

# BEING URBAN

Community, Conflict and  
Belonging in the Middle East

Edited by  
Simon Goldhill

First published 2020  
by Routledge  
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxfordshire OX14 4RN

and by Routledge  
52 Vanderbilt Avenue, New York, NY 10017

*Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business*

© 2020 Selection and editorial matter: Simon Goldhill; individual chapters: the contributors

This book was commissioned and edited by Alexandrine Press, Marcham, Oxfordshire

The right of the author has been asserted in accordance with sections 77 and 78 of the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

The publisher makes no representation, express or implied, with regard to the accuracy of the information contained in this book and cannot accept any legal responsibility or liability for any errors or omissions that may be made.

*Trademark notice:* Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

*British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data*

A catalogue record of this book is available from the British Library

*Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data*

A catalog record for this book has been requested

Typeset in Aldine and Swiss by PNR Design, Didcot

ISBN: 978-0-367-89846-5 (hbk)

ISBN: 978-1-003-02139-1 (ebk)

# Contents

	<b>Acknowledgements</b>	vii
	<b>The Contributors</b>	ix
	<b>Introduction</b>	1
	What Is a Good City? <i>Simon Goldhill</i>	
PART I	ENGAGEMENT AND SPACE	
Chapter 1	<b>The Public Realm</b> <i>Richard Sennett</i>	35
Chapter 2	<b>On Urban Failure</b> <i>Ash Amin</i>	59
Chapter 3	<b>On the Possibility of Urban Citizenship</b> Inclusive Identities, Exclusive Spaces <i>Nezar AlSayyad and Sujin Eom</i>	73
PART II	INFRASTRUCTURE AND AFFECT	
Chapter 4	<b>Urban Atmospheres</b> <i>Matthew Gandy</i>	89
Chapter 5	<b>Atmospheric Urban Geopolitics</b> <i>Sara Fregonese</i>	113
Chapter 6	<b>Becoming a Crowd</b> Multiple Narratives, Identities and Ambiguities: People's Places in the Near East/Levant: Tahrir Square, Cairo, Taksim Square, Istanbul, Rabin Square, Tel Aviv <i>Mike Turner and Yonca Erkan</i>	127
PART III	CONFLICT AND STRUCTURE	
Chapter 7	<b>The Conditions of Urbicide</b> <i>Wendy Pullan</i>	153
Chapter 8	<b>Sovereignty and the Urban Question</b> Exploring the Material Foundations for Imagined Communities of Allegiance in Conflict Cities <i>Diane E. Davis</i>	172
Chapter 9	<b>Precariousness and Protest</b> Negotiating Urban Refuge in Cairo and Tel Aviv <i>Irit Katz</i>	201

PART IV	CURATING THE CITY	
Chapter 10	<b>The Levantine Age</b> Cosmopolitanism and Colonialism in the Eastern Mediterranean <i>Nasser Rabbat</i>	219
Chapter 11	<b>Excavating Urban Imaginaries in Tehran</b> <i>Somaiyeh Falahat</i>	233
Chapter 12	<b>A Spectral Sumud</b> Jaffa in Kamal Aljafari's <i>Port of Memory</i> <i>Mezna Qato and Sadia Shirazi</i>	252
	<b>Index</b>	262

## A SPECTRAL SUMUD: JAFFA IN KAMAL ALJAFARI'S *Port of Memory*

Mezna Qato and Sadia Shirazi

Goldhill, Simon, ed. *Being Urban: Community, Conflict and Belonging in the Middle East*. London: Routledge, 2020: pp. 252-261.



Kamal Aljafari, still from *Port of Memory* (2010). Courtesy of the artist.

Adorno says that for a man who no longer has a country, to write becomes a place to live.  
I would say for a Palestinian, the cinema is a country.  
—Kamal Aljafari, 2012

This chapter is a meditation on one of Kamal Aljafari's films set in Jaffa—*Port of Memory* (2010). We argue that in this film, Aljafari overturns normative cinematic narratives of Palestinian cities as either dead or fully ensnared in a statist project. In *Port of Memory*, Jaffa is not represented as a site of urban ruin nor as an 'underdeveloped' city undergoing 'redevelopment' but as a place of habitation and rebellion against gentrification and occupation. Aljafari, we argue, not only reclaims cinematic representations of Jaffa as an act of 'cinematic justice' (Handal, 2016), but in his restitution of the city and its built environment to its Palestinian inhabitants he en-

gages in a radical act of historic preservation. Aljafari's film creates a cinematic archive in which obdurate stones resist as do the inhabitants of the neighborhood of Ajami, both engaged in what we call a spectral sumud in which habitation functions as rebellion. Aljafari's work creates a space of reconstituted materiality for the Palestinian subject in Israel who finds themselves doubly erased – on the one hand by the imminent threat of dispossession, and on the other, by erasure from cinematic archival records.

*Port of Memory* opens with a long tracking shot of a grand, decaying house at twilight. The camera lingers tenderly on the bones of a structure that bears traces of other times and previous inhabitations. These cinematic caresses read as a memorial for a building that may not live much longer: we see a floorboard of what was once a balcony, recesses where there were stairs, and the remnants of plaster crenellations above cinder-blocked windows. This now uninhabited home has been partially demolished and stands alone, severed from the former collectivity of its street, while the camera carefully attends to the traces of its previous life. This is Aljafari's Jaffa, a city in ruins as a result of its encounter with an Israeli state that has used both occupation and gentrification to erode its historic city centre and to dismember its built environment, severing the port city's access to the sea. The filmmaker draws a connection between the expropriation of Palestinian property in Jaffa and the exclusion of Palestinians from cinematic representations of the city. Through his film's episodic narrative, Aljafari's depiction of the shrinking port city and its spectral inhabitants inextricably ties the lives of its Palestinian inhabitants to the materiality of these spaces—Aljafari joins bricks to flesh.<sup>i</sup> In doing so, he offers a critique of what he calls the 'cinematic occupation' of Jaffa and the use of historic preservation and urban 'redevelopment' by the state as tools of occupation and gentrification.

More so than many other Palestinian cities, Jaffa was a central character in the nascent twentieth-century political imaginary as a primary outward-facing port that multiple imperial powers attempted to claim.<sup>ii</sup> From the nineteenth century, it was where *Filastin* and *Al-Difa'*, the leading dailies of the Ottoman and Mandate periods, were printed, carrying news to and from the world, and to and from Arabic-reading populations across the country and region. By the 1930s, Jaffa was a crucial node in political mobilization against British rule, its shoremen and dockworkers organizing the first general strike in 1933 that quickly spread throughout the country, and the city was a hub of agitation during the 1936-1939 revolt. Jaffa was the primary corridor of arms and munitions between Ramle and the wider hinterland, critical to the survival of the resistance to British colonialism (Golan, 2009). It was also the economic bedrock of the country, particularly of the citrus industry.<sup>iii</sup>

However, like other Palestinian cities, Jaffa from 1948 onwards was laid siege to by colonial and then Zionist forces, who hollowed out its historical and social core, fragmenting and scattering its population, bulldozing its buildings and overtaking its vibrant port. This of course devastated the economic and social capital of the city's inhabitants and destroyed the city's urban fabric.

Despite this, very little cinematic attention has been paid by Palestinian filmmakers to Jaffa. It acts as no one's central character, as Nazareth and Nablus are for Aljafari's contemporaries Elia Suleiman and Hany Abu-Assad. Instead, it is more often a city referenced as nostalgic loss, living primarily through invocations of its past. One such example is Annemarie Jacir's *Salt of this Sea* (2010), released the same year as *Port of Memory*. For Jacir, Jaffa is a constellation of characters, each an archetype of a particular Palestinian condition (the Diasporic woman, the beleaguered Labourer, the Collaborator and Technocrat). *Salt of this Sea* is a melodramatic film in which the built environment is a prop in its narrative structure, a conjured terrain for a troubled Palestinian-American's homecoming. This city is agitprop for a romantic cinematic gaze. The handsome characters of her film dreamily look on from parapets across the city at a lush sunset of a blissful Mediterranean metropolis. The film is a love story, and the love is for a city imagined and idealized rather than lived in, a city of memorialisation, of return and illusion (Antoun and Yaqobi, 2006).

Rather than foreground a righteous naiveté from which everything becomes a prompt for moral indignation or heaving resignation, Aljafari's characters in *Port of Memory* are flat in affect, almost morose, as they face the banal forms of erasure that enfold them. Aljafari shrugs off functionalist symbolism, returning the city and the sea to its Palestinian inhabitants and allowing them the space to animate the city through everyday life. Aljafari's episodic filmic narrative does not imbue his characters with any more agency than the buildings, they are all entangled, spectral figures that refuse to remain in the present alone. Jacir's golden rays are replaced in Aljafari's film with melancholic blues and the story-line grinds to a halt. Indeed, in an almost direct response to portrayals of the city such as Jacir's, Aljafari seems to mark them as the filmic tropes of nationalist ideology that have actually suffocated everyday life in the city.

We see elements of this vision in Aljafari's earlier film, *The Roof* (2006). There Aljafari directs his attention to the fraught condition of a family's existence in the city of Ramle in central Israel, where he was born in 1972.<sup>iv</sup> Many families from Jaffa were expelled from Jaffa to Ramle during the 1948 war just months after those original inhabitants of Ramle (and Lydd), some 50,000-70,000 people, those not massacred, were forced out, losing their homes and livelihoods.<sup>v</sup> In this film too, Aljafari renders the minutiae of settler colonial experiences, of the city destroyed both by inattention



and hyper-attention. The city's Palestinian inhabitants are bored, they are tired. They are just getting by or barely making it through.



Kamal Aljafari, still from *Port of Memory* (2010). Courtesy of the artist.

## A SPECTRAL SUMUD

*Port of Memory* bears witness to what becomes of Palestinians who are left out of cinematic narratives, and simultaneously also left behind, in Israel. Aljafari focuses on the Palestinian residents in Jaffa, a population of around 3,000 people amidst nearly half a million Jewish Israelis. Many of these Palestinians live with the imminent threat of eviction from their homes. The city has been steadily absorbed and encroached upon by Tel Aviv to its north—to the point that it is now considered a suburb of Tel Aviv (as discussed by Katz and Davis in this volume). New construction surrounds the Palestinian neighborhood of Ajami; the ambient sounds of construction and demolition of buildings permeate the film's score. While Henri Lefebvre writes that the city is a setting of struggle and the stake of that same struggle, Aljafari identifies cinematic space as a parallel site of struggle, and restitutes Palestinian inhabitants' rights to their city by reconstituting memory through filmmaking (Lefebvre, 1992, p. 386). He departs from dominant spectacular filmic representations by focusing on the materiality of the city and the minutiae, sounds and gestures of everyday life. Though we know from *The Roof* that the characters are in fact Aljafari's extended family, Aljafari's relationship to the subjects in the film is never made explicit and this deliberate avoidance of easy empathy or sentimentality underscores his resistance to the genre of documentary narrative films that sets out to restore humanity to devalued human life.



Aljafari deploys the repetition of daily gestures and sounds to structure the episodic film and guide its intervallic narrative. He imbues haptic and sonic registers with elegiac and defiant tones that rhythmically punctuate the film, creating continuity, not rupture: the long takes of the filmmaker's aunt ritually and systematically washing her hands in the sink, Aljafari's family seated on a couch watching television, and a man in a desolated beachfront café drawing a hot piece of coal within centimetres of his neck. As *Port of Memory* progresses, these gestures of the inhabitants take on an excruciatingly pained and tensile beauty. The characters' movements clearly hold crisis at bay, while also holding close to one another and the city. The frenetic activity of settler-colonial encroachment is met with the still obstinance of Ajami's residents, who *remain*. Remaining is conceptualised as 'sumud' or steadfastness, and is part of an ideological theme and a politicised language, developed by Palestinian nationalist politics in the 1960s (Meari, 2014). Concretised in the aftermath of the 1967 war as an attempt to give name to the experience of a refusal to move, existing became a form of rebellion, and inhabitation was rendered a revolutionary act. Although sumud normally emphasizes a pastoralist attentiveness to territorial claims by those in more rural conditions across the occupied territories and in Israel, we argue that *Port of Memory* claims it for urban spaces. The implacable symbolic power of sumud in Palestinian imaginaries lends itself to reading modes of habitation as resistance in Aljafari's film.

In the film, the gaping maw of settler-colonial expansionism is the lurking menace to Jaffa's inhabitants and the buildings that offer them both a physical extension and cover. The polite and prowling gentrifying home buyers and the development advertising copy that proclaims to have built Jaffa itself, both swallow and rework the city's history, a story of primitive accumulation, of a state born from the dispossession of others. In the first scene of the film, when Salim (Aljafari's Uncle) visits his lawyer to discuss an order of evacuation from Amidar, the state-owned housing company, it marks the second time the family has had to defend their ownership of the property from the Israeli state. In the ten years that have passed since the first case, the family's lawyer has misplaced the title of the house. This scene in which the family attempts to challenge the legality of the government's actions is compromised by their own lawyer establishes the limits of the law within the judicial framework of the state. The stupefying bureaucracy of expropriative legality and the trivial but excruciatingly consequential contingency of the loss of a document, is the archetypal crisis of the precarious and dispossessed within the state.

The film pairs the incremental legal expropriation of Palestinian property in Jaffa with the foreclosure of Palestinian residents from the city's cinematic history.<sup>vi</sup> When we spoke with him, Aljafari referred to this as the 'cinematic occupation of Jaffa.'<sup>vii</sup> In

another interview, he explains: 'the film is very much about place, being excluded from it, about being there and not being there at the same time. I know these buildings will vanish from reality, so at least I have them in my film. And [through] cinema...with framing and by shooting something for a long time, you can claim it.'<sup>viii</sup> Citing Hayden White, Edward Said suggests that 'narrative in general, from the folk tale to the novel, from annals to the fully realised "history," has to do with the topics of law, legality, legitimacy, or, more generally, authority.' (2002, pp 141-7). Aljafari shifts this emphasis on "history" to focus on the space of domesticity as a site of conflict, the film produces a haptic interruption to "narration" by animating both human and non-human objects. The film not only challenges dominant histories but recasts the narratives of foreclosed subjects in the materiality of its architecture as well as in Jaffa's cinematic archive. The urban infrastructure of Jaffa is people (Simone, 2004), and buildings become characters through which the narrative of urban existence is told. The residents of Ajami remain in excess of settler-colonialism, its remnants and surplus. However, in the state of suspension lived by the characters, an insistence on touch, domesticity and the habits of daily life lived near the edge of the sea, emerge as the ground of the city itself, becoming a performative rebellion, *sumud*, against the threat of dispossession and erasure by the Israeli state and its gentrifying citizens (Lloyd and Wolfe, 2016).

This process of urban change in Jaffa could in some measure be regarded as the typical practices of gentrification, familiar to urban sites globally (Smith, 1996; Lees, 2000; Hackworth and Smith, 2001). But it is crucial to understand that these developments in Jaffa take shape under particular conditions – and are experienced quite differently by the Palestinian residents of the city, from others, who move about the city with relative ease, and who appropriate it as their own. Aljafari's film does not dwell on describing the mechanisms of gentrification, outraged though he may be about these processes. Rather, each scene layers a thick obstinate sense of emplacement, of how these processes compel residents to resist by remaining, while Aljafari too, refuses to avert his gaze from incipient erasure through filmmaking, and stages a deferral of death. While historic preservation is often used to describe the activities of urban planners operating at the behest of the state, we make a case for Aljafari engaging in historic preservation through filmmaking by way of preserving a cinematic archive of a disappearing Jaffa.

Jaffa itself has a peculiarly rich presence in contemporary film history: the city was used as a live set for numerous American and Israeli films from the 1960s through the 1980s. Aljafari appropriates footage from two such films - *The Delta Force* (1986), in which Jaffa represents war-torn Beirut, and *Kazablan* (1974), in which Jaffa represents itself – and shows Mizrahi Jews struggling against Ashkenazi government representatives over house demolitions – a story of inter-Israeli oppression that elides

the city's Palestinian narratives. The filmmaker responds to the exclusion of Palestinians from cinematic representation – indeed, in *The Delta Force*, even the opportunity to play Arab 'terrorists' was granted only to Mizrahi Jews – by reinserting them into the film. A layered psychic narrative emerges from this juxtaposition of the everyday life of Palestinian residents with scenes from these Hollywood action and Israeli dramatic films, with the filmmaker carefully replicating the camera's placement to capture the same scenes, albeit in a different time and populated by very different actors. A refusal against 'invisibilisation' – but also against individuated celebration. The characters to be added, apart from that of his uncle, are those who make the city, its everyday oxygen of bodies at work, shown at rest, tired, bored, amused and in pain. They are children, the elderly, people in love, people grieving and indebted to one another.

In the last sequence of images in *Port of Memory*, imagery collides. Footage from *The Delta Force* of a tank hurtling down a pedestrian street, hugged tightly by the old stone walls of residences, is followed by a long take of Salim ambling down the same street, worn from the passage of time but readily recognisable. The city's streets are transfigured from a site of violent conflict in the first film, to a prosaic pedestrian landscape, without any movement of the cinematic frame. The explosions and collisions in *The Delta Force* happened in real time and space, with ammunition ricocheting off walls and absorbed by streets and buildings. Roland Barthes wrote 'The Photograph represents that very subtle moment when, to tell the truth, I am neither subject nor object but a subject who feels he is becoming an object: I then experience a micro-version of death (of parenthesis): I am truly becoming a spectre.' Jaffa's cinematic image, to paraphrase and extend Barthes towards a decolonized reading of the photograph, was not just an intimation of death, but one whose production literally contributed to the city becoming a spectre.<sup>ix</sup> Departing from Barthes' theory of the unary photograph, Aljafari returns the photograph to its historical moment, through its reproduction and theatrical staging of life in a dead image that doubles it.

Another film sequence re-appropriated for Salim by Aljafari comes from the Israeli film *Kazablan*. The scene opens with Salim gazing longingly at the sea, from which he is separated by a mesh wire fence. The camera then pans to a shot of the sea and another man's voice is heard singing, 'There is a place beyond the sea, where the sand is white and home is worn, where the sun shines, over the market, the street and the port....' The water is now accessible and the actor sings as he walks along the shoreline and then through the narrow pedestrian streets of Jaffa. In a montage sequence and spectral sumud that is particularly poignant, Aljafari transports Salim into the spaces of this parallel film universe by green-screening him so that he can walk back through the port of his childhood. Salim walks in front of *Kazablan's* main actor, looking back at him playfully as he ducks into a doorway. In the next scene, Salim

alone traverses the eerily unpopulated spaces of the vacant port (now disappeared) he remembers from his youth. These scenes produce spaces of a past-future, in which the past is replaced by a future presence and where reality is supplanted temporarily by projective desire.<sup>x</sup> It is unclear whether the scenes are part of a dream sequence or a waking memory roused by gazing at the ever more distant sea: it represents the spectrality of the city and a cyclical time that refuses erasure. The film ends with a sequence of images that echo the film's structure: night falls, the morning is greeted by construction along the coastline, Aljafari's aunt commences washing her hands, his uncle gazes again at the sea from his rooftop at dusk, and the screen fades to black.

## THE SEA AND RETURNS

Through a dual invocation of cinema, Aljafari is intent on returning the city of Jaffa to its Palestinian residents. On the one hand, cinema offers the only access to these spaces that no longer exist, while at the same time, cinema is presented as a fiction, as something that does not exist. The land and the stories about the land are not easily aligned, and Aljafari's footage further complicates this mix.<sup>xi</sup> Indeed, Aljafari refrains from establishing a triumphalist ideology in his work and cultivates what Said referred to as a 'scrupulous...subjectivity' (Said, 2002, pp 141–147). The film moves between subjective and objective registers in its hybrid form of fiction-documentary, refusing and refuting Jean-Luc Goddard's observation in his film *Notre Musique* (2004) that all that is left to the Palestinians is documentary, while the Israelis possess fiction. Goddard gives the photograph, banal and reproducible, to the Palestinians and a photograph, unreproducible and unary to the Israelis, a repression that is an invocation, too, of Barthes.<sup>xii</sup> Yet *Port of Memory*, as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak remarked of subaltern historiography, 'articulates the difficult task of rewriting its own conditions of impossibility as the conditions of its possibility' (Spivak, 1988, p 275).

When Salim walks again along Jaffa's corniche, Aljafari re-enacts that primal nationalist act—return—in a form that turns its back on rhetorical performance. If you live in a city, you return every day, you return home, from visiting a friend or family, the market, work, hospital, or school. Walking through the city is an act of always returning from elsewhere. As Salim is green screened back into his city's streets, so too are all the prior inhabitants of this Jaffa. And in so doing, Aljafari claims the city over and over again, imprinting himself and his family and friends into its streets, alongside the sea, within the stones of the buildings, redefining both its cinematic representations and its physical terrain. It is precisely in this spectral form of return, this haunting of Jaffa by those who live in it but are excised from it, that Aljafari makes his most powerful statement as both promise and threat.<sup>xiii</sup>

The spectrality of Salim, the ports of memory, is not merely to perform one's own record of existence, of sumud, but to hurl back into nostalgia's face its own hypocrisies and rejections, its own erasures. Aljafari's Jaffa, in other words, is a city slowly being erased, but also a defiant city of immovable stone, a raging sea that may itself swallow the city one day, but also of people tending to each other, slowing down time as they hold one another and move within it. Aljafari's camera watches with tenderness as people live in excess of settler colonial erasure and nationalist flourish. It is almost as if Aljafari's Jaffa is less about a lost city, than the spectre of possibility for another kind of life in the city, another kind of relationship to it altogether. One of friendship, care, neighbourly camaraderie, companionship in silence, and respect and space for rage and hurt. As the motorcyclist whirs across the screen to the water's edge, as Salim wanders along the beach, and his sister arranges the sofa just so, a spectre is conjured of a city that not only defies death and calamity but with loving cinematic transpositions promises another future for Jaffa, and future as home.

Antoun, N. and Yaqubi, M. (2006) Yaffa is not an Orange: The Limits of Archetypes *Jadaliyya*, July 25, 2011. Accessed October 28, 2019: <https://www.jadaliyya.com/Details/24220/Yaffa-is-not-an-Orange-The-Limits-of-Archetypes>

Barthes, R. (1981) *Camera Lucida*, trans. Richard Howard (New York: Hill and Wang)

Golan, A. (2009) War and Postwar Transformation of Urban Areas: The 1948 War and the Incorporation of Jaffa into Tel Aviv. *Journal of Urban History* 35. 7, pp. 1020-1036.

Hackworth, J. and Smith, N. (2001) The Changing State of Gentrification. *Tijdschrift voor Economische en Sociale Geografie*, 92, pp. 464-77

Handal, N. (2016) Kamal Aljafari: Unfinished Balconies in the Sea: Interview with the Filmmaker, *Guernica: A Magazine of Art & Politics*, 18 February 2016. <https://www.guernicamag.com/kamal-aljafari-filming-ghosts-and-unfinished-balconies/>

Himada, N. (2010) This Place They Dried From The Sea: An Interview with Kamal Aljafari, Montreal Serai, 28 September 2010. <https://montrealserai.com/article/this-place-they-dried-from-the-sea-an-interview-with-kamal-aljafari/>

Lees, L. (2000), A Re-appraisal of Gentrification: Towards a 'Geography of Gentrification'. *Progress in Human Geography* 24 (3), pp. 389-408.

Lefebvre, H. (1992) *The Production of Space*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. London: Wiley-Blackwell.

Lloyd, D. and Wolfe, P. (2016) Settler Colonial Logics and the Neoliberal Regime. *Settler Colonial Studies*, 6:2, pp. 109-118

Meari, L. (2014) Sumud: A Palestinian Philosophy of Confrontation in Colonial Prisons. *South Atlantic Quarterly* 113 (3), pp. 547-578.

Moten, F. (2003) *In the Break: the Aesthetics of Black Radical Tradition*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

Pappé, I. (2006) *History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Said, E. (2002) *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Simon, A. (2004) "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg," *Public Culture*, Volume 16 (3), Fall, pp. 407-429.

Smith, N. (1996), *The New Urban Frontier: Gentrification And The Revanchist City*. New York: Routledge.

Spivak, G. (1988) Can the Subaltern Speak? in *Marxism and The Interpretation of Culture*. Ed. Nelson, C. and Grossberg, L. (London: Macmillan, 1988), pp. 271–313.

Spivak, G. (1999) *A Critique of Postcolonial Reason* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press).

<sup>i</sup> This act of what we argue is joining bricks to flesh operates as a critique of the shift from human testimony to forensic analysis of material 'evidence' in human rights discourse and law in the 1990s. This techno-fetishization, as we call it, of testimony from objects, is exemplified by projects such as 'Forensic Architecture' at Goldsmiths University, which, we argue, severs bricks from flesh, and in which forensic analysis eclipses the testimony of survivors and witnesses to violence.

<sup>ii</sup> It of course is also mentioned in far earlier sources, including the Old and New Testaments, in classical Greek writing and in early Muslim texts: for generations it was a port of entry to the 'Holy Land.' It held powerful symbolic value as point of contact, and as site for multiple historic imaginaries.

<sup>iii</sup> The population of Jaffa exploded from nearly 27, 000 in 1928 to 71, 000 in 1948. As more Palestinians were driven by drought, famine and economic dereliction by British colonial administration to the city, from the increasingly dire conditions of the countryside, Jaffa boomed as a commercial centre and primary port of call, particularly of the citrus industry. This came to an end in 1948, after which many Palestinians from the city left, and most of their descendants languish in refugee camps in Lebanon and Jordan, while others found refuge further afield. They carried with them social, political and economic capital that held sway in the decades after, as they led political agitation and helped found the Palestinian Liberation Organization and its constituent political parties, entered into the bureaucracies of host states and built up substantive capital in the Gulf states and beyond. For an overview of this history, see Pappé, 2006.

<sup>iv</sup> Kamal Aljafari's father's family is from El Ramle and his mother's family of Bilbesi's are from Jaffa. Aljafari was born in El Ramle in 1972.

<sup>v</sup> Turning to film from an early age, Aljafari left Jaffa to study film at the Kunsthochschule für Medien (Academy of Media Arts) in Cologne, Germany, held a fellowship at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard and now teaches in Germany. The matter of home, belonging and care haunt his cinematic work.

<sup>vi</sup> "Foreclosure" here refers to the use of the psychoanalytic term in postcolonial theory, which highlights the term's ethical underpinnings: 'I shall docket the encrypting of the name of the "native informant" as the name of Man...I think of the "native informant" as a name for that mark of expulsion from the name of Man—a mark crossing out the impossibility of the ethical relation.' Spivak, 1999 pp. 5-6.

<sup>vii</sup> Kamal Aljafari, personal interview by Sadia Shirazi, New York, November 10, 2011.

<sup>viii</sup> Kamal Aljafari, interview by Nasrin Hamada, 'This Place They Dried From The Sea: An Interview with Kamal Aljafari,' *Montreal Serai*, 28 September 2010. <http://montrealserai.com/article/this-place-they-dried-from-the-sea-an-interview-with-kamal-aljafari/> (accessed March 1, 2011).

<sup>ix</sup> The cinematic image is considered akin to the photographic image. See Barthes, 1981, p14.

<sup>x</sup> Thanks to Laura Mulvey for helping develop this line of thought.

<sup>xi</sup> Sarah Lookofsky's feedback contributed greatly to this argument.

<sup>xii</sup> For more on 'piercing historicity' and critiques of the unary in Barthes, see Moten, 2003, pp. 208-209.

<sup>xiii</sup> We draw from Constantina Zavitsanos talk from the 'Living Labor: Art/Work' Panel at the NYU Performance Studies that occurred on 13 April 2014. "Living Labor: Art/Work," <https://vimeo.com/102015824> (accessed 15 January 2017). Zavitsanos draws from the Philadelphia Student Union's call and response with Gomian Konneh, a Mastermind H.S. Student during their protest of budget cuts in public schools: 'If you are, unable, to take care, of us now, how do you, expect us, to take care, of you later' and considers it as an oath, a threat, a promise and a real question. Constantina Zavitsanos, text message to S. Shirazi, January 23, 2017. See also: '#Walkout215 - Philadelphia Students Say "No" to Budget Cuts,' YouTube video, 01:59 at 01:24-01:25, posted by Media Mobilizing Project on 18 May 2013, <http://https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KywXVCNiR6M> (accessed 23 January 2017).