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Robert George White [ID]

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Fantasmas sob a superfície: Os restos e espectros da Palestina no Cinema do Interior

ROBERT GEORGE WHITE

Independent Scholar
robertgwhite81@gmail.com

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Abstract

In a 2003 interview with the *Journal of Palestine Studies*, the director Elia Sulieman evoked the spectre of the revenant (which appears by coming back) when explaining the presence of Palestinians within Israel in terms of Israel's being haunted by the spectre of the 'becoming-Palestinian' of the Israeli-Arab. This is both an allusion to a historical legal condition of present absence (the Knesset's 1950 Law of Absentee Property), but also articulates—this article claims—an emerging hauntology/ontology of the cinematic image of the Palestinian in Israel.This article argues that the contemporary cinema of Palestinians in Israel is essentially a cinema of ghosts, where temporal disjointedness and spatial displacement constantly disturb the project of national identity formation; from the haunting of Jaffa in the work of Kamal Aljafari, where Palestinian 'ghosts' are re-inscribed onto the work of Israeli director Menahem Golan, to the ghostly lacuna between Arab and Jew which haunts Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013). Drawing on Jacques Derrida's notion of 'the spectral', alongside a critical analysis of what Edward Said termed *al-dakhil* (the interior), the article examines Palestinian interiors as

haunted sites. The article contends that from within these sites, Palestinian cinematic remnants stubbornly refuse to be buried, haunting and acting back on the State which has attempted to repress them.

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Resumo

Em uma entrevista de 2003 com o *Journal of Palestine Studies*, o diretor Elia Sulieman evocou o espectro do fantasma (que aparece voltando) ao explicar a presença de Palestinos dentro de Israel em termos de Israel ser assombrado pelo espectro do 'devir- Palestino' do Árabe-Israelense. Isso é tanto uma alusão a uma condição legal histórica de ausência presente (a Lei de Propriedade Ausente do Knesset de 1950), mas também articula — afirma este artigo — uma hauntologia / ontologia emergente da imagem cinematográfica do Palestino em Israel. Este artigo argumenta que o cinema contemporâneo dos Palestinos em Israel é essencialmente um cinema de fantasmas, onde a desconexão temporal e o deslocamento espacial perturbam constantemente o projeto de formação da identidade nacional; desde a assombração de Jaffa na obra de Kamal Aljafari, onde "fantasmas" Palestinos são reinscritos na obra do diretor Israelense Menahem Golan, até a lacuna espectral entre Árabes e Judeus que assombra Ana Arabia de Amos Gitai (2013). Usando o conceito de "o espectral" de Jacques Derrida, em conjunto com a análise crítica do que Edward Said chamou *al-dakhil* (o interior), o artigo examina os interiores palestinos como locais assombrados. O artigo afirma que de dentro desses sites, remanescentes cinematográficos Palestinos teimosamente se recusam a ser enterrados, assombrando e agindo de volta ao Estado que tentou reprimi-los.

Introduction

In a 2003 interview about his film *Divine Intervention*, the Nazarene director Elia Suleiman describes the oppressive pressure of his home city, Nazareth. As the largest Arab city within Israel, the city essentially exists as an enormous Palestinian enclave within the Israeli state. This enclave-like status is reinforced both architecturally and economically—with the city overlooked by its Jewish neighbour, Nazareth Illit, and both watched and neglected by the state.[1] The need for observation, claims Suleiman, stems from the perpetual haunting that the figure of the present-absentee[2] represents in the Israeli psyche. Unlike the Occupied Territories, where the dynamics of oppression and resistance are overt and hyper visible, Suleiman (2003, 70) refers to the "psychological and economic" occupation that is internalised by Palestinians in Israel, creating a condition of invisibility. The unsustainable pressure of this condition leads Suleiman to conjure the revenant of the former Palestinian within the proper noun 'Israeli-Arab', when he claims "Israel knows this. They are haunted by the fear that their 'Arabs' are going to become 'Palestinians' again" (Ibid, 71). This notion of revenance, a coming into being that begins by coming back[3], is, I argue, crucial to understanding how the cinema of Palestinians inside Israel articulates a spectral politics, one which destabilises its Israeli counterpart by bringing back the ghost of Arab and Jew as that which, to paraphrase Mahmoud Darwish (2012, 52), dwells within the other and, as such, is unpartitionable. This cinema also indicates how Palestinians in Israel might go about what Edward Said (1986, 108) refers to as "producing themselves" and resisting the State's attempts to erase them and traces of Arab-ness in Israeli culture. The politics of haunting at work in the liminal cinematic space of Palestine-Israel, which is characteristic of what I will term the 'Cinema of the Interior', will be the focus of this article.

Spectres of Partition, spectres of Binationalism:
Situating the Cinema of the Interior

Existing scholarship on Palestinian Cinema frames it either as cinema of resilience and struggle for national self-determination (Gertz and Khleifi 2008,135), a national cinema as a structure of feeling decoupled from territory (Tawil-Souri 2014) or with renewed focus on the cinema of the Palestinian Revolution (Yaqub 2018). What each of these lack is a critical engagement in the significance of a spatial and territorial consciousness at work in the liminal cinematic zone of Palestinians in Israel. With the notable exception of the work of Ella Shohat (2010) and Yael Friedman (2008), the cinemas of Palestine and Israel

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1   Chad Emmet (1995, 64) notes that Nazareth received a lesser classification than Nazareth Illit in an Israeli Law passed to stimulate capital investment, which led to a disparity in both industrial development and unemployment rates.
2   A historical-legal condition of Palestinians within Israel and the subtitle of Suleiman's later film *The Time That Remains*.
3   Jacques Derrida is insistent on this disjointed temporality in *Specters of Marx*, claiming of the revenant: "One cannot control its comings and goings because *it begins by coming back*." (Derrida 1994, 11).

have long been thought in opposition—with little attention paid to cinema in what Shohat (2010: 271) terms "the liminal zone *between* Israel and Palestine."

The question of partition, which Gil Hochberg (2007) engages with in cultural terms, refers most explicitly to a historical event, or rather its failure; that is, UN Resolution 181, the 1947 partition plan which failed to establish two states from Mandate Palestine. The ghost of this partition line informs Michel Khleifi and Eyal Sivan's 2004 documentary *Route 181*, which traces the pathology of partition, the continued legacy of political and cultural attempts to partition Palestine-Israel. It is precisely this continued legacy that I argue haunts the cinematic space of Palestinians in Israel.

This issue of haunting in the *Israeli* visual field (Hochberg 2015) is, I argue, neglected in the *Palestinian* one by either the omission of a sustained discussion of the specificity of place in Palestinian filmmaking in Israel (Gertz & Khleifi 2008, Tawil-Soury 2014) or an explicit focus on production contexts on Palestinian filmmaking in Israel (Friedman 2010). This article will address this gap by examining the double nature of this haunting; that is, the spectre of partition which haunts from the past, and of binationalism which haunts from the future.

Binationalism as a progressive, culturalist approach to moving beyond the cul-de-sac of the two-state solution is a unifying thread which runs through the postcolonial theory of Edward Said, Ella Shohat and Bart Moore-Gilbert and the filmmaking of Juliano Mer-Khamis, Amos Gitai, Udi Aloni, and Elia Suleiman. The defeats and concessions of Oslo, along with the intransigence of Israel's government under Likud and Netanyahu and the rise of political Islam in Gaza have contributed to an emergent one-state thinking outside of a Westphalian nation-state model. Between the pessimism of the status quo, and the idealism that Suleiman (2016) acknowledges as being both utopian and necessary lies the 'pessoptomism' of Emile Habiby that Moore-Gilbert (2018) endorses in his culturalist thinking of a binational, democratic state. Such thinking is not limited to a tendency in theory and contemporary cinema however, with activists from Yoav Hafawi (2018) in Tel Aviv to Ahmed Abu Artema (2018) in Gaza endorsing the idea of a single, democratic state. While the political stasis of Palestine/Israel remains, its cinema, and increasingly activism at a grassroots level, points to a critical approach to the continued political project of partition.

The haunted cultural imagination of Palestine-Israel

The trope of a surface haunted by ghosts and an underworld by ruins—which the politics of the present tries to exorcise (or at least repress)—extends beyond cinema, recurring throughout the broader cultural imagination of Palestine-Israel. As such, it requires some brief explication.

It is precisely this logic of haunted, subterranean memory which opens Gil Hochberg's *In Spite of Partition*, where she (2007, 1) highlights a short story by Orly Castel Bloom, in which an elderly Arabic-speaking woman appears under the bench of a young

Israeli woman, insisting on their kinship, which the young woman denies, doubting the reality of the encounter. The slippage between Hebrew and Arabic which defines the encounter, along with the haunting figure that dwells beneath the surface as a repressed traumatic memory, hints at the traumatic psycho-spatial topography of partition. A key literary trope of this is the subterranean. The cave *within* the ruin is a key feature of Emile Habiby's ironic novel of Palestinian life in Israel, *The Secret Life of Said the Pessoptomist* (1974), in which the cave beneath the ruined village of Tanturah lies a family treasure. The treasure itself is something of a Macguffin, more figuratively engaging Said with a quest to locate the remnant of historic Palestine within Israel. In cinematic representation, ruins or caves mark a site of where the figure of the Palestinian emerges as a repressed memory of 1948 in Israeli consciousness, with notable examples of this in the work of Udi Aloni, Kamal Aljafari and Annemarie Jacir. The latter two examples will be analysed in this article.

Absent Presence (2010), one of the final works by Palestinian poet Mahmood Darwish, is haunted throughout by a series of ghosts coming back in various forms. The title itself alludes to the juridical condition of Palestinians within Israel. This historical-legal condition emerged in the years after 1948, with the 1950 Law of Absentee Property. This determined Palestinians who left their villages during the 1948 war but found themselves within the new state, as corporeally present within the state, but legally absent from their place of origin, as Hillel Cohen (2002, para. 10) has identified, particularly—but by no means exclusively—in the case of Galilee. Darwish's poem evokes the interplay of absence and presence and visibility and invisibility of a Palestinian past that is rendered invisible in the cultural logic of Zionism, yet precisely because of this very negation, cannot be buried. In a long passage which evokes the history of Deir Yassin[4] as a metaphorical ghost which haunts the contemporary political project of Zionism, Darwish writes of this ghostly memory which dwells in the lacuna between sleep and wakefulness, refusing to be exorcised:

> We became the ghost of a murdered man who pursues his killer asleep or awake or on the borderline between the two, so that he is depressed and complains of sleeplessness, and cries out, Are they not dead yet?' (…) but the ghost expands, occupies the consciousness of the killer till it drives him mad. (Darwish 2010, 47)

By evoking the ghosts of Deir Yassin, Darwish articulates the inability to lay to rest the ghosts of the past which haunt the Israeli imagination. Indeed, a fictionalised version of the psychiatric hospital on the grounds of Deir Yassin is the setting of Udi Aloni's

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4 Deir Yassin was a Palestinian village near Jerusalem, which was depopulated and the site of a massacre by the Irgun, a Zionist paramilitary group, on April 9th 1948. A psychiatric hospital, Kfar Shaul, now lies on the site of the former village.

Forgiveness (2006), which tells of the disquiet stemming from repressing the ghosts of the past, rather than reconciling with them. This cultural amnesia of the Palestinian *Nakba* (literally, catastrophe) of 1948, according to Gil Hochberg (2015), puts the ghost at the threshold of visibility/invisibility, a haunting presence through its continued absence. The effect of the Nakba of 1948, writes Hochberg (2015, 38) "is seemingly erased or hidden from Israeli eyes, and yet nevertheless finds its way into the Israeli visual field as a haunting presence of *visible invisibility.*" This haunting absent presence is particularly prevalent in the liminality of Palestinians within Israel. Therefore, some analysis of the specificity of the subjectivity of Palestinians within Israel—what Edward Said (1986, 51) terms *al-dakhil* (the interior)—is required.

Edward Said, absent presence and the haunted Palestinian 'Interior'

In his collaborative photo-essay, *After the Last Sky*, Edward Said speaks of Palestinian experience *min al-dakhil*, which translates as 'from the interior'. This interior manifests itself in different ways. Firstly, in a tangible geographical sense, it refers to Palestinians in Israel—whose status as viewed from those in exile such as Said changed from "different in a pejorative sense" to "still, different, but privileged" (Said 1986, 51)— as the tide of Arab nationalism ebbed and the status of those *fil-kharij* ('in the exterior') diminished. A second meaning is spatial in a more psychological sense, that is, a psychological and linguistic interiority that is collective, an experience of being on the outside while dwelling in the interior, a space "always to some extent occupied and interrupted by others—Israelis and Arabs" (Ibid, 53). Said dedicates an entire chapter of *After the Last Sky*—'Interiors'—to exploring this condition of being rendered an outsider within the inside.

For Said, maintaining any distinction between outside and inside within the interior leads to a perpetual state of insecurity; one is both hemmed in by, but also excluded from that which surrounds you which he articulates by claiming that "the structure of your situation is such that being inside is a privilege that is an affliction, like feeling hemmed in by the house you own." (Ibid, 53)

This exclusion was particularly pronounced for Said, since he was unable to enter Israel at the time of writing *After the Last Sky*, and thus witnessed the interior vicariously through Jean Mohr's photographs. Said's thinking of the 'privileged affliction' that is the experience of *al-dakhil*—the interior—will inform my reading of what I term the *al-dakhil* films (the Cinema of the Interior), particularly the ghostly structures that dwell within this cinema and articulate its politics. This politics is conditioned by the aforementioned historical-legal status of 'absent presence', which occasions a contemporary trace of ontological displacement visible in the cinematic language of the *al-dakhil* directors, both caught within the state apparatus and held outside it.

The ghosts which haunt the project of partition will be examined in a close reading of Kamal Aljarfari's 'Jaffa' trilogy and Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013). These films in

particular (but not exclusively), I argue, examine the political 'spectre' of partition, as both a political and cultural project, through the ghostly figure of the *Arab al-dakhil*—a figure that haunts the lacuna between both Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew.

Kamal Aljafari's 'spectral' Jaffa: From the Architectural Uncanny to Spectral Politics

Kamal Aljafari's three most recent features, *The Roof* (2006), Port of Memory (2009) and Recollection (2015), make up a haunted triptych of his paternal city, Jaffa. Aljafari is based in Germany, but—as his surname indicates—has paternal ties to Jaffa and maternal ties to Ramle. The three films chart a shifting relationship with haunting throughout his work, from a ghostly architecture which haunts its inhabitants in *The Roof*, to a spectral politics which 'ghosts' the political and aesthetic consciousness of Zionism in *Port of Memory* and *Recollection* by bringing back the Palestinian revenants captured in the margins of the frames of Israeli cinema.

The technology of the cinema, which Aljafari utilises extensively through digital editing, as an inherently spectral apparatus is developed as an idea extensively by Jacques Derrida. Derrida (2002, 2015) connects cinema to spectrality in both content and the structure of the image itself, a distinction which he (2015, 26) insists 'must be distinguished.' Cinema as a medium is both a haunted but also *haunting* technology, in its capacity to arrest time and 'embalm' the moving image, in a Bazinian sense. Drawing on the experience of watching Pascale Ogier in *Ghost Dance*, Derrida (2002, 120) refers to the 'dissymmetrical gaze' of the cinematic revenant, watching, observing and surveying the viewer who is conscious of being unable to return the gaze. In *Specters of Marx* Derrida will evoke the cinematic in a definition of the spectre as that "which one projects—on an imaginary screen where there is nothing to see" (Derrida 1994, 125). In its ability to preserve an index of death through a projection of light, cinema itself is a spectral apparatus, an apparatus Aljafari will exploit the digital possibilities of in *Port of Memory* and *Recollection* to haunt the political present.

Architectural Haunting in *The Roof* (2006)

Aljafari's first feature, *The Roof* (2006), unpacks some of the subjective complexities of 'home' for a Palestinian from Israel living overseas, particularly in a scene towards the middle of the film. Structurally, the film is an essayistic blend of documentary, historiography and memoir that employs a reflexive and ironic register in the tradition of Emile Habiby. Its focus is the Aljafari family homes in both Jaffa and Ramle, the latter providing the missing titular roof. During a telephone conversation with Aljafari, during which Nabieh—an old friend living in Beirut—suggests that Aljafari visits him in Lebanon. "I can't enter the Arab countries" comes Aljafari's reply. This is due to Aljafari's complex legal status as a Palestinian filmmaker based in Germany with Israeli and German citizenship. In fact, the filmmaker himself, following Adorno's comments

on literature and exile, has referred to cinema as a "homeland" (Aljafari 2010), a place where alternative histories and futures can be imagined. In the same conversation, Aljafari evokes his longing to hear Beirut's sea, a sight/sound he is unable to access, denoting a fluidity of place that articulates just some of the subjective and territorial complexity of the contemporary Palestinian subject; one who is legally a citizen of Israel, educated in Germany and homesick for the sea in Lebanon, a place which—through force of law—he can only visit in his imagination.

Shortly after an establishing opening scene, in which Aljafari and his sister discuss his experience of incarceration during the first Intifada, Kamal Aljafari's film fades to black and a quote by Anton Shammas (2002, para. 1) appears on screen, articulating the ghostly weight of home for those it haunts in exile: "And you know perfectly well that we don't ever leave home we simply drag it behind us wherever we go, walls, roof and all. Home — it is probably the one single thing we don't leave home without; and that would explain the rumbling in our wake." It is clear from this quote and what follows that *The Roof* is a film about the pressing weight of home and the ghosts that dwell within (or more accurately, *above* it).

The scene which follows the Shammas quote is one that employs a spatial logic of inversion. A camera pans steadily and slowly to the left, scanning the earth as stones and rubble give way to foundations and remains of houses. Aljafari narrates over this scene, a tale of dispossession of 1948 that took place in Jaffa (his father's origin) and Ramle (his mother's). It is a familiar tale. Forced to leave their homes, they became present absentees. The shot foregrounds the archaeological evidence. The foundations, origins were right here in the ground. This archaeological (and architectural) connection to the earth grounds contested claims of national belonging. In the national narrative of Zionism, Palestinian ruins have to be subsumed into a wider taxonomy of "archaeological particulars" (Said 2003, 47) which Edward Said argues in his 2003 lecture *Freud and the Non-European* have made archaeology "*the* privileged Israeli science *par excellence*." (Ibid, 46). Without such an absorption, these ruins remain a haunting presence that awakens the Palestinian remnant within the State. For Said, therefore, a Palestinian archaeology must open up the land to heterogeneity: its multiple pasts and multiple peoples.

The scene in *The Roof*, quite literally turns a nationalist logic of *arche* and foundations— the connection to the land providing the collective grounding and historical claim—on its head. The past is not buried, in the land or the earth itself, but is something rather that *buries*: "My parents live on the first floor,' states Aljafari, 'and the past lives above them." *Arche* here, rather than being archaeological, becomes architectural as the unfinished roof looms over its inhabitants who are, quite literally, buried alive beneath it. Foundations don't root us, says the film, (while the image shows the ruins of Arab Ramle) but rather bear down on us with the weight of gravity and history.

We are introduced to the eponymous roof by way of a slow, one-minute tracking

shot, as the camera tracks left with tight framing as the unfinished roof is slowly revealed, along with a number of discarded objects. Accompanying this languid tracking shot is the song *Ya Habibi Taala* by Asmahan, a song of love, absence and ghosts. The song seems appropriate, as the spectral absent presence of the unfinished roof haunts the Aljarfaris; an uncanny or rather *unheimlich* haunting that permeates the film throughout.

The Arabic title of the film—*al Sateh*—gives an ambiguity lost in its English translation. While meaning 'roof', it can also convey flatness and surface, marking a slippage and instability at work in a number of other scenes. The linguistic slide from roof to surface gives a sense of something concealed.

A similar semantic instability underpins the Freudian uncanny. Freud locates *Heimlich* and its antonym *unheimlich* (uncanny or literally 'unhomely') as interchangeable. This comes from a dual sense of *Heimlich* (which translates as 'homely') meaning both that which is familiar and comfortable and that which is concealed and hidden. *Unheimlich* then, Freud notes, "applies to everything that was intended to remain secret, hidden away, and has come into the open" (Freud 2003, 132). Thus, Freud locates the *unheimlich* within the logic of the familiar. The homely is always already unhomely in that the familiar is repressed in the form of a secret and the unhomely is "what was once familiar [homely, 'homey']. The negative prefix *un-* is the indicator of repression" (Ibid, 151). Through the use of German *Heimlich/unheimlich* and the blurring of separation between the two terms, Freud explicitly frames a discussion of the uncanny in terms of domestic architecture. The semantic shift in *al sateh* from roof to surface allows for a thinking of 'home' as the unhomely repressed coming to the surface of the image. Such a movement from architecture to image manifests in an aesthetic experience[5] of

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5   For Freud, the uncanny is both a psychological and an aesthetic experience, with the latter developed in the second half of Freud's essay.

the *unheimlich*, occurring in the first ten minutes of *The Roof* occurs in a scene of domestic 'normality' in the Ramle house. After a scene in which the family dine together in virtual silence, there is a cut in extreme close-up to a hand on the edge of the sofa. The extreme closeness and shallow-focus photography that (de)frames the twitching, hairy hand evokes an aesthetic sense of the uncanny.[6] The effect of the framing of the scene creates a cinematically disembodied hand which, until the frame pulls back to reveal Aljafari's uncle, gives the viewer an uncanny shock, particularly given the lack of animation of many of the 'bodies' in *The Roof's* mise-en-scène.

The film's closing scene appears to echo the anxiety triggered by the foundations and the burden of the home seen in the opening shots of Ramle and the weight of the past on top of the Aljafaris. The scene begins with a shot of Kamal and his mother sitting opposite one another in silence. The shot then cuts to the mother, who asks: 'do you want to finish the house?' to which Kamal replies "I don't know—it's strange finishing something that doesn't belong to us."[7] This brings the rueful response from his mother that "everyone has left. Not just them—left their homes." Belonging and home have a heavy weight for Aljafari, being more a ball and chain you drag with you. Returning from Europe, where he is based, the ghosts of 1948 weigh heavily. The mantle of the historic 'home' is passed to Kamal, who appears overwhelmed by its burden; the foundations that don't root the family but bury them beneath the surface of the spectral roof.

Let the ghosts come back: *Port of Memory* (2009)

Similarly to *The Roof* before it, Aljafari's *Port of Memory* (2009) employs a non-anthropocentric camera-eye, as walls and the fabric of Jaffa are foregrounded, with human figures often wandering into and out of frame. The corporeality of the city itself is as 'alive' as the humans who dwell within it. The film's narrative, such that it is, tells the story of Salim and the lost deeds to his house. The threat of eviction, and the wider sense of erasure of Jaffa permeates the film, as the perpetual sound of construction and the presence of gentrification documents a city increasingly being swallowed by neighbouring Tel Aviv. However, the film's most telling scene, which utilises digital editing to enact a form of spectral politics, occasions a Palestinian haunting of Israeli's cinema's past.

In this scene, through digital manipulation, Salim, the film's main character, is inserted into the acoustic space of Zionism, here a musical performance from an Israeli film. The scene begins with a graphic match, as Salim (played by Aljafari's uncle) wanders Ajami (his neighbourhood) before being inserted into shots from which the

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6 For Freud, disembodied corporeal elements betray a heightened uncanniness. He writes that "Severed limbs, a severed head, a hand detached from the arm (as in a fairy tale by Hauff), feet that dance by themselves (...) — all of these have something highly uncanny about them, especially when they are credited, as in the last instance, with independent activity" (Ibid, 150).

7 Aljafari notes in the establishing shot of Ramle that remaining families in Jaffa and Ramle in 1948 were given the houses of other Palestinians.

scenes were taken, an Israeli film *Kazablan* (1973). This film manages to layer a fictional cinematic occupation on top of the factual occupation of Jaffa during this period, as the film tells a narrative of oppressed Mizrahi Jews living in Jaffa, and the scene in question is the sung lamentation of Ashkenazi oppression, a narrative which, as Aljafari states, "completely elides not only Jaffa's Palestinian history, but also its remaining Palestinians, enacting a virtual, cinematic emptying of the city" (Aljafari 2010). As the character wanders the crumbling architecture of an abandoned Jaffa, he sings the lyrics to Yesh Makom, his song to his former life in Morocco:

> There is a place beyond the sea,
> Where the sun shines over the market, the street and the port,
> Home beyond the sea...

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Image 2
Screenshot. *Port of Memory* [DCP]. Courtesy of Kamal Aljafari. Novel Media. France/ Germany/Palestine. 2009. 62mins

Salim's spectral appearance troubles this scene, briefly haunting the frame from the edges and fracturing and undermining the fictional narrative of the scene's Mizrahi lamentation. By re-appropriating a Hebrew song of loss and longing the scene counters a hegemonic national space, by interrupting its fictional unity. The complete elision of the Palestinian, or *Arab al-dakhil*, is countered by the staking of the claim that there have always been *peoples* in Palestine-Israel, never simply *a people*.

A remarkably similar 'ghosting' of the cinematic space of Zionism can be seen in Anne-Marie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* (2008). In the scene in question, Soraya, the film's Palestinian-American protagonist, visits the remains of Dawayima with Emad—a Palestinian from Ramallah—while looking for Soraya's ancestral home in Jaffa. The village (in which Emad's family lived before 1948) is in Israel, through which the two are passing disguised as settlers. They are awoken by a school tour, led by a teacher who—startled

by a figure emerging from the cave—assumes Soraya is a Jewish-American tourist and explains (switching from Hebrew to English) that camping is forbidden in these "ancient archaeological remains." The traumatic memory of this figure/place being a hidden remnant of historic Palestine within Israel is unlocalizable to the teacher, and thus must be transferred to that of a lost tourist in 'Biblical' space.

While Aljafari's use of digital enacts a 'ghosting' of Jaffa by its present-absentees, the unnamed presence of the Arab-Jew also constructs a complex double haunting in which the figure of Arab-Jewishness haunts *Port of Memory* in its own repression. Menahem Golan's *Kazablan* (1973) is one of the most successful 'Boureka' films, a musical genre which often used humour to depict the class politics of Israeli society, with Mizrahi Jews outwitting uncaring bureaucratic authorities, depicted as cold, managerial Ashkenazi Jews. The third act usually involves a resolution under the banner of unified Jewishness.[8] *Kazablan* tells the tale of a Moroccan-Jewish gang leader in love with a young Ashkenazi woman in the context of a Mizrahi neighbourhood which is being threatened with demolition. *Port of Memory* both *consciously* engages in the spatial politics of Jaffa's "cinematic occupation" (Aljafari 2016) but *unconsciously* highlights the marginalized, liminal figure of the Mizrahi[9] as analogous to the erasure of Palestinian presence in Jaffa. In doing so, the film highlights a double negation by the hegemonic State: the marginalisation of the orientalized Arab-Jew to the always already spectral space of the Palestinian. The figure of the Mizrahi is thus, for Shohat (2010, 266), a detotalizing figure for both Israeli and Palestinian nationalisms; forming an "in-between figure, at once inside and outside, 'in' in terms of privileged citizenship within the Jewish state, in contrast to the Palestinian citizens of Israel, but hardly 'of' the hegemonic national culture." It is this very 'Eastern-ness' that must be paradoxically both orientalized and assimilated by the State in a Paternalistic double movement to suppress the ghost of 'Eastern-ness' used to other Ashkenazi Jewish communities in Europe—thus repressing the 'Arab-ness' that bonds Jewish identity to Palestinian identity.[10]

Aljafari's primary concern in *Port of Memory* (2009), which he fully realises in *Recollection* (2015), is to 'ghost' cinematic Jaffa to issue a demand, much like Derrida's revenant: that the destruction of the city witnessed in *Delta Force* (1987) (another Menhaem Golan production that appears as a mise-en-abyme of destruction within the film), and the story of eviction and dispossession in *Kazablan* were always already the hidden history of Palestinian Jaffa.

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8   This popular entertainment framing, Ella Shohat (2010, 255) has argued, both covers up structural inequalities while rendering a genre traditionally seen as apolitical entertainment as permeated by nationalist politics.

9   In Hebrew, literally 'Eastern' (Shohat 2010, 154)

10   Both Gil Hochberg (2007) and Ella Shohat (2006) describe this process at length, articulating how the spectre of anti-Semitic Orientalism in Europe compels a form of Orientalism to be re-produced in hegemonic Euro-Israeli culture. Essentially, they both argue, a form of pathological partitioning occurs so as to disassociate any trace of 'Arabness' from the national narrative.

Remnants of Palestine: *Recollection* (2015)

The spectral politics of *Port of Memory*, inserted into a wider narrative of loss, are fully realised in Recollection (2015), a film which abandons narrative altogether to construct an archive of the city of Jaffa, along with an excavation of the cinematic remnants (and revenants) of that city. The film is composed entirely of found footage, with Aljafari composing a portrait of Jaffa sourced from a huge number of Israeli and American films made in the city from the 1960s to the 1990s.[11] The film opens with a cinematic preface, as its methodology is revealed. The characters of Israeli films shot in Jaffa are frozen, before being digitally removed, to clear space for the city and its inhabitants—whose spectral presence is revealed by this foregrounding of the margins of the cinematic frame. In a striking opening an entire ensemble scene from *Kazablan* (1973) is digitally spirited away. The film's structure, following this methodological preface, adds to the spectral reconstruction of the space of the city in a way that makes topographic sense. In an interview with Nathalie Handal, Aljafari (2016) stresses the importance of this noting that the archive of films he is working from cared only for an Orientalist aesthetic quality they imposed on Jaffa: "For someone who knows and comes from this place, these films do not make sense. It was important for me to have the character in my film walk and make sense of all of it, and project the place as it is, streets that lead to other streets as they are."

Indeed, when Aljafari mentions the character of his film, it is important to stress that this character itself is more a phantom, wordless witness documenting a historical cinematic record of a city. The fabric of the city of Jaffa, which features so prominently in *Port of Memory* is quite literally the protagonist of this film. The camera-eye constructs a tour of the city—arriving from the Mediterranean in a subversion of colonial Europeans' view of the city, before silently taking in the walls, steps and squares of a cinematic Jaffa. The digital removal of the original films' protagonists creates an eerily silent—albeit not entirely *empty*—city. What this digital rendering of Jaffa does do rather, is make space for what previously went unseen. This is brought into stark relief with the first entrance of human figures into the frame, around 12 minutes into the film. A series of freeze frames and zooms foreground these unwitting extras, the most striking being a zoom of the child caught in the top left of the frame in the scene below, taken from *Kazablan*.

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11   At the Palestine and the Moving Image Conference, Aljafari (2013) explained the painstaking process of archiving the Palestinians (often friends and acquaintances) caught in the frames of Israeli and Hollywood Cinema shot in Jaffa (notably, *The Delta Force* (1986)), and how bringing these spectral figures to the foreground of a lost Jaffa would constitute his next feature—which would become *Recollection* (2015).

The close-up here highlights a dual spectrality in both its production and reception. For the latter, the boy is both the ghostly temporal "punctum" which Roland Barthes (1993, 96) highlights in his analysis of the "anterior future" (Ibid.) at stake in a still image's capturing of a life preserved before death. This sense of 'loss to come' extends into the images of a city lost to demolition and development. Regarding reception, the scene's technical use of digital foregrounding of the margin highlights cinema's own possibility to bring forth the ghosts of the past—a possibility which simply didn't exist on analogue film at 24 frames a second, as Laura Mulvey (2006, 156) highlights in her analysis of Douglas Sirk's *Imitation of Life* (1958). In an analysis of the opening 'boardwalk' scene in which black extras at the edges of the frame appear so fleetingly that "it is only when the film is halted and the frame can be scanned these significant details becomes visible." (Ibid.) In Mulvey's analysis, the becoming-visible of the spectral extras is made possible digitally by a delayed mode of viewing. In Aljafari's film, the possibilities of digital technology to give the stage to ghosts lies in post-production, rather than reception. In inverting the politics of visibility/invisibility which elides Palestinians in Israel, by digitally removing that which has concealed them and allowing them to gaze at us, *Recollection* gives amplified presence to Jaffa's 'present-absentees' and also, in a Derridean sense, "the right of absolute inspection" (Derrida 2002, 121). This amplification is further intensified by the film's sound design. The sound design gives corporeal weight to the fabric of the city in a remarkable manner, bringing the walls of the city to life, and bringing back the ghosts

of its demolished neighbourhoods.[12] Aljafari describes the pioneering and spectral use of sound design in the film, worth quoting here at length:

> While recording we used special microphones that could record the sound inside the wall. (...) It was important for me to listen to the sound of the walls, life buried beneath, inside the sea. The Israeli government and the municipality of Tel Aviv destroyed Jaffa. They threw the homes they destroyed into the sea. But every year, in the winter, when the sea rises, it throws part of these homes back on to the shore. (Aljafari 2016)

There is both a poignancy and political force to Aljafari's words here; the former as in his first feature *The Roof*, a conversation with his grandmother reveals that the family stayed in Jaffa in 1948 as the waves were too strong and forced them back into the port. The notion of the sound-image of these ruins acting as a remnant in the Agambian (2005, 52) sense—an irrepressible, irreducible figure which resists the act of division (as partition) and renders it inoperable—both resonates personally and reinforces the spectral politics of the film; crucially, it reiterates the ethical demand of the ghost, or in Aljafari's (2016) words, for "cinematic justice."

This ethical demand of the ghost is a question Derrida returns to in both *Specters of Marx* (1994) and "Spectographies" (2002). The idea of the ghost keeps open the space of the 'yet-to-come' (how Derrida frames the deferred promise of justice). The revenant must always be permitted to come back, warns Derrida in "Spectographies", as it keeps open the promise of a future which disrupts the status quo: "As soon as one calls for the disappearance of ghosts, one deprives oneself of the very thing that constitutes the revolutionary movement itself, that is to say, the appeal to justice, what I call 'messianicity'" (Derrida 2002, 128). It is this bringing forth of the remnants and revenants of Palestinian Jaffa, I argue, which constitutes the shift in the function of haunting in Aljafari's trilogy; from documenting a haunted architectural uncanny in *The Roof*, to harnessing digital technology's spectral potential to open up the present to the possibility of imagining the political otherwise.

The haunting hyphen:
Between Arab and Jew in Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013)

Amos Gitai is an Israeli filmmaker, but his critical relationship with the State saw him spend the eighties and early nineties in exile in France. An architect by training, his first documentary—*House (Beit)* (1980)—was banned by Israeli television and tells the story of Palestinian exile through a house in West Jerusalem. This explicit concern for

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12 The second segment of the film documents al-Manshiyya—a neighbourhood that was occupied by the Irgun and razed in 1948, with much of the Arab population being forced to leave by sea to Gaza and Egypt, with some moving into the Ajami neighbourhood. (Zochrot 2014)

Palestinian memory in Israeli cinema along with the subconscious spectre of Arab-Jewishness, conditions his 2013 French/Israeli co-production, *Ana Arabia*. *Ana Arabia* is ostensibly an 'Israeli' film about *al-dakhil*, yet shares a number of striking similarities with Kamal Aljafari's *Port of Memory*, a 'Palestinian' one, alongside both directors' 'architectural' framing of mise-en-scène. In this sense, the films could be argued to 'take place' in a liminal space both threatened and abandoned by the State. Both films dwell within the shadow of Tel Aviv, with Gitai's film taking place entirely in an enclave between Jaffa and Bat Yam. They also share a spatial urban politics, as in both films, the main characters, Yusuf in *Ana Arabia* and Salim in *Port of Memory* are being threatened with eviction by the municipality. Linguistically, both move between Arabic and Hebrew and are occupied by the hauntings of Israel's repressed others; that is, both its present-absentee Palestinians and its marginalized Arab-Jews.

Ana Arabia is primarily a film about the haunted/haunting spaces between Arab/Jew and Palestinian/Israeli. The film unfolds in real time, as the main character Yael, a journalist, explores the story of a Jewish holocaust survivor, who converted to Islam and married a Palestinian. Technically, the film is almost without precedent, consisting of a single shot lasting 81 minutes.[13] The location is an important element of the film's mise-en-scène, it essentially being a threshold space. It is an enclave that exists as a liminal space in a number of ways; geographically, it sits between but outside cities (on the edges of both Bat Yam and Jaffa). The significance of this liminality is that this enclave constitutes a community of outcasts. That is, the figures dwelling in this space have all been expelled from a community. The absence that structures the film, the figure of Hannah Kiblanov, who became Siam Hassan (known by her Arabic nickname *Ana Arabia*) was born Jewish, converted to Islam and declared herself an Arab. However, it was the transgressive act of marrying Yussuf which brings her into the space, with the marriage causing problems among friends and family.[14] Sara, the Jewish woman who was married to Jihad (one of Yussuf and Siam's sons), was also subject to ostracism from the sons of his previous marriage, who gave Jihad an ultimatum. Her own marriage became violent, and the violence and madness that ended in Jihad's death in Nablus suggests a complex religious fault line beneath Gitai's professed message of secular co-existence. In Arabic the term *al-kharij* contains within it a semantic ambiguity. It is both 'the exterior', that which is outside of *al-dakhil*, but also carries, in a religious sense, the meaning of leaving or being cast out from an order. This space of *Ana Arabia* thus plays out this tension of *al-kharij* both outside of, and caught within *al-dakhil*; its inhabitants cast out of a religious and political order, yet still contained (or perhaps abandoned) within the interior, a forgotten enclave in the shadow of Tel Aviv.

13 The film's clearest forebear is Alexander Sokurov's *Russian Ark* (2002), a vertical history of Russia and Europe.

14 Yussuf confesses that 'in the 50s and 60s, "friends" of Hannah would threaten to kill him. Hannah fled her family to be with Yussuf, being returned by the police on the first occasion before escaping again.

Arguably, the spectral structure of the film is actually what haunts its form. In a number of interviews given at the release of the film, Amos Gitai has spoken of his desire for both a different way of consuming images of Israel/Palestine, but also for the use of the single take so as not to 'interrupt' the relation between Arab and Jew.[15] The film's grammar then is interesting in that it constructs and dissolves a separation between Arab and Jew, which Gil Anidjar (2003, xxv) recognises as a constructed relation of enmity between ostensibly ethnic (Arab) and religious (Jew) markers—a constructed enemy opposed (in the European imagination) opposed to both Europe and to each other. This distinction is of relevance to *Ana Arabia*, as the proper nouns 'Arab' and 'Islam' are often collapsed into indistinction; the film tells of the conversion of a European Jewish woman (Hannah/Ana/Siam, the dead woman at the 'centre' of the narrative) to Islam in order to marry Yusuf. Ella Shohat's work on postcolonial studies (2006, 208) has critiqued this Eurocentric approach of constructing Arab and Jew in opposition, and also the binary that has evolved aligning Jewish and Christian identity as Western, and Muslim as Eastern.

In its construction and erasure of the Arab/Jew binary, *Ana Arabia* is haunted throughout by the figure of Arab Jewishness, a haunting evoked by the title; literally, 'I am an Arab'. In the film this is intended to show the movement in identity from Hannah (Jew) to Ana (Arab) but betrays the always already dwelling of Arab within Jew and vice versa; a dwelling repressed by the political erasure of the hyphen which falsely "rendered the concept of 'Arab-Jew' oxymoronic" (Shohat 2010, 266).

Conclusion

This article has analysed the complex structure of haunting which constitutes the Cinema of the Interior of Palestine-Israel. This is an interior characterized by a logic of haunted surfaces and repressed depths. The Cinema of the Interior is essentially a cinema of ghosts; the ghost of the unfinished roof of the house in Ramle, in Aljafari's *The Roof* (2006), which traps its occupants beneath the weight of the memory of the *nakba* and creates a contemporary excess of home/sickness; the Palestinian of Jaffa who ghosts the edges of the frame of Israeli cinema's Jaffa productions in *Port of Memory* (2009) and *acts back* on the space of that cinema and *speaks back* against a cultural history of erasure. There is also the double haunting at work in *Port of Memory*, which consciously resists the elision of the Palestinian from the Israeli cinematic frame, but unconsciously re-inscribes the ties that bind Arab and Jew (the erased hyphen) and folds them into a Palestinian narrative of loss and nostalgia. *Recollection* conjures a lost Jaffa as a new digital archive (echoing the 1982 loss of the Palestinian Film Archive), its Palestinian

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15 Gitai has spoken of this interruption in interviews at the release of the film. In a 2014 interview with Nienke Huitenga, he states: "as a citizen of Israel, I think the relation between Jews and Arabs should not be interrupted. So when I translate this to my own language of film, to the syntax of cinema, I also don't want to interrupt."

revenants digitally brought back to resist an Israeli cultural hegemony which has erased them from the frame.

The hyphenated identity of the Arab-Jew enacts a haunting of its own, one which might be termed the spectre of the impossibility of partition. It is the ghostly lacuna *between* the Arab and Jew, the erased hyphen that Ella Shohat (2006) speaks of, which haunts Amos Gitai's *Ana Arabia* (2013) and its attempts to bridge the space between these two figures, a space in which the Arab-Jew already dwells.

The 'ghost' of nostalgia is a topic Ella Shohat (2006) explores in her essay 'Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine and Arab-Jews', when examining the taboo of nostalgia for the Arab world within Euro-Israeli culture in Israel. Reflecting on the East/West partition that Zionism reinforces to also partition Palestine-Israel and Arab-Jew, she writes that "[t]he pervasive notion of 'one people' reunited in their ancient homeland actively disauthorizes any affectionate memory of life before the State of Israel" (Ibid, 222-3).

A theme common to the Cinema of the Interior is how haunting problematises nostalgia for place grounded in nationalism. That is, nostalgia is for a *home* rather than a home*land*. In *Port of Memory,* a scene of nostalgia for Palestinian Jaffa ghosts an Israeli film's scene of Arab-Jewish nostalgia for Morocco, a taboo nostalgia similarly expressed in the closing scenes of *Route 181*. In *The Roof,* Aljafari expresses a yearning for Beirut—a Palestine in exile. These complex and subversive intersections of nostalgia—the Arab-Jewish nostalgia for a time before and a place beyond Israel, the Palestinian nostalgia for a Palestine in exile as much as the land lost in the *nakba*—haunt their respective nationalisms, and complicate a totalising notion of a homeland, pointing to a "stubborn historical intimacy" (Hochberg 2015, 8) between the proper nouns Palestine/Israel and Arab/Jew which renders the political and cultural project of partition inoperable. To end then in the spirit of Derrida, one might paraphrase Marx's own ghostly invocation; a spectre is haunting Palestine-Israel—the spectre of binationalism.

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Biographical note

Robert G. White completed his PhD—
entitled: *Beyond Partition: A Topology of
al-Shatat in Post-Palestinian Cinema*—at the
London Graduate School, a Critical Theory
doctoral programme at Kingston University,
London. His research interests explore the
intersection of film and philosophy. His doctoral
research utilized a topological approach to
examine the dual questions of partition and
the resistance of the image in contemporary
Palestinian cinema. He has presented
his research at a number of international
conferences, including Film-Philosophy. He
is the co-editor of *Spaces of Crisis and Critique:
Heterotopias Beyond Foucault* (Bloomsbury,
2018), for which he contributed the chapter
'Spacing the Interior: The carceral body as
heterotopia in contemporary Palestinian
cinema'. His research has also been published
in *Film Criticism*.

—
ORCID iD
0000-0003-2384-4532
—
Academia.edu
https://kingston.academia.edu/RobertWhite
—
Institutional address
Independent scholar.