palestine under the guise of bringing modernized ideas of homosexuality to counter Palestinian (and Muslim) backwardness. Here, Palestine is painted as the antithesis of modern Israeli values, while Israel has relations with, but is still not equal to, Europe and the US. Thus, to better understand pinkwashing logic we can apply fractal Orientalism to this bilayer phenomenon. As discussed by Atshan, pinkwashing relies on the dismissal of queer Palestinian subjectivity, which is replaced by the idea that all Palestinians are homophobic, an exaggerated portrayal of queer Israeli subjectivity which dismisses Israeli homophobia towards Israelis and Palestinians alike (72). Thus, Israel, like Beirut, appears as an exceptional region in the Middle East because of its fractal relation to Palestine. However, while the Beirut fractal is seen as backwards compared to the West, the US and parts of Europe strategically allow Israel to exist as a part of the West rather than as a separate fractal. The US funds Israeli apartheid and helps enforce ideas of Palestinian backwardness to maintain an ally in the Middle East, while at the same time ensuring that Israel remains a region in the Middle East (in the Orient rather than in the West). Thus, Israel exists as a sort of shifting fractal, both as a link between Palestine and the US and as a place entirely distinct from the rest of the Middle East.

Another facet of fractal Orientalism that aids our understanding of Israeli exceptionalism is homonationalism. As stated by Atshan in *Queer Palestine*, homonationalism refers to "the linkage between a country's treatment of homosexuals and its moral-civilizational value" (197). Contained within this theory is the idea that the way a country treats

non-heteronormative subjects can be discussed distinct from the country's political and social

contexts. Homonationalism negates intersectionality and instead uses the treatment of queer

subjects to gauge how socially advanced – or modern – a country is by a strict binary. When

Israel commits acts of pinkwashing – such as by organizing LGBTQ Birthright trips with the

usual IDF solider tour guides replaced by queer IDF soldiers – the state creates an exceptional

image of itself and its government (77). These acts of pinkwashing in particular fit into fractal

Orientalism as Birthright trips are meant for Jewish North American youth (76). By equating

Israeli politics with Western notions of LGBTQ inclusivity for the sake of appealing to Western

youth, Israel again appears as a shifting fractal in its relation to Palestine and the West. It

simultaneously enforces homonationalism – and thus Orientalist tropes – by demonstrating its

modernity in terms of its queer acceptance while doing so through the military institution it uses

to occupy Palestinian land. Furthermore, the Israeli government intentionally promotes these

instances of queer acceptance to contrast Palestinian homophobia and again make Israel the

more modern fractal that Palestine is compared against.

Returning to the concept of intersectionality, this method of using queer IDF soldiers to

represent Israeli queerness negates all other aspects of queer subjectivity. For example, "the

Israeli government has articulated its explicit rejection of asylum cases from gay Palestinians,"

stating that these cases do not pose any life-threatening risks to the asylum-seeking Palestinians

(102). Israeli queerness cannot be essentialized when it does not even include queer Palestinians;

Israel, however, purposefully focuses on the queer Palestinians who do make it to Israel in order

to show how it is a safe haven for queer subjects (99). Again, Israel ignores the political context

that forces queer Palestinians to go to Israel. As explained in a quote by activist Ashley Bohrer

included in *Queer Palestine*, "the dismantling of economic stability and opportunity inside

Palestine forces LGBT Palestinians to leave their homes," from which they go to Israel to be undocumented workers facing harassment, discrimination, and poor living conditions (100). Finally, the tokenized queer IDF soldiers themselves face harassment for their sexuality, "with rates of abuse against gay soldiers reaching 40 percent" in 2011 (86). Israel's fractal orientation and its manipulation of homonationalism allows the state to enhance its modern connections with the West while continuing an occupation that directly harms the queer subjects it pretends to protect.

Beiruti exceptionalism can also be examined alongside the ideas of homonationalism and intersectionality. Considered the "gay tourist destination of the Middle East," it is obvious that Beirut's apparent modernity in the eyes of the West is connected to its prevalent queer culture. This notion, however, glosses over all queer subjects who do not have access to the same gay culture as gender-conforming upper-class Beiruti men and foreign tourists. Like homonationalism in Israel, it also ignores the lived experiences of queer subjects who have been directly affected by homophobia in Beirut. One example presented in *Queer Beirut* of this institutional homophobia again involves the military. Georgette, a gay drag queen who acted as one of Merabet's interlocutors, recounts his experience getting a physical assessment at the Fayāḍiyyeh army barracks (the headquarters of the Lebanese army) (Merabet 36). Even without makeup, Georgette was effeminate and thus assumed to be gay by his doctor. Upon walking into the consulting room, Georgette was met with a response of "You are a f*ggot, right?!" (38). In the cruel and demoralizing "assessment" that followed, Georgette's rectum was inappropriately touched and a rotten egg was forced between his buttocks and left there to crack; Georgette was then told he was excluded from military service (39). While such explicit instances of homophobia must be considered in discussions of queer life in the Middle East, it

is also important to examine the intersections of this example and others with additional aspects of identity. In Georgette's case, his gender presentation specifically led to this event; he may have been perceived as heteronormative had he been a masculine gay man. *Disruptive Situations* focuses on various such instances as well, highlighting the importance of subjects who are queer in ways other than their sexuality in examing the supposed modernity of a place. Many of Moussawi's interlocutors discuss the importance of class in accessing queer space, citing how race and religion play important roles in determining class and thus how one experiences queer subjectivity. Overall, Beirut is considered a more modern fractal of the Middle East, but its supposedly modern spaces are not equally accessible to all (queer) subjects, and thus homonationalism again fails as a method of determining a place's "modernity."

To further examine the idea of gay tourism proposed in the previous paragraph, I will first turn to the concept of the "gay international" discussed in *Queer Palestine.* This term comes from Joseph Massad, a professor of Modern Arab Politics and Intellectual History of the Middle East, and refers to the idea that homosexuality is a Western construct imposed through imperial methods on non-Western societies (Atshan 188). The "gay international" literally refers to the flow of people and ideas that are carried from the West to the "Orient," to be imposed upon countries as part of a greater colonial project. Included in this concept is the idea that queer Arabs do not identify as LGBTQ+ but rather just see themselves as participating in same-sex acts (there are no labels); those that do label themselves come from middle- and upper-class backgrounds and have connections to the West (187). Firstly, as acknowledged in *Queer Palestine,* there is some truth within Massad's critique, including the fact that Western concepts of labels and queerness are co-opted to defend imperial projects (thinking back to how Israel uses Palestine's "lack" of queerness in a Western sense to justify occupation) (188). However, at

its roots, the idea of the "gay international" further enforces Orientalist tropes, by constructing queerness – and through it, modernity – as a solely Western concept incapable of existing in, or being created by, the Orient. Furthermore, accusing queer subjects, specifically those who choose to identify with labels, of being influenced by imperialism denies these subjects their right to self-determination and fails to acknowledge that queerness does not just manifest in the form of same-sex acts. These concepts and their conflicting implications within the "gay international" are vital in understanding the success of gay tourism in the Middle East and its effects on local queer subjectivities.

In Beirut, the gay tourism industry facilitates the commodification of queer bodies to exceptionalize the city and make it a desirable destination for (inter)national travelers. Importantly, the city is considered – by the West – as a place for gay men to visit, and thus anyone who is not a gay man is not directly considered when imagining Beirut's queer "scene" (Moussawi 44). The main desired subjects of tourists are masculine "third-world gay men," referred to as "bears" (45). The International Gay and Lesbian Travel Association (IGLTA), a group that facilitates much of Beirut's international tourism, promises travelers that they will get to adventure with gay bear groups and "hear the bears… roar" (45). While this hypermasculinization seems to counter the femininity (and its negative connotations) often associated with queer men, it is meant to portray an exotic, racialized, and dehumanizing depiction of Beiruti gay men. The IGLTA website promises tourists that they will get to "discover" these attractive men (bears), who, as "third-world" subjects, are meant to be "encountered in the local geography" to fulfill the "colonialist fantasy" of wealthy, white tourists (Alexander 85, from Moussawi). An example of Orientalist tropes, these methods used to promote gay tourism in Beirut enforce racist ideology and toxic masculinities, while glossing

over – or overtly excluding – the majority of the local queer community. Returning to the "gay international," tourists view themselves as bringing modernity and progress – in the form of overt queerness – to the supposedly closeted and progressively behind Beirut queer community (Moussawi 44). With a perpetual misunderstanding of how queerness operates outside of the West, these tourists enforce Orientalism through their acts of "saviorism" and are supported by tourist organizations who hope to profit from these misconceptions of Beiruti subjectivities.

As mentioned in the previous paragraph, one view incited by Orientalism is that Beiruti – and other Middle Eastern – queer communities are not as modern because subjects do not comply with traditional Western standards of "outness" (being openly queer). Looking through the lens of the "gay international," being "out" would be a Western concept unnecessary for, and unwanted by, queer subjects in the Middle East. For foreign travelers, the idea that queer Beirutis are not (able to be) open about their sexuality is vital in creating savior complexes that rely on Orientalism. Explored in depth in *Disruptive Situations*, the realities surrounding notions of "outness" and the act of "coming out" fall somewhere amidst these theories, both relying on and challenging Western ideas. Moussawi explains how many of his interlocutors question the Western notion that coming out is the only way to "feel liberated and true to oneself," as this description does not "capture their lived experiences" (96). For example, various people stress the importance of maintaining familial/relational networks, and explain how by explicitly sharing queer identity, one risks losing these support systems; however, many of these people express their queerness in other contexts, such as in queer activist spaces (96). Yasmine, one interlocutor, discusses how she does not want to "box" herself into a pre-defined LGBTQ identity, and thus she inhabits a "nonbox" in which there is space for her "various performances and practices" (87). These acts of selective outing and nonboxing challenge binary Western

ideas of coming out, demonstrating how one does not need to be entirely "out" in order to accept their queer identity and embrace "progressive" queerness (84). Moussawi also discusses "narratives of reconciliation" when considering outness, which refers to "the claim that queer individuals, mostly from the Global South, must reconcile their culture and often their religion with their sexuality" (82). This idea relies on Orientalism, which assumes that everyone in the Middle East is Muslim and that queerness and Islam are mutually exclusive (82); thus, all queer subjects in the Middle East must grapple with their religion not supporting their sexuality. To combat this idea is the example of Rabab, a bigender individual who stopped wearing a hijab after receiving top surgery (76). Rabab explains how she was "congratulated" after removing her hijab, as people saw this as a sign of "liberation" that allowed her to be "more legitimately queer" (76). In reality, Rabab only removed the hijab because it marked her as a woman; the assumptions associated with her action demonstrate how Orientalism fails to support an overlap of Islam and queer/feminine freedom, even though they actively co-exist within various subjects.

This idea of "narratives of reconciliation" is present in the lives of queer Palestinians as well, as they face tensions between their culture, religion, and non-heteronormative identities. Atshan investigates how queer Palestinian (activists) must decide how much to discuss the "very real violence, threats, and intimidation that many queer Palestinians face from their society and families if their sexuality is discovered" without perpetuating backwards stereotypes about Palestinian society (Atshan 36). As queer Palestinians risk losing their family, homes, and jobs, and even face death threats when sharing their identity, the situation is sometimes more severe than that of queer Beirutis. This overwhelming narrative, however, does not mean that all Palestinians are forced to choose between queerness and leading a fulfilling life. Some adopt

queer strategy – that is, a different approach – to navigating their lives, by marrying another queer person of the opposite gender (a gay man marrying a lesbian woman) (35). How these relationships play out, particularly in terms of monogamy, varies from couple to couple, but they allow queer Palestinians to simultaenously conform to the expectations of their family and society while not letting go of their queer identity. Importantly, it is impossible to fully counter Palestinian homophobia while under Israli occupation, as there cannot be freedom for queer Palestinians while there is no freedom for any Palestinian (39). This leads to another act of reconciliation discussed in *Queer Palestine*: how some local activists and many Western academics believe that the Palestinian liberation movement and the queer (Palestinian) freedom movement are mutually exclusive, while many queer Palestinian activists believe the two movements are synonymous. Activists and academics who do not see the importance in the queer liberation movement argue that it takes away from the overall Palestinian freedom movement and that "Zionist colonialism must be tackled" before queer rights are addresseed (59). Certain activists argue the opposite, that combating homophobia takes precedence over challenging Israeli occupation. Both of these stances ignore the fact that "national and sexual struggles cannot be disentangled" (59); these two fights cannot – and should not – be reconciled with one another. As one queer Palestinian collective writes, "we must also question the logic of 'gay rights' as it is commonly understood and practiced— a single-axis politics based on one's sexual identity to the exclusion of other interconnected injustices based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, and other markers of difference" (54). Attempts at decoupling the Palestinian and queer liberation movements negates the existence of all intersecting queer identities, and discounts the queer strategies that non-heteronormative subjects take up to challenge homophobia and occupation in Palestine.

To follow the theme of strategy, I will turn again to Moussawi whose book title includes a subsection titled "Queer Strategies in Beirut." Throughout *Disruptive Situations,* Moussawi refers to "al-wad'," an Arabic term meaning "the situation." Moussawi uses this term to refer to the constant state of uncertainty and disruptiveness that subjects experience living in a place of everyday war such as Beirut (Moussawi 5). While I will not describe al-wad' in depth, as it takes an entire ethnography to encapsulate it, it is important for understanding how subjects adopt queer strategies to respond to a "queer situation." Some are similar to the strategies of queer Palestinians, who are also in a queer situation under occupation, living in a constant state of violence and uncertainty. While many queer strategies are detailed by Moussawi, I will focus on gendered strategies, already shown previously through the example of Rabab. Rabab's choice to remove her hijab is not queer just because she is queer, but because it disrupts – queers – both local and Western understandings of Lebanese gender presentation. Another example is Randa, a genderqueer individual who opposes "normative Lebanese femininity" through the use of "different" clothes and hairstyles in creating her gender presentation (97). Even though these choices make Randa more visible – thinking back to the idea of selective outing – Randa states that her "strength and resilience" stem from her gender non-normativity (99). Thus Randa adapts to the disruptive situation of al-wad' by disrupting norms herself.

Gendered strategies are also discussed in depth in *Queer Beirut*, as Merabet notes the important distinctions between masculine and feminine men. As the ethnography focuses solely on gay men, one important theme that arises is the role of the penetrator versus the penetrated. Men who penetrate other men may be perceived as "less queer" because they still conform to the heteronormative notion of intercourse in which the man is inside of the person on the "receiving"

end. Gay men who are penetrated, however, reveal themselves as queer because they are on the receiving – and thus traditionally feminine – side of sex (Merabet 44). This attribution of femininity (and weakness) to gay men affects how various subjects express their queerness. Young and social Hadi, for example, conforms to the idea that gay men are feminine to begin a career as a belly dancer, drawing on movements from drag (132). Before reaching greater fame and success, Hadi also manipulates his queer identity to engage in sexual acts with various men in order to live in their homes for free (128). Many other men are wary of such open and feminine modes of expression, and choose, even in known queer spaces, to present themselves as masculine, heteronormative subjects. In analyzing why Hadi chooses to engage his queer identity so differently from other men, it is necessary to note that at this point he had cut all ties with his family (or them with him), showing how Hadi ignores narratives of reconciliation and chooses his queerness, and how external aspects affect queer identity. Finally, *Queer Beirut* outlines an additional queer strategy that parallels the ideas of mutual liberation in *Queer Palestine*. During the 2003 US invasion of Iraq, various protests arose throughout the Middle East, many of which Hadi himself attended (235). One notable occurrence at these protests was the presence of rainbow signs with the words "out against the war" written across them, a slogan picked up as a chant by many non-queer protestors who simply understood it as a statement against the US invasion (235). These events further demonstrate the importance of mutual solidarity in queer liberation movements and in resisting imperialism in the Middle East.

To conclude, I will turn to the theme of space present in all three texts. In *Disruptive Situations*, Moussawi explains the idea of "bubbles," which are temporary places or spaces in which people can partially retreat from al-wad', alone or with other queer individuals (Moussawi 136). The invention of these often non-tangible and impermanent spaces results from a lack of

visible community, or inadequacy in what any existing community can provide. Bubbles are not immune from the permeating social hierarchies within Beirut (and al-wad') and are not accessible for all queer subjects (138). They are in-between spaces – suspended between everyday life and the disruption of al-wad' – while simultaneously acting simply *as* space, when one considers how al-wad' just is everyday life. *Queer Beirut* provides concrete examples of such spaces without explicitly drawing on the theory of bubbles. Firstly, Merabet challenges the use of "community" in describing the queer "sphere" – how he refers to queer spaces – citing how it assumes that gay men are part of a "somehow coherent and comprehending group of individuals," when in reality they form nothing close to an "uncontested social entity" (Merabet 113). Rather, queer men who relate to their identity in a multitude of ways come together in certain places that become implicitly marked as gay, including cafes, strips of beach, and areas around the urbanized "downtown." One of these near-downtown spaces is a staircase, attracting young gay men who come together to flirt, gossip, and show off their (fake) designer clothing (alluding to the importance of class distinctions) (63). Like bubbles, the staircase is an in-between space, situated away from "outside social criticism" but not quite within the safety of the expensive downtown cafes where many wealthier queer men create space (64). Finally, in *Queer Palestine,* Atshan discusses queer space through two queer Palestinian activists groups, Aswat and Al-Qaws. Aswat is a designated space for queer (including trans and intersex) women to discuss their struggles "as a national indigenous minority living inside Israel; as women in a patriarchal society; and as LBTQI women in a wider hetero-normative culture;" Al-Qaws welcomes all queer individuals and has similar goals to those of Aswat (Atshan 46). More concrete than bubbles, these groups are examples of organized queer spaces. Importantly, their work heavily relies on foreign aid (47), emphasizing the importance of not just cross-movement

but also international solidarity in the success of queer and/or Palestinian liberation.

None of these spaces exist isolated from their social, political, and location-based contexts, and thus all are impacted by hierarchies and distinctions based on all aspects of identity, including queerness. Therefore, Beiruti and Palestinian notions of queerness are more complex than Western and Oriental perceptions of queerness in the East. "Queer" is an intersectional identity, a strategy, and a non-normative description manipulated by various subjects to respond to queer situations perpetuated by imperialism. In order to achieve queer liberation, activist and solidarity movements – both internal and international – must join the overarching fight to counter and overthrow imperialist thinking patterns about the humans who make up a dynamic Middle East.

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Education as a Tool of Resistance During the First Intifada: The Rise and Fall of Popular Schooling

Kathryn Thomason

At the peak of socio-ethnic tensions in the Israel-Palestine region in 1987, the Israeli government turned to radical, and often controversial, forms of oppression in order to quash the growing resistance. These acts often worked to the opposite of their intentions, insulating Palestinian communities instead of isolating them and forging bonds instead of breaking them. However, the suspension of all formal school settings still posed a special challenge for young children and their parents as they lost precious time in the classroom, something usually associated with years of sequential deficits. In this paper, Thomason outlines how school closures during the first intifada impacted educational culture in Israeli-occupied Palestine.

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The project of Jewish settler-colonialism in Palestine is carried out through physical, material, and ideological apparatuses, which attempt to both manufacture consent and forcibly produce compliance in the Palestinian Arab population. Education has a particularly contested and important role to play in the Palestinian struggle against Israeli dominance, as it has been wielded both as a tool of Israeli settler-colonialism and a tool of Palestinian resistance. In regards to the former, Israel has attempted to make education a realm of surveillance and control through which the state of Israel monitors and influences Palestinian views. Since 1948, Israeli officials have clashed over the appropriate way of educating Palestinians, with debate raging over whether an Israeli-educated Arab Palestinian population would be easier to control than an uneducated one. Some Israeli officials advocated for providing education that furthers the "intellectual captivation" of Palestinians as a means of "efficient, benign, and enduring" social control— using Arab teachers that were heavily screened and monitored, and teaching from Israeli-approved textbooks that omit Palestinian history and culture. However, education has also been critical to Palestinian resistance, providing grounding from which personal and group identity—and thus organizing—formed and practiced. In this paper I examine Israeli repression and Palestinian reclaimation of education during the first intifada in order to argue that school closures functioned as a double-edged sword that both harmed Palestinian resistance and promoted long-absent Palestinian agency over education.

During the first mass Palestinian intifada against Israeli control, spanning from 1987 to 1993, Israel mandated mass closures of Palestinian schools. Such closures came after 500 years of official Palestinian education being controlled by outsiders—first by the Ottoman Turks (1517-17), then by the British (1917-48), Egyptians and Jordanians, (1948-67) and finally by Israel. Specifically, education in the West Bank and Gaza fell under the jurisdiction of the Israeli

Civil Administration, the entity in charge of services and civil matters for Palestinians. Palestinian schools since 1967 were characterized by Israeli neglect— subject to overcrowding, poor facilities, and limited supplies. Teachers were unable to develop modern, relevant pedagogies, and instead were forced to follow Israeli-approved Jordanian curriculum (West Bank) and Egyptian curriculum (Gaza). Israel controlled private schools, United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) schools for refugees, and government-affiliated schools, over which they had complete power to hire and fire teachers, and manage students, holidays, budgets, and salaries.

All curriculum was altered or produced to fit Israel's political needs, meaning that Palestinian history and culture was not taught to Palestinian students. Furthermore, Israel maintained a close eye on Arab teachers moving through Israeli-run teacher training colleges. Potential teachers were heavily screened and surveilled by Israeli officials, and often would only receive teaching positions upon graduation if they were deemed loyal enough to Israel and nonthreatening to the sociopolitical order. As teaching was one of the few white-collar jobs available to Palestinians, many were forced to comply with Israeli rule— at least outwardly— in order to be able to make a living. Teachers and students both were banned by law from unionizing, at risk of punishment by exile or imprisonment. Armed Israeli raids of Palestinian schools were common, as were sporadic closures that extended the amount of time it took for Palestinians to complete primary, secondary, and/or higher education by many years.

It was amidst these dismal conditions of Israeli-controlled Palestinian schooling that the first intifada began.The killing of four Palestinians by what is thought to be an Israeli military vehicle on December 9th, 1987 at a checkpoint in the Gaza Strip, followed by the subsequent killing of a young Palestinian man by an Israeli soldier at a protest sparked mass displays of

Palestinian civil disobedience and collective struggle against Israeli rule. What followed were mass displays of Palestinian civil disobedience and collective struggle against Israeli rule. Palestinians refused to pay taxes, boycott Israeli goods, arranged confrontations and strikes, and protested in the streets, unarmed or armed with rocks in the face of Israeli oppression. In the absence of official or elected leadership, Palestinians turned to informal committees and local guidance that distributed pamphlets and leaflets throughout neighborhoods to coordinate collective actions.This informal and grassroots leadership structure allowed for women and Palestinians of low social standing to participate heavily in political organizing. Such committees provided childcare, food, protection, and support for one another, understanding that the key to successful Palestinian resistance against powerful and well-funded Israeli military and statecraft was to be as united as possible across lines of gender and class. To quell mass civil disobedience, Israel turned to collective punishment against Palestinians, imposing curfews, mass arrests, blockades, and, most pertinently to this paper, mass closures of Palestinian schools.

School closures caused a massive loss of total school days during the first intifada. Scholar Yamila Hussein writes that during the uprising, "Palestinian schools were allowed to convene for as little as 17% and no more than 50% of their school year" (Hussein, 19). Hussein

Israel maintained that such school closures were a response to Palestinian violence. The Israeli Civil Administration described schools as "centers of violent protest," and Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin stated that Israel would close schools "which have ceased to fulfill their function as educational institutions and which have been consistent in allowing their children out into the street". Israeli officials gave no clear reason behind why distance learning could not replace in-person business-as-usual classes, stating simply that such learning would violate the same military order that closed schools to begin with.

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also argues that Israel primarily used two strategies for the closure of Palestinian schools during this time—selective and collective closures. The former was used in Gaza, and closed all schools in the area for definite periods of time, while the latter at specific schools for indefinite periods. Collective closure, largely used in the West Bank, shut down all schools in one area for extensive amounts of time, from primary schools to universities. Closures could last days, weeks, months, or longer. Sometimes, closed schools were sites of Israeli military occupation; by the end of the intifada, Israel had turned over 40 schools into military bases, where soldiers looted the school of supplies and converted them into training spaces. In East Jerusalem, Israeli-run schools serving Palestinian pupils were collectively closed by the Israeli police. Hussein writes that Palestinians viewed the closures as a part of a policy of "*ignorization*," which aimed at destroying their culture's academic capacities. The closure of educational institutions was perceived as collective punishment that impeded learning, depleted the community's intellectual resources, and asserted Israeli control" (Hussein 19). The closures were also an attempt to force Palestinians to choose between continued resistance to Israeli occupation, at the price of closed schools, or accepting occupation in exchange for the education of their children. Hussein writes that school closures were especially devastating to Palestinians due to the high cultural value placed upon education as well as its potential to nurture Palestinian resistance.

However, the closure of schools sparked several reactions from Palestinians: first, the withdrawal of Israel from the realm of education, where it had exerted near-total dominance for the last twenty years, allowed Palestinians to claim some autonomy at last over the form and function of education for their young people, and opening up space for possible change in the realm of Palestinian education. Second, it provided another target for Palestinian organizing and acts of civil disobedience. These took the form of direct confrontations, school break-ins, sit-ins,

and campaigns to raise global support for the reopening of Palestinian schools. After a while, the strategy of direct confrontation to combat school closures was dropped as the amount of Palestinian youth killed or wounded by Israeli forces climbed. Thus, organizing aiming to provide independent Palestinian-run alternative schools during the intifada became the primary response to Israeli school closures.

At the same time, alternative schooling was also provided by the UNRWA, which was quite different from popular education organized by Palestinians. Despite their differences, Hussein argues that both types of alternative education functioned to support "the intifada's objectives of total disengagement from Israeli-controlled systems"(Hussein 20). In 1990, Palestinian scholars Mahshi and Bush wrote, "the greatest challenge of the occupation and the intifadeh is to discard years of occupation education and start afresh" (Mahashi and Bush 475). It was this lens that teachers, parents, and other members of Palestinian society set out to develop alternative forms of schooling that would instill a distinct Palestinian identity, pride, and political orientation into students. Thus, Palestinian alternative schooling was an integral part of the intifada, both as the result of the struggle and a key facet of building and expressing independent and community-run alternatives to Israeli control over Palestinian lives.

Schools for refugee students run by the UNRWA struggled to respond to school closures. In the spring of 1988, when it became clear that school closures were going to persist for a long stretch of time, the UNRWA edited and streamlined its curriculum in the hopes that students would be able to learn the most important lessons at home. Using the same textbooks as always, teachers created worksheets to distribute to students, but this method of distance learning was largely unsuccessful since student participation was essentially voluntary, and there was no face-to-face contact between teacher and student. The UNRWA proposed using Egyptian and

Jordinian television and radio to help facilitate distance learning, but this plan was flawed due to the lack of Palestinian control over radio and television stations in these neighboring communities. Using Israeli air and television waves was, of course, out of the question.

The Israeli Civil Administration, predictably, did little to ensure that learning continued after government-run schools for Palestinians were shut down. Indeed, Palestinian teachers of government schools were docked pay or forced to go on completely unpaid leave. Unlike UNRWA and private schools, teachers at public schools were outright banned from engaging in any attempts to remotely teach their students. In April of 1988, all teachers in and around Ramallah were called to a meeting with the Civil Administration who warned them that attempts to continue providing education amidst the school closures were illegal and would be grounds for firing. Nonetheless, many teachers continued to teach, albeit clandestinely.

Private schools were more able than government or UNRWA-run schools to provide students with home-learning materials. After closures, some private schools immediately began instructing teachers on how to best write self-study packets to be distributed to students, complete with learning objectives, activities, assignments, self-evaluation tests, and exercises. For older students, of middle and high school age, such packets worked relatively well as long as they were frequently turned back in to teachers for feedback and comments. Younger students still learning to read and write, of course, did not fare so well with independent learning materials, especially given that many parents were unable to provide supplemental home teaching due to work, resistance activities, and other conflicts. Furthermore, Israeli military officials quickly deemed such packets to be in violation of the school closure order. This forced private and UNRWA schools to distribute and collect educational materials under the military's

radar, which was difficult; in one instance, Israeli soldiers entered one private school in the West Bank to physically stop the packets from being distributed.

As the intifada continued, Palestinians, coordinated by the United National Leadership of the Uprising, created independent structures that allowed them to boycott the Israeli Civil Administration. Popular Committees were established to provide a wide range of community services, including education. As at-home schooling connected to the UNRWA and private schools was insufficient, and children previously enrolled in government schools had virtually no ability to learn, popular committees began to organize neighborhood schools that conducted lessons in houses, mosques, churches, gardens, clubs— anywhere that provided some shelter from the gaze of Israeli officials. Any member of the community with some level of free time and education was welcomed to teach. Usually, parents stepped into this role, although sometimes older students in high school or college taught younger ones. This popular education, as it was called, emerged in communities all over the West Bank and Gaza. At first, such education was conceptualized as a temporary solution to the problem of school closures, and as such, was not unified across different neighborhoods nor steered in a common direction. However, as the intifada wore on and it became clear that life was not returning to normal anytime soon, the need for a more unified system of popular education became clear.

After only a few short months of Palestinian popular education, however, the Israeli authorities outlawed all popular committees, including educational ones. Any person deemed to be a member of a popular committee could face up to ten years in Israeli prisons. This order was enforced by occasional army raids of neighborhood schools and gathering-places. To further disrupt Palestinian popular education, Israeli officials adopted the strategy of sporadically reopening schools only to close them again, in order to compel Palestinian organizers to believe

that perhaps all their efforts to organize alternative schooling were not needed, as schooling would return to normal soon. All together, this pushed the Palestinian popular eduction movement underground; nonetheless, classes were subjected to constant interruption and harassment.

These underground classrooms were sometimes administered by leaders in the local town or broader community through a supervising committee. Under such arrangements, teachers (or those acting as teachers) within a single town would share curriculum and try to sync lesson pacing with each other. Often, teachers would meet with one another to share information and lessons. In neighborhoods that had no supervising committees, popular education classes varied wildly from teacher to teacher in subjects taught, curriculum used, even periods per day and number of days open per week. Curriculum, while informal, was based loosely off of the official Israeli-approved Jordanian textbooks that students had already been learning from; however, teachers often expanded upon the content of these textbooks to "Palestinianize [sic] the curriculum within a vision of national identity and the national struggle for independence" (Hahashi and Bush 20). In addition to using radical curricula, teachers were free to experiment with new pedagogies that incorporated lived experiences with the intifada and Palestinian drama, poetry, dance and art into classroom lessons, as well as run classes in less hierarchical ways. Palestinian educators also expanded their vision of education beyond children shut out by school closures; an organization called the Center for Applied Research and Education organized teacher, student, and parent trainings about democracy, civil society, and human rights.

Popular education had several advantages. Framed as it was in a larger context and movement of Palestinian resistence to Israeli domination, there was heightened motivation and energy to participate fully, creatively, and collaboratively from both students and teachers; now

instead of school being a chore that some Palestinian students were reluctant to partake in, it became a form of resistance as tangible as throwing stones at Israeli soldiers. Furthermore, for the first time in a very long time, Palestinians had the chance to develop curriculum and teach their own histories, and to develop a national identity that was nurtured academically. Popular education, while hampered by Israeli repression, was able to nonetheless be quite flexible and responsive to circumstances of the intifada; in an example highlighted by Hussein, a popular education class followed its students into the fields of the West Bank when two siblings were called to help their parents with agricultural work: "While helping the family work the land, the children studied math, biology, and farming…sang and recited Palestinian poetry, and learned the folkloric dabkeh dance," (Mahashi and Bush 21). These factors created conditions for truly engaging and liberatory education— a drastic change from the censored and Israeli-controlled education of the previous twenty years. In May of 1988, attempts to organize the constellation of popular teaching were made. Educators from West Bank universities and other schools organized a conference in that year to discuss how to channel the enthusiasm, flexibility, and freedom of popular schools into a durable and high-quality alternative school system. They hoped to produce "a set of guidelines for alternative schooling… [that] would be published in a handbook for neighborhood schools" (Mahashi and Bush 479). These ambitious goals were derailed when organizers of the committee faced arrest and detainment by Israel and the climate generally became more dangerous for alternative and popular schooling.

Popular teaching initiatives in neighborhoods and clandestine alternative education attempts by UNRWA and private schools eventually weakened under Israeli repression. Specifically, the aforementioned ban on popular committees, of which education was one, was implemented harshly; hundreds of Palestinians affiliated with the committees were arrested and

even sent into exile. Constant surveillance, harassment, firings, and imprisonment of Palestinians engaged in "illegal" teaching scattered many underground classrooms by the end of 1989. As a report from al-Haq on Israeli abuses during the first intifada states, frequent and violent raids and arrests of students and teachers by the Israeli military discredits Israel's claim that school closures were in response to the security threat posed by in-person schooling. Nonetheless, such strikes were effective. "Despite all its significance for community-building and political resistance to Israeli rule," writes Hussein, "alternative education was also one of the weakest intifada projects and among the first to dwindle" (Mahashi and Bush 22). She highlights an interim character as a factor that weakened alternative educational initiatives. Indeed, with the exception of the 1989 conference that attempted to unite popular schooling into a single system, popular education was framed generally as a temporary solution to the problem of Israeli school closures rather than the total reclamation of education from Israelis and into the hands of Palestinians. For these reasons, alternative and popular forms of teaching were unable to take root and last throughout the first intifada. As a result, Palestinian children were unable to access consistent and continuous learning until 1990.

Nonetheless, the space that these forms of teaching created for the conceptualization of a "Palestinianized" curriculum was critical. Aspects of creative and alternative pedagogies and techniques lived on in Palestinian education even after the disbandment of neighborhood-run popular education. At the preschool level, pilot programs in activity and play-based learning gained popularity in mainstream schooling as Palestinian schools began opening up again. Another program, oriented towards elementary schools, aimed to integrate "problem solving, cooperative learning, and reduc[ed] reliance on teachers"(Mahashi and Bush 480) so that education focused less on the institution and physical location of schools and more on the goals

of holistic learning. Such programs, overall, attempt to integrate schools with their communities, make learning more student-centered, and provide culturally meaningful education to Palestinians. Yacoub Qumsiya, the director of one such project, stated that he in fact believed the intifada had transformed Palestinian education more successfully than any formal study could ever have.

However, intermittent Israeli school closures and the inability to sustain quality alternative schooling institutions had powerful negative effects on Palestinians as well. The effects of school closures were felt most strongly by rural and impoverished children who, enrolled in lower quality schools than their wealthier and urban peers, had less of an educational foundation to fall back on during the years of school closures. Students from elite families, mostly in the West Bank, were able to go abroad during the intifada and escape both the traumatizing violence of the period and the educational disruption; taken together, these factors widened the socioeconomic gap already present between rich and poor Palestinians. Simultaneously, school closures threatened the mass literacy of the Palestinian population. This was seen as a serious existential threat; many Palestinians had long hewn to the idea that "an independent state necessitates a literate nation" (Hussein 22), leading to great dismay over the reality of several generations of grade school children unable to read coupled with high school graduates unable to access Palestine's colleges and universities, which had suffered heavily under Israeli repression during the intifada.

This situation placed Palestinians in a bind, forced to choose between continued resistance at the price of school closures, which undermined their goals of national self-determination, or terminate the intifada in the hopes that Israel would reopen schools and allow their children to receive consistent education again. Palestinian society attempted to

resolve this unpleasant choice by encouraging people to commit themselves both to schooling and the intifada; however, as Israeli crackdowns on popular education worsened, students were forced to choose, in the words of Hussein, between the stone and the pen.

Despite Israel's claims that school closures were a response to schools being hotbeds of anti-Israel protest, there was no noticeable drop in protest after closures were enacted. Additionally, closures produced great strains for Palestinian schools once they reopened, as classrooms had to swell to accommodate double or triple the amount of students they were supposed to have. Furthermore, the unpaid leave and salary reductions imposed upon public school teachers persisted even after schools reopened, causing great economic suffering and reducing the amount of qualified teachers who could afford to work under such conditions. Together, these factors strained an already under-funded and under-resourced school system in Palestine. Young children and high school seniors were hit the hardest by closures, as the former needed constant support to develop literacy and the latter were unable to take the required classes and tests in order to graduate. Closures also damaged the next generation of teachers; Khalili stated in a 2006 interview that the denial of formal schooling produced a lower teaching quality than there would have been without disruption. Even elite private schools suffered after reopening, teetering on the verge of bankruptcy as they attempted to make up the revenue lost when student tuition ceased but teacher salaries continued.

To conclude, Israeli attempts to quash collective organizing and resistance during the first Palestinian intifada caused mass school closures that produced both profoundly positive and negative effects on Palestinians. After centuries of externally-imposed education systems and curricula, Palestinians had the space and the political orientation to take matters into their own hands, creating popular schooling systems that employed radical pedagogies that were seen as

furthering and assisting in the resistance movement. However, intense Israeli repression of such popular schools disbanded them after only a few years, leaving behind no independent system but a reorientation towards educational programs that adopt the creativity and flexibility of popular schools. Palestinian youth experienced educational disruption as one of many major alterations to the rhythms of daily life during the first intifada, and some experienced long-term setbacks to their educational achievement. Overall, however, the Palestinian response to Israeli school closures exhibits a principled adherence to the vehicles that transport one to freedom: literacy, communal organizing, creativity, and resilience in the face of relentless state power and repression.

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