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**Imaging the Homeland;
Representations of Palestine in Palestinian Art
And Popular Culture**

Tina Sherwell

Ph.D. Communication and Image Studies

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Imaging the Homeland; Representations of Palestine in Palestinian Art and Popular Culture

Ph.D. Communication and Image Studies

Tina Sherwell

Abstract

The thesis examines the construction of Palestinian national identity via a study of the representation of the homeland. The thesis focuses specifically on the representations created by Palestinians of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. This Palestinian community, who continue to live on the land that was formerly Palestine, have created representations in the absence of their own official state apparatus and in the context in which representations of Palestinian identity met with harsh reprisals by the occupying authorities. This thesis contributes towards the study of national identity, for it reveals that nationalism is not an object in itself to be studied but is the outcome of the practices of social actors.

The thesis explores the representation of the Palestinian homeland created by those who have experienced the land as the landscape of their every day lives under occupation, yet at the same time perceive the land as the future site of a Palestinian national homeland. It is the representations of these Palestinians who have experienced this paradox which is the focus of this thesis.

In examining the representations of Palestinian national identity the thesis addresses the transformations the representation of the landscape has undergone as part of its incorporation into the national discourse. It specifically looks at the representation of the village and the peasantry as way towards understanding how Palestinians use elements of the past and from the landscape to image their national identity and the nation's past and future. Feelings of belonging and love for the homeland are explored in relation to the gendering of the homeland. While the final chapter examines what happens to the representation of the homeland, national identity and the role of art after a decline of a nationalist imperative and a period of heightened nationalism.

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Glossary of Arabic Words Used in the Thesis

| | |
|--------------|--|
| Abu | Father |
| Ard | Male honour |
| Batin askiri | Military womb |
| Dabka | Traditional Palestinian dance originating from the peasant community |
| DFLP | Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine |
| Dunum | 1000m squared |
| Fateh | The largest political wing within the PLO whose leader is Yassir Arafat |
| Fellah | Peasant. |
| Fellaheen | The peasantry. |
| Feyedeen | Freedom fighter |
| Ghoul | Spirit |
| Hamula | A patrilinear, patriarchal group |
| Henna night | Bride's party attended by the female members of the bride and bridegroom's family. The name derives from the tradition of adorning the organic patterns drawn in henna |
| Hmar | An ass |
| Hosh | Central courtyard in a family residential compound |
| Intifada | Uprising- literally a shaking off. The name given to the uprising that swept the occupied territories in December 1987 and lasted until 1994. |
| Irgilieh | Water pipe for smoking tobacco |
| Jinn | Spirit |
| Kanoon | Metal container for heating coals |
| Khutbeh | Engagement |
| Kufiyeh | A chequered man's headscarf. A symbol of affiliation to Fateh, within the PLO. Originally part of the peasant's headwear |

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| Madafah | The village guest house. A one-room compound often situated next to the Sheik's compound in the village. |
| Mahr | Dowry, bride price which is paid by the groom to the bride |
| Masha'a | A form of collective farming |
| Mihrab | Prayer niche |
| Munadalin | Strugglers |
| Nakba | The catastrophe. This is the name given to the experience of the war of 1948 in which Palestine was lost and half of its population were transformed into refugees |
| Nidal | Struggle |
| PCP | Palestinian Communist Party |
| PFLP | Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine |
| PLO | The Palestinian Liberation Organisation established in 1964 the leader of which is Yassir Arafat. The organisation has worked since the 1960's for the end to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem and to the right for self- determination for the Palestinian people |
| PPP | Palestinian People's Party |
| Qarineh | Female Spirit |
| Sahra | Party |
| Sannea'a | Large round metal tray for serving food |
| Sejlon | Couch |
| Shaheeds | Martyrs |
| Shebab | A young male youth |
| Shedeh | Backgammon |
| Sheikh | Village leader |
| Sulta | The Palestinian National Authority |

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| Sumud | Steadfastness. The political strategy of resisting Israeli occupation by bearing all aspects of life under occupation and refusing to leave the occupied territories or the refugee camps |
| Taboun | Traditional outdoor oven for baking bread built of mud and stone |
| Thob | Long sleeved traditional dress worn by Palestinian peasant women and covered with elaborate patterns of cross-stitch embroidery |
| Tlubeh | Ceremony in which male members of the bridegroom's family ask for the hand of the bride from the male members of her family |
| Umm | Mother |
| Umma | The wider community. Often reference will be made to the umma of Muslim believers or the Arab people |
| UNLU | United National Leadership of the Uprising |

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Introduction

National identities are based on the difference between 'them' and 'us', distinctions which serve to mark the boundaries of the national community. Often the identity of the nation is represented as 'essentialist', positing that beneath the differences that exist between the members of the nation there lie elements which they hold in common, that serve to bind the people together and to distinguish them from other national communities (Hall;1990;223). Definitions of a nation are often based on the idea that the people of the nation share a common culture, language, origin, have been resident in a particular geographical terrain and recognise that they share these elements in common (Gellner;1983;7, Smith;1982;187). Several or all of these characteristics are used as the basis of a national formation. The majority of nations are distinguished by the fact that communities who possess a shared culture reside in a demarcated terrain that constitutes the nation's homeland- the nation state. However, not all communities who see themselves as constituting a nation reside, in a nation state in which they exercise sovereignty. In general, however, communities who distinguish themselves as nations articulate their desire for national independence in terms of a struggle to acquire the freedom to govern their community in the form of a nation state- which is defined as geographically continuous bound territory (Smith;1982;191-192).

Different approaches exist to the study of the national identity of particular national communities. The first approach is governed by the premise of legitimating the 'essentialist' identity of the nation. This approach uses historical, political and cultural evidence to authenticate national identity and to validate the claims of a people to being a distinct national community sharing a common culture, history and origin. Absent from this approach is self-reflexivity. Thus, academic research using this approach reinforces the mythologies of the nation's claim to an 'essentialist' identity without properly examining how the nation creates representations of itself and how

academic texts contribute to validating the claims of a nation. The second approach to the study of national identity is the constructivist approach. Those who work from this premise approach national identity with a view to understanding how national identity is constructed and reproduced by the members of the nation. Commencing from a constructivist position, studies take into consideration the ways in which national identities are formed, maintained and how belonging is fostered, structured and articulated by national subjects and by the official apparatuses of a nation. Such approaches, rather than validating and authenticating nationalism, deconstruct the ways in which national communities validate and authenticate themselves and their claims to possess a distinct identity. It is the latter theoretical approach that informs the study of Palestinian national identity in this thesis whose subject is an examination of the mechanisms of national identity.

These two different approaches to the study of Palestinian nationalism are evident in the following texts. 'Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness', published in 1997 by Rashid Khalidi, is very much informed by the legitimating school of thought. For although he cites in his introduction constructivist theories for the study of nationalism, he does not necessarily apply them to his historical inquiry of Palestinian identity. Khalidi's book charts the discussion of Palestine in the Arab and the Palestinian press during the early twentieth century. This was a time when debates on identity began to flourish with the rise of Arab cultural nationalism and as a consequence of the easing of censorship regulations by the ruling Ottomans. He examines the fears and discussions about Zionist ambitions in Palestine, as expressed by the elite of that time. Khalidi also devotes part of his discussion to an examination of peasant disturbances and confrontations with settlers, suggesting that this was an early form of nationalist expression. He then proceeds to discuss two figures from Palestine who served in the Ottoman Parliament- Diya 'al-Khalidi and Ruhi al-Khalidi in regards to their overlapping identities, from which he

argues Palestinian identity emerged. He draws his book to a close by examining the 're-emergence of Palestinian identity' explaining the circumstances which prevented the disappearance of Palestinian identity and the role of the PLO in developing and re-shaping Palestinian identity. The aim of Khalidi's project is to uncover the existence of Palestinian nationalism at the end of the nineteenth century and during the early decades of the twentieth century, as it was expressed in a number of fields. He focuses on the peasant uprisings, debates in the Arab press about Zionism and affiliation patterns of the elite. Put in another way, he attempts to reveal that Palestinian identity was in existence during the historical periods of his study and uses his historical research to support his claims, thus from a retrospective perspective he reads the existence of Palestinian identity into his material. Unlike the title of his book, he doesn't specifically address how Palestinian identity is constructed and reproduced. Khalidi devotes much of his research to the study of the early years of Palestinian nationalism, and only deals with the recent history of Palestinian nationalism in his final chapter. Although he sets out to examine the reasons for the perpetuation of Palestinian identity, he does not examine how this is achieved nor does he explore the importance of the symbols and imagery of the nation.

Ted Swedenberg's article, 'The Palestinian Peasant as National Signifier', (1990) stands in marked contrast to Khalidi's text. Swedenberg explores the way the peasant has been appropriated into the national discourse and transformed into a symbol of national identity where the peasantry are used to signify the character of the Palestinian people and their relationship to the land. In this process, he highlights how the history of the peasantry is contoured to create a positive representation of the peasantry with which the members of the nation can metaphorically identify themselves. Thus, in contrast to Khalidi's treatment of the peasantry, he does not read into the peasants' actions of the past displays of national identity, but reveals that such readings are precisely part of the construction of the nation's re-imaging of its

past. However, the legitimating approach to the study of national identity needs to be understood in terms of the political discourse of Palestinian identity. Palestinian identity and Palestinian national aspirations are contested and have not been fully recognised. Thus, for a community engaged in a national struggle, the legitimating approach serves to validate their claims in a context in which there are a host of counter-claims that seek to deny the existence of a Palestinian identity (Bowman;1988;31, Said;1986b;66). The problem stems from the fact that in the arena of politics those nations who have contested Palestinian identity fail to recognise that their own national identities are also recent inventions.

The work of Benedict Anderson, Ernst Gellner and Eric Hobsbawm are among those whose writings have been seminal in establishing the constructivists' approach to the study of national identity. Ernst Gellner proposes that nations are not the outcome of an awakening of an old identity but are a new form of social organisation (Gellner;1983;48). Gellner elaborates on his view that nations are recent social formations suggesting that, "Having a nation is not an inherent attribute of humanity but has come to appear as such" (Gellner;1983;6). Thus, what those who subscribe to the constructivists' school of thought explore is how national identities come to appear as a 'natural' identity (Hobsbawm;1983;14). Gellner argues that "Nations as a natural, God-given way of classifying men as an inherent long delayed political destiny are a myth; nationalism, which sometimes takes pre-existing cultures and turns them into nations, sometimes invents them and often obliterates pre-existing cultures: that is reality" (Gellner;1983;49). This notion of the nation being the realisation of a 'long delayed political destiny' is particularly informative in regards to the study of third world nationalisms, whose content was significantly contoured by the encounter with colonialism and modernity. The rhetoric of a 'long delayed political destiny' is often part of third world nationalisms, in which the coloniser is imaged as that who prevents the complete realisation of the people's national identity and aspirations to

nationhood. Indeed, it was the case that many third world nations emerged from the liberation struggles of peoples who endeavoured to throw off the shackles of colonial rule, which by definition attempted to suppress the national aspirations of the colonised. However, what is most significant about this process is the role of the antagonists (Bowman;1994;145). For it is the prevention of the national aspirations of the colonised that does much to fashion nationalism as being the realisation of a long delayed political identity, while at the same time fuelling the quest to establish distinctions between 'them' and 'us'. Palestinian nationalism is a case in point, since the denial of Palestinian identity and the suppression of Palestinian aspirations to nationhood, (Palestinians to date have not achieved independence in the form of a sovereign state), have contoured the content and form of Palestinian nationalism and national identity. It is useful to consider Stuart Hall's thesis on identity at this junction, for he proposes that the suppression and distortion of identity of the colonised under colonialism fuel the colonised's search for their identity. He suggests, however, that the search should not be viewed as the rediscovery of an identity that already existed and was buried by colonialism, but rather that the articulation of such an identity is "not an identity grounded in the archaeology but in the re-telling of the past" (Hall;1990;224). The implication of his suggestions are that national identities are not something that existed naturally, but instead are created by social actors who represent the past through a lens which is contoured by their national aspirations. Thus, inherent in such representations are the interventions and desires of social actors. In deconstructing nationalism one endeavours to examine the ways in which national subjects articulate their national identity and represent it as being a historical identity rooted in the past.

The use of the past by national communities is the subject of Eric Hobsbawm's enquiry into national identity. He proposes that national identities are based on 'invented traditions' (Hobsbawm;1983;1). Each national community selects from the

storehouse of history elements with which to construct traditions, and at the same time incorporates pre-existing traditions into its discourse by claiming them as representations of national identity (Hobsbawm;1983;6). Hobsbawm suggests that nationalism uses history to legitimate and authenticate its project which enables the new social formation to articulate itself as symbolising a continuity rather than a break with the past (Hobsbawm;1983;14). In this way nations naturalise themselves appearing to be so natural as not to bring the subject of their invention into question (Hobsbawm;1983;14).

The argument that national identity is constructed and invented should not be interpreted as a political attempt to disqualify the national identity of communities. For, as Benedict Anderson highlights, words such as 'invented' carry with them connotations of falsity and its binary opposite genuineness, which can become ways of distinguishing between nations as part of a legitimating project. He proposes that the study of national identity should consider that, "communities are to be distinguished not by their falsity and genuineness but by the style in which they are imagined" (Anderson;1991;6). There are two important concepts to glean from Anderson's statement; the first being that nations are 'imagined communities', the second that one should consider the *style* in which they are imagined. Therefore, examining the style in which nations are imagined involves examining how the 'essentialist' identity of a nation is conceived and represented.

To research the style in which a nation is imagined raises a whole set of questions, for it involves a consideration of *how* nations are imagined? *Why* are they imagined? *Who* does the imagining and *where* does it take place? The examination of *how* nations are imagined involves studying which artefacts, images, places and narratives are used to represent the nation and, following Hobsbawm's cue, looking at how the elements from the past are used in fashioning the style in which the nation is

imagined. In considering *why* these elements are chosen we question how they serve the project of imaging the nation, which also reveals the qualities the nation claims to have and how national belonging is defined.

The question of *who* fashions the national discourse leads us to examine what are the underlying power relations contained within a national discourse, and whose interests are represented by it. This, in turn, highlights the issue of agency in regards to what roles do those who contour the national discourse ascribe to national subjects and how these are affirmed, negotiated and contested by the members of the nation. Implicit also is the question of the relationship between gender and class identities and the national discourse and how these identities are negotiated as part of a subject's national identity.

Where the imaging of the nation takes place is particularly noteworthy in regards to the study of Palestinian nationalism, as not all Palestinians are located within the same geographical terrain. Thus, the images of the nation and the style in which it is imagined arise from a variety of different locations. This thesis focuses on the way in which a national identity has been articulated by the Palestinians resident in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem who have fostered a national discourse under consecutive occupations and in the absence of an officially recognised representative body and a state apparatus.

The aim, however, is not only to identify how, why, where and who constructs Palestinian national identity, but to explore how Palestinian identity is sustained and reproduced by the those who identify themselves as being part of the nation formation. For national identities, as we understand from Stuart Hall, are not fixed stable identities, but rather are always in the process of being made and remade as different elements and antagonisms arise that serve to contour national identities.

The ongoing process of transformation occurs because, “an active identification is not purely a submissive act on the part of the subject, who would passively incorporate all the determinations of the object. The act of identification, on the contrary, destabilises the identity of the object” (Laclau & Zac;1994;14).

One of the fields where we can discern the style nations are imagined and constructed is in the cultural sphere, as it is through culture that a national community produces and reproduces itself. By examining the images which are produced as part of a nation’s visual culture we can discern how the nation is imagined. In the Palestinian context, representations of national identity created by Palestinians of the former Occupied Territories were produced in the absence of their own official state apparatus. The political climate was also one in which expressions of Palestinian identity met with harsh reprisals from the Israeli Authorities; for instance up until 1994 Palestinians could be arrested for displaying the Palestinian flag.

In examining the sphere of culture as way towards understanding how Palestinians produce and reproduce their national identity, this thesis specifically address the visual representations created by Palestinians. Very little academic research has been undertaken on Palestinian art and visual representations in Palestinian popular culture. To date there still only exists one book on Palestinian art written in English and Arabic by Ismail Shammout entitled ‘Art in Palestine’ (1989). His text was predominately comprised of visual representations and a short introduction, which explains the context in which Palestinian art emerged. Thus, my study of Palestinian visual representations has been undertaken in the absence of a canon of art history on Palestinian art and in the context in which very few academic texts exist on the subject. Noteworthy is that there is a lack of research informed by constructivists’ theories on the relationship between Palestinian national identity and visual representations. Thus, the premise of this thesis is that we can understand the style

and the ways in which Palestinian national identity is imagined by examining visual representations of the homeland. Since Palestinian art has a recent history and in many ways is a popular art form reproduced on calendars, posters and postcards, I have not treated it as a separate sphere from popular culture. Rather, my discussion of the visual representation of national identity incorporates an analysis of other popular forms of imaging national identity in a way which views both art and popular images as being part of the same national visual discourse.

My choice to focus on the representation of the homeland arises from the fact that after the war of 1948 Palestine was considered a 'lost land' by the Palestinians. Thus, Palestine was re-constituted and re-created in the representational practices of Palestinians. In addition the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis centres on the claims of two peoples to the same stretch of terrain, which has meant that the landscape is central to both their representations of national identity. In examining the representations of the homeland, I have specifically chosen to look at the images created in the representational practices of Palestinians living in the former Occupied Territories. For these Palestinians, Palestine was a space that was lived and experienced under occupation yet, simultaneously was the space of imagining of where a future Palestinian homeland would be realised. Thus it is the representations of those who have experienced this paradox that are the focus of my research. My study of the imaging of the homeland examines the features of the landscape that are selected to represent the nation, and what elements of the landscape are used to articulate the nation's cultural identity and history of belonging to the geographical terrain of the former and desired homeland.

My interest in Palestinian art began when I was a student of art working upon the issue of Palestine. I was motivated by wanting to discover what other Palestinian artists were creating. Therein began my research. With the absence of books and

catalogues available in England, I decided to travel to Palestine in 1995 to interview artists and document their work. This was supported by a grant from The Barakat Trust at the University of Oxford. Later, the following year, I returned to Palestine for a longer visit during which I lived in Bethlehem with a Palestinian Christian family for two months. During that time I undertook my research on the salons and I learnt about class distinctions in Bethlehem. During these months my research was supported by a travel grant from The British School of Archaeology in Jerusalem and a Colyer Fergusson Grant from the University of Kent at Canterbury. Autumn of 1996 was a time when serious clashes broke out between the Palestinians and Israeli soldiers, which meant that much of the West Bank and Gaza Strip was under a closure. In 1997 I came to Palestine to set up the archive of Palestinian art in Jerusalem at a local Palestinian art centre. Over the course of one and half years, I documented 200 artists resident in the West Bank, Jerusalem, Gaza Strip and inside Israel and the images in this thesis are selected from the works of these artists. During that time I became involved in the day-to-day workings of a Palestinian art centre and learned much about the Palestinian art scene and other art establishments in Palestine. 1998 marked fifty years of the State of Israel and of the corresponding Palestinian *Nakba*, and I was able to attend a number of commemoration events. Over the last year and a half I have been part of a Muslim refugee family in the Shufhat refugee camp, in which I have observed many customs and rituals of the refugee community of Jerusalem including feasts, weddings and so forth. Having become a member of a Palestinian community, where I now live and from where I have been writing my thesis, I have come to understand many of the subtleties and complexities of the political situation and of Palestinian identity. The knowledge which I have accumulated apart from my reading has come from discussions, from what people explain to me, from listening and observing and from the experience of living and working in Palestine. Hence, much has been absorbed and understood indirectly with the passage of time and in turn has informed this thesis.

From Snakes' Heads to Mud Paintings; Representing the Landscape of Palestine.

The Significance of Land

One of the first places to begin when embarking on a thesis on 'The Representation of Palestine' is with a discussion of the ways in which the terrains of the place are depicted. In the late tenth century, Palestine was described in Arabic in the following terms:

"Filastin is the westernmost province of Syria. In its greatest length from Rafah to the boundary of Al Lajjun (Legio) it would take a rider two days to travel over; and the like time to cross the province in its breadth from Yaffa - (Jaffa) to Riha (Jericho)...Filastin is watered by the rains and the dew. Filastin is the most fertile of the Syrian provinces. Its capital and largest town is al Ramlah, but the Holy City (of Jerusalem) comes very near the last in size" (Istakhri and Ibn Hawakal in Le Strange in Said et al;1988;236).

Palestine has a unique land depression at the Dead Sea, which is the lowest point on Earth, while Jericho is the oldest continually inhabited town in the world. Palestine formed an important land bridge between the continents of Africa and Asia making its position strategic for empires. The place has been subject to numerous invasions and conquests over the centuries and has witnessed the movement of people back and forth across its land. The importance for Palestinians of their rich cultural heritage and the fact that Palestine has been inhabited for centuries was heralded in 'The Palestinian People *Nakba* Appeal' written by Mahmoud Darwish for the Memorial Day of the *Nakba* on the 15th of May 1998. He wrote, "Our land, modest in size, hosted vast cultures and civilizations, both in conflict and in harmony, our own culture emerging from the fullness of this diverse and rich heritage" (<http://www.nakba.org>).

For the Ottomans who ruled Palestine from 1517-1914, Palestine was important for safeguarding the pilgrimage route from Damascus to Mecca, which also generated significant trade and wealth. The water pouch makers of Nablus and Hebron would

receive commissions annually for thousands of water pouches from the water officer of the caravan (Doumani;1995;25). The third holiest city in Islam, Jerusalem, was also located in Palestine, the governance of which bestowed prestige and religious legitimacy on the Ottoman sultans. Ibrahim Abu Lughod makes an important observation about Palestine during the Ottoman period, "Palestine of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was a territorial domain but not a distinct administrative/geopolitical unit" (Abu Lughod;1988;194). The different areas of Palestine were administered from various centres of the Ottoman Empire for example, Jerusalem was governed directly from Istanbul, while the northern seashore came under the control of the district of Beirut (Abu Lughod;1988;195). Relationships with its neighbours and the previous centres of power have influenced the identity of the regions of Palestine right up to the present day. For example the foods eaten by Palestinians from Galilee are influenced by the cuisine of Lebanon, while the fondness for using hot spices in Gaza is attributed to the influence of Egyptian palate. Abu Lughod argues that the administrative unit of Palestine was a British creation as were many other Arab and African states (Abu Lughod;1988;195). Lughod highlights that,

"Since territorial identity- derived from a territorial state- is very recent in origin, the Palestinian identity of the pre-modern period, similar to that of other Arabs, was based upon their religious, cultural and geographical – town, village or tribal background" (Abu Lughod;1988;202).

These observations should not be taken as a negation of the national identity of the indigenous inhabitants; a misinterpretation that is often used to suggest that Palestinian identity was purely the result of the encounter with Zionism. Rather, it is the case that Palestinians did not see themselves as having a territorial identity as delineated by what the British carved out to be Palestine. The Palestinians saw themselves as part of the region of *Bilad al Sham*, and the Ottoman Empire whose society was predominantly comprised of Muslims, within which also existed a strong sense of regional and village identity which were central to their identity formations of the peoples of the region. In Palestine during the time of Zionist colonisation there

existed a flourishing society among the Palestinians, evident in their architecture, publishing, commerce, trade, cultural and educational institutions (Said;1988;18). Thus what Zionism influenced was the struggle that defined Palestinian nationalism as Zionist ambitions in Palestine affected what it meant to be an inhabitant of Palestine.

The struggle between Palestinians and Israelis has often been represented as a conflict between Arab and Jew, Islam and Judaism, or even between 'West' and 'East'. However, the conflict is far less sensational. It is first and foremost a conflict over land in which two national communities lay claim to the same terrain. The roots of the conflict began during the latter part of Ottoman rule in Palestine. No single European country was able to overthrow the Empire, however each country vied for power within the Ottoman territories. The space of power lay in the concessions granted to Europeans for the protection of religious minorities. France was responsible for Catholic Christians, and Russia the Orthodox Christians. Protestantism, however, lacked an institutional base in the Holy Land (Scholch;1993;50). The United Kingdom entered the arena at a later date after Russia and France had firmly established themselves in the region and Britain adopted the plight of the Jewish community as their cause. The sponsoring of the Jewish people was part of the ideology of the Anglican Messianists and Evangelists, whose popularity was on the increase in Britain. Their ideology advocated the 'restoration of the Jews', whose return to Palestine and acceptance of the Christian Gospel was believed to be a prerequisite for the arrival of the Kingdom of Christ (Scholch;1993;62). Though attempts to convert the Jews into a Protestant congregation met with little success, the British nevertheless maintained their aim of restoring the Jews to Palestine.

Alexander Scholch describes the political atmosphere of the time as being one in which the Holy Land was the site of a constellation of interests and the subject of

numerous colonial projects. He highlights the different German, French and British ambitions to colonise the Holy Land, pointing to the fact that Zionism was one of several colonial ambitions for Palestine. To illustrate his point, he sites Henry Dunant, founder of the Red Cross, proposal in 1866 to initiate mass colonisation of Palestine under the Protection of Napoleon III (Scholch;1993;71). While “Edward Cazlet, the British Industrialist, called for the establishment of a British protectorate over Palestine in 1878-79, with the goal of leading the Jews back to Palestine and creating a lasting bond between Britain and the country” (Scholch;1993;64). Aside from these specific proposals a general view prevailed in Europe of ‘The Peaceful Crusade’, namely the intention to continue the struggle begun by the Crusaders of freeing the Holy Land from its control by ‘Arab Infidels’. A mass of literature was produced on the subject of the Holy Land and, as Scholch suggests, “Europeans could get more detailed information about Palestine than they could about any other non-European area. The European public was more convinced that it had the ‘rights of ownership’ to Palestine than in any other non-European territory” (Scholch;1993;60).

The success of Zionism in Palestine at the expense of other colonial projects can largely be attributed to the support the movement acquired from the United Kingdom, who after the fall of the Ottoman Empire at the end of World War One were given the Mandate to rule Palestine by The League of Nations. The Balfour Declaration in particular was pivotal in paving the way for the establishment of a Jewish State in Palestine which it pledged in the document. With the volume of material on the Holy Land and the belief in a ‘Peaceful Crusade’ we can understand that The Balfour Declaration did not emerge from a political vacuum but was actually deeply rooted in the British perception of the Holy Land. Aside from ideological reasons, control of Palestine for Britain was important for military ends. Thus, British interest in Palestine was less for the exploitation of raw materials, than for the position Palestine afforded Britain as a powerbroker in the Middle East.

Zionism emerged in Europe during the nineteenth century as an ideology that proposed that the Jews constituted a distinct nationality on the basis of their religion. The choice of Israel as a national homeland was based on religious belief that this was the terrain that God had promised to the children of Abraham (Genesis 17:8 in Benin et al;1989;103). The Jews therefore considered themselves to be in exile. Glenn Bowman argues that “Judaism’s formation was deeply implicated in exile and the return of a small proportion of the exilic population to Judea “, after the Babylonian exile (Bowman;1999;58). The return to Zion promised “personal and communal redemption in fulfilment prophecy” (Parmenter;1994;15). For some Jews however, this return was understood as a spiritual ingathering rather than a literal return to Eretz Israel. (Parmenter;1994;15). It was at the First Zionist Congress in Vienna that Theodor Herzl transformed the idea of return into a political project for the establishment of a Jewish nation state (Parmenter;1994;16). Palestine was imagined in Zionist political rhetoric as an empty barren land. This became a very powerful image and was hallmarked in the idea of, ‘A land without a people for a people without a land’. This rhetoric metaphorically elided the Palestinians, a large proportion of whom would later be physically expelled from the land. This slogan should be viewed as an important visual strategy for it established in the minds of the colonisers and their supporters that Palestine was a virgin land. Such a statement served to erase the agricultural history of the land and attributed the Zionists with the development and transformation of the landscape. Zionists believed that, through labour on the land, the Jews could be regenerated and would renew their ancient bond with the land which had been lost as a consequence of their lives in European cities. (Parmenter;1994;15). Working on the land and having a relationship with it was central in creating the new subjectivity of the Israeli citizen that was imaged in the vision of the ‘pioneer’ (Selwyn;1995;117). Fostering a bond with the land is still very much part of Israeli identity and has become an aspect of educational and military

training, both of which involve excursions and hikes in the landscape, with the purpose of understanding the physical terrain and its religious significance.

For the early Zionists the 'few peasants' who lingered in Palestine were not referred to as Palestinians but as Arabs; the distinction is an important one, since the inference in this stereotype was that these people were Bedouins or nomads and not a settled community, and therefore had no homeland. In addition the fact they were Arabs was understood to mean that their homes were in other Arab countries (Said et al;1988;241). These ways of imaging Palestine were central to the moral ground upon which Israel was established; as President Menachem Begin warned, "If this is Palestine and not the Land of Israel, then you are conquerors and not tillers of the land. You are invaders. If this is Palestine, then it belongs to a people who lived here before you". (Begin,1969 in Said et al; 1988;241). Palestine can no longer be found on any contemporary world map, the success of Zionist strategies thus speak for themselves.

The future citizens of Israel began to immigrate to Palestine in the 1880's, establishing the first Jewish colonial settlements. However it was under subsequent British rule that the volume of immigration significantly increased. When Britain came to power, 90% of the population were Arabs with a small minority of Jews who had lived in Palestine for centuries (Beinin et al;1989;101, Said et al;1988;242). In 1922 Jews accounted for 11% of the population, but by 1949 this figure had reached 30% (Hourani;1989;323). The numbers swelled during the '30's and '40's as Jews fled from persecution in Europe. Britain was unwilling to open its own borders to the Jewish community yet supported immigration to Palestine. From the Zionists' perspective their arrival in Palestine was viewed as a return to a place from which they had been exiled (Parmenter;1994;15). The return to Zion was part of a religious prophecy in which the idea of a spiritual ingathering was interpreted in literal terms in the Zionist discourse. In light of the persecution of the Jewish community in Europe, the Zionists

began to see that one of the only ways to protect themselves was to have a nation of their own. Israel became one of the few countries in which citizenship was based exclusively on religion, which also gave every Jew the right of return to the Land of Israel. The Zionist conception of citizenship and its pattern of colonialism were and continue to be based upon separatist policies with the non-integration of the local inhabitants. Rather than incorporating the native population, Zionists proceeded to transform Palestinians from insiders to outsiders in their own land by disenfranchising them from the resources of the land, economic development and national identity (Waines;1971;213). Britain had initially thought that Zionism was modelled on its own form of colonialism in that, "the new Zionist settlers would 'uplift' the local populace economically with their capital and cultural dynamism" (Graham-Brown;1980;22). However, it soon became apparent that the Zionist ambition was to create a separate nation in Palestine. Tensions rose between the Palestinians and the Zionists and Palestinians increasingly feared the loss of their homeland as Zionists acquired land through purchase (Ruedy;1971;127). The Jewish National Fund however was unable to accumulate sufficient land holdings (Ruedy;1971;135) and had to find other means of acquisition mainly diplomacy or war. On the diplomatic front, The United Nations eventually conceded to draw up a partition plan in which the Jewish population who at the time owned 7% of the land were allocated 55% (Beinin et al;1989;102). The Palestinians who made up two thirds of the population found this proposal completely unacceptable and a negation of their national rights. On the war front the Zionists were more successful. Increasing unrest in Palestine and Britain's inability to maintain civil order and keep its commitments to both communities led to its withdrawal from Palestine (Waines;1971;235). Subsequently civil war broke out and when it came to an end the State of Israel was established, on 77% of what was Mandatory Palestine (Beinin;1989;102). Half the Arab population was displaced, creating approximately 700,000 refugees, while during the course of the war, Israel destroyed and erased some four hundred and eighteen villages (Khalidi;1992;xxxi).

Landscape and Nationalism

As I suggested earlier the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis is over land. Both Palestinian and Israeli nationalisms are territorial nationalisms. To understand this point more fully and its significance to our study it will be profitable to examine what defines a nation and how territorial nationalisms are distinguished. Anthony Smith suggests that nations are defined by the fact that the people who make up the national community share a common culture and language (Smith;1982;187). These however are very broad categories, which can encompass a range of group formations. There are certain aspects of culture and language that are particular to the definition of a nation. One of the elements of a national culture is the importance of the communities' history and their representation of the past. Ernst Renan argues in his historic piece 'What is a Nation?' of 1882 that a nation is,

“A heritage of glory and a reluctance to break apart, to realize the same programme in the future: to have suffered, worked, hoped together...I have said suffered together; indeed common suffering is greater than happiness. In fact national sorrows are more important than triumphs because they impose obligations and demand a common effort” (Renan;1882, in Hutchinson;1994;17).

Renan's early insights point to the important psychological bond that unites the community in the imagination of a nation. Ernst Gellner elaborates on this point: for him it is not enough for individuals to share the same culture and history but it is necessary that, “Two men are of the same nation if and only if they recognize each other as belonging to the same nation. In other words nations maketh man; nations are the artefacts of men's convictions, loyalties and solidarities” (Gellner;1983;7). The significance of Gellner's observation is the importance he attributes to members of the nation being able to identify one another as part of the community. He highlights the working of nations which are fairly recent inventions and states that they are “not an inherent attribute of humanity” (Gellner;1983;6). The emergence of the nation succeeds a historical period in which societies were organised around “small scale

operationally effective units- clan, village castes etc and vast...political entities like empires or religious confederations” (Smith;1982;189). Benedict Anderson argues that the decomposition of dynastic realms and religious communities corresponded to the rise of nationalism (Anderson;1991;12). In the case of the village, to cite one example:

“Most of what happens in a village during the course of the day will be recounted by somebody before the day ends and these reports will be based on observations and first hand accounts...By this means a village informally constructs a continual communal history of itself: a history in which everyone portrays, in which everyone is portrayed, and in which the act of portrayal never stops” (Connerton;1989;17).

Nations, however, do not have the same representational practices that are present in the village, as Benedict Anderson has explained. Even within the smallest of nations all the members of the nation cannot know one another, which is why Anderson suggests that nations are in fact ‘imagined communities’ in which individuals imagine the members of the nation which they do not know (and will probably never know), to be like themselves (Anderson;1991;6). The mutual likeness of the people of the nation is in part defined by their difference from other communities, and this difference contributes to the collective identity of the nation and fosters the idea of belonging to a community. However the idea of belonging is structured around a discourse of inclusion and exclusion, since the borders of the nation are not infinitely elastic but clearly articulate who is a member of the nation and who is not. Nevertheless defining national belonging is often elusive, as Walker Connor observes, “the essence of a nation is intangible” and is often based on feelings and intuitions (Connor in Hutchinson;1994;36). What the difference between ‘them’ and ‘us’ often congeals around is the way in which the ‘other’ organizes his enjoyment as Slavoj Zizek suggests, “In short what gets on our nerves, what really bothers us about the ‘other’ is the peculiar way he organizes his enjoyment (the smell of his food, his ‘noisy’ songs and dances, his strange dances, his attitude to work” (Zizek;1991;165). It is the difference in the way ‘others’ achieve their pleasure that become the markers of

difference. It is the taken for granted aspects of everyday life that are used to differentiate between them and us in which the 'other's' culture is viewed in negative terms. The boundaries of the nation are artificial constructions but the ideas expressed above work to sustain the belief that all those within its borders are part of a distinct community sharing a common identity. Those who reside in Diaspora outside of the homeland (as for example with the Palestinians) do not identify totally with their host communities, but hold on to their 'original' identity sustaining it through memories, objects and collective rituals. Edward Said notes, "Photographs, dresses, objects severed from their original locale, the ritual of speech and custom: much reproduced, enlarged, thematised and embroidered, and passed around, they are like strands in the web of affiliation we Palestinians use to tie ourselves to our identity and one another" (Said;1986a;14).

Often introduced into the representations of the national collective is the notion that a nation shares a common origin thereby distinguishing its particular national identity. It is here that the discourses of race and nationalism coincide with one another as Walker Connor proposes, "an unstated presumption of a Chinese (or German) nation is there existed in some pre-recorded era a Chinese (or German) Adam and Eve, and that the couple's progeny has evolved in essentially unadulterated form down to the present" (Connor in Hutchinson & Smith;1994;37). In the case of territorial nationalism, these issues of origin, common culture and shared memories of the past are all tied into a specific location- the space of the homeland. In the case of territorial nationalism, it is the belief that a nation's complete identity comes to blossom only in the designated terrain, for it is only there that true national identity can be realised and perpetuated. The people represent themselves as belonging to the homeland and the homeland as belonging to them, "by virtue of an historic association and origin" (Smith;1982;188). However, what is represented as 'historic association' is that which

the nation selects to image as its past, for central to the formation of a national's identity is that the 'imagined community' is not just the community of today, but also the community of the past that has 'always' been resident on the designated terrain (Connor in Hutchinson & Smith; 1994;37). What is used to represent the historic association with the land is an issue that will be continually addressed throughout this thesis.

In light of the above ideas, we can begin to understand why the representation of the landscape occupies a dominant place in the artistic expression of both the Palestinian and the Israeli communities. The cultural arenas of literature, theatre, cinema, dance and folklore have played a significant role in shaping the vision of the landscape and have been mobilized by both Palestinians and Israelis as important sites for the articulation and formation of their respective national identities. The aim of this chapter is to explore the way Palestinians transformed their visual representations of the landscape as it became incorporated into the discourse of territorial nationalism. It is to the meaning of 'landscape' that I now turn in order to examine the associations this category conveys and how it affects practices of representation, which will benefit our understanding of how Palestine is represented.

W.J.T. Mitchell, in his essay 'Imperial Landscape', suggests that 'landscape' has taken on the quality of a fetish commodity (Mitchell;1994;15). As a fetish commodity, landscape is designated with values not inherent to it, yet the values of landscape are represented as emanating from the land, rather than the being the creation of a society which transforms land into a landscape through fetishising it. This designation could be understood as another way of describing territorial nationalism; the demarcated area within the boundaries of the map are reified and attributed mythological significance through the discourse of roots, a shared culture and heritage which happens only in that bounded terrain. Mitchell, in a recent paper presented at

Birzeit University, put forward the following question which problematised the issue of landscape and nationalism:

“Is it not the case that Palestine’s problem is that it is being reduced to the status of a landscape: framed, hedged about, shaped, controlled and surveyed from every possible perspective?...The famous 3% of arid land now occupied by a few Bedouins and lizards is to be given to the Palestinians, with one catch. It is not to be developed. It is to be left as a “nature preserve”- in short a landscape to be seen but not touched, not dwelled upon” (Mitchell;1998;13).

The ‘reduction to the status of a landscape’ in this context prevents the landscape from becoming a lived in environment for Palestinians; being denied the landscape serves to heighten it as an object of fetishism and a site of fantasy. Meanwhile for the Israelis being able to determine how the landscape is to be used enables them to give shape to their fantasies about the landscape. The focus on landscape also serves to divert attention away from other aspects of the Palestinian situation, in particular the question of the Palestinian people and their needs as a nation. Foud Moughrabi clarifies the problem by suggesting that, “Palestinian politics always were concerned with liberating Palestine but not the Palestinians” (Moughrabi;1997;8).

At the core of Mitchell’s thesis is the suggestion that landscape operates as a false idol to be worshipped. “Landscape is quite capable of becoming an idol in its own right-that is a potent ideological representation” (Mitchell;1998;2). In the Palestinian context, as with other nations, one of the ways this is articulated is the way in which individuals are willing to die for the landscape, or put in another way, it is the willingness to die for the meaning the land holds. Some Palestinian martyrs during the intifada believed that where they fell to the ground liberated the land from Israeli occupation. The willingness to sacrifice oneself in order to bring about the liberation of the homeland can be understood as a form of worship in which nationalism takes on the aspect of a religion. The question of martyrdom and the nation’s landscape will be explored in a later chapter. Jacqueline Rose, in her recent book, ‘States of Fantasy’

echoes Mitchell's point, she writes, "For you might say it is the sanctity of the land that underpins the violence of the state; but you might also say that it is the persecutions and deprivations of nationhood that engenders the sanctity and violence of the land" (Rose:1998;30). Landscape can then be understood as being worshipped through the practices of territorial nationalist discourses; it is in the name of the nation that violence is perpetrated and condoned. A readily available example of this is the state-sponsored violence carried out by Israel in the name of national security. Under the rhetoric of the 'sanctity of the land' Israel has enforced the closures of the Palestinian territories and regularly carries out air raids upon Southern Lebanon.

Contouring the Landscape

Mitchell's proposition is that in being an 'idol', landscape conceals the social relations which created it. However in relation to the Palestinian/Israeli landscape he states, "The face of the Holy landscape is so scarred by war, excavation and displacement that no illusion of innocent original nature can be sustained for a moment" (Mitchell;1994;27). The modern Israeli state unravels as it has been constructed on the suppression of another people's history who are still present in the landscape. The continual presence of the Palestinians in the State of Israel and the territories it occupies, particularly the refugee camps where people who were displaced from their land live serves to undermine the narratives of the Israeli State. The maintenance of the State's landscapes depends on spatial strategies, strategies of confinement which take the form of the marginalisation and ghettoisation of the Palestinian communities. Inside Israel, Palestinians are not allowed to fully integrate into the state and are discriminated against (Lustick;1980;69-70). While in the West Bank, Palestinians have been confined in isolated cantons in the autonomous areas to which Israel controls the exit and entry routes. Although not all Palestinians live in these cantons, those who hold West Bank ID cards have been confined to the West Bank, since 1993 when a closure was placed on the area preventing West Bank Palestinians from entering

Jerusalem or Israel (Passia; 1999;235). The geographical space of Israel is not a large terrain and one of the aspects of the country that becomes strikingly apparent when one moves through the landscape is the way in which Palestinians and Israelis are sandwiched together. The Jerusalem refugee camp of Shufhat, for example, is a stone's throw from Jewish neighbourhoods. The refugee camp however is not marked on a local map or on highway signs. This physical proximity in turn affects the conflict between the two communities for it has prevented the myths of Israel from being completely sutured, as Palestinians are somehow always present. Successive Israeli governments have attempted to evacuate Palestinians from their field of vision through numerous measures- most recently through the building of bypass roads to connect settlements in the West Bank which aim to provide Israelis with routes which do not pass through Palestinian areas. Since the signing of the Oslo Accords, some thirty bypass roads have been built for this purpose (Passia;1999;231).

The 'erasure of history' which Mitchell suggests occurs when land is turned into an idol was incorporated into the Zionist colonisation of Palestine. Early settlers (and note these activities still continue today),

“Launched a massive project aimed at revealing an originary historical inscription in the landscape. Their enterprise entailed such activities as using the bible as a guide for re-mapping and renaming the territory and organising archaeological digs and hiking expeditions. The Zionist project of uncovering and displaying exclusive Jewish roots had the effect of denying any authentic Arab historicity in Palestine” (Swedenberg;1990;19).

History involves selecting what is to be remembered and what is to be forgotten. However, what happens in the Israeli context is not just forgetting, an action which carries innocent overtones, but rather the conscious desire not to remember, that manifests itself in the denial of memory. Put into practice, this denial is expressed in the numerous ways in which Israel contours and constructs its landscapes in order to erase and silence Palestinian histories. The ruins of many destroyed Palestinian

villages have consequently been covered over with new buildings or have been planted over with trees and transformed into public parks.

There is a complex dialectic of remembrance and denial that operates in the terrain of Israel, for the landscape can be read in different ways depending on where one is positioned. For the first time visitor to Israel the landscape may seem 'natural' enough; it appears as a modern country modelled on European ideals. However, a Palestinian perspective on the landscape serves to subvert the tranquillity and naturalness of the scenery. Every landscape in Israel has a counter-narrative. Every landscape in Israel is reclaimed in the memories of Palestinians. What have become strategic forms of resistance and an articulation of Palestinian identity are the narratives associated with place. On the many occasions when I have travelled or walked with Palestinians they unconsciously slip into describing the changes that have been imposed upon the landscape that we happen to be passing through. This constant oral testimony to what the landscape was previously acts as a defence mechanism against the erasure of Palestinian histories; it also works to bring the Palestine of past days into the present, by re-inscribing a vision of it onto the spaces that are now occupied by Israel. Often the accounts are in sharp contrast to the modern constructions or empty spaces that occupy the sites.

In light of the changes that the landscape is undergoing, Palestinians have become attuned to taking note of the small changes that accumulatively constitute the transformation of the country. For example, the narrowing of the aisles at the checkpoint at the Bethlehem border, or the placing of a metal fence on the main road outside Damascus Gate in Jerusalem, or the relocation of peasant women who sell fruits and vegetables in Jerusalem, or the sign warning tourists against entering the Palestinian area at the Al Ram checkpoint. These changes are also noted as signals which are read as warnings of further changes. The continual transformation of the

landscape works to sharpen the memories of Palestinians, as with every transformation Palestinians remember what was there before, and in that way changes to the landscape work to reinforce the memories of Palestinians. This highlights a distinction between the memories and ways of remembering of those who live in exile and those who are resident in Palestine. Those who are resident upon the former land of Palestine, witness its daily transformation, thus the changes serve as memory tools for remembering, and preserving an image of the former landscape of Palestine. Those in exile who do not experience the daily changes the landscape undergoes on do not have this element to reinforce their memories hence their memories congeal around their last experiences of Palestine, which are necessarily preserved through repetition and re-narration (Said;1986;14).

In the discursive operations of the memories of Palestinians who witness the erasure of their past, traces of one kind or another, a fig tree, a cactus plant, an old Arab house sandwiched between a modern complex, become highly symbolic and fetishised signs. These markers are read as emblematic of the former presence of Palestinians and it is from these traces that narratives of Palestinian history spiral out. With these narratives Palestinians position themselves in the landscape and re-affirm their connection to it. These narratives function as a way of re-inscribing the Palestinian past upon the landscape. In fact, in many ways, Palestinians are burdened with the responsibility of continually re-telling their histories and of having to be vigilant over the narratives of places and the past. Rema Hammami expresses such a sentiment about Jaffa,

“My feeling is of being burdened by Jaffa, this place that only exists in the world of lost paradises, is no different from that of any other child of a Jaffaite. For there are no ‘former’ Jaffaites- they never really left in 1948 but still carry it around with them everywhere and always. I would love to be able to walk through the city without being weighed down by its past and my duty to that past- just to be able to be fascinated by the architecture and the people who

live there now, to be able to call them *Yaffawiin* in some meaningful way instead of referring to them as ‘the present inhabitants’” (Hammami;1998;67).

Hammami’s experience highlights that the burden of the past has become an element of Palestinian identity. In a way Palestinian identity is constituted from the memories of a lost homeland, memories which always construct the present as not being concurrent with the narratives of the past. Hammami observes, “Going to Jaffa for someone who grew up with it as an iconic myth, a place that no other place can ever measure up to is bound to bring disappointment” (Hammami;1998;67). Palestinians who have not experienced the loss of the land at first hand are raised with a sense of loss and carry with them that feeling. Speaking to a refugee about future generations regarding my fear that they might lose their connection to the land he replied “People are not going to forget because my son will always carry my pain”.

It is these memories and narratives which unravel the seemingly pristine terrain of the modern Israeli State. However, Israel has successfully managed to discredit and silence these narratives and has also prevented Palestinians having access to an audience. This has been achieved through the assertion of Israel’s narratives of events propagated in range of forms and mediums on an international level and through the creation of stereotypes about the Palestinians (Said;1988;4-6). As a consequence when Palestinian come to narrate their experiences they find that they are confronted with a host of counter claims (Bowman;1988;31). These acts of suppression have nonetheless given Palestinians a unique insight into the Israeli psyche a side hidden from international audiences, as Jacqueline Rose suggests, “You occupy my land, my mind- and then turning itself on its head: you think you have the upper hand, but your unconscious only I can see” (Rose;1998;34). In these contexts the mythology of a democratic landscape becomes increasingly hard to sustain. The State of Israel, then, is not only an occupation of the land but is also a siege on the minds of both Palestinians and Israelis. The occupation of the land has

contoured the subjectivity of all its inhabitants, implicating the psychology of the two communities within one another. Mitchell has developed a definition of landscape which encapsulates many of his ideas which inspired the above discussion. As he explains,

“Landscape is best understood as a medium of cultural expression, not a genre of painting or fine art...Landscape is a medium in the fullest sense of the word. It is the material ‘means’ (to borrow Aristotle’s terminology) like language or paint, embedded in a tradition of cultural signification and communication, a body of symbolic forms capable of being invoked and reshaped to express meaning and values” (Mitchell;1994;14).

It is with landscapes that communities and nations express and exchange their ideas and their mythologies- landscapes circulate between individuals and are invested with meanings that shape and contour the land into a landscape. Landscapes can be viewed as a malleable material continually being transformed by the interventions of those who inhabit the terrain, be it an individual who works in his garden, or a government planning policy. Yet an aspect of landscape is that it always resists representation in a sense it is able to bear infinite interpretations and personal associations which are not revealed. One can never access all the associations that one place may hold for everyone who has passed through or lived there, thereby implying that we can then only have access to *some* of a landscape’s facets because landscape always precedes us and succeeds us.

If landscape is a medium that is exchanged through practices of representation then it is not only exchanged between the people who inhabit it, for Palestine is also Israel which is also the Holy Land; the importance of this in the European imagination was noted earlier and persists to the present day. The Holy Land has been an object of desire for more than just two communities. As Edward Said suggests, “Cover a map of Palestine with the legends, insignia, icons and routes of the people who have lived there, and you will have no space for the terrain” (Said;1986a;61). For centuries it has occupied a strategic position in the imagination of the West. Throughout the

nineteenth century the influx of missionaries and pilgrims increased as means of travel improved and as the Ottoman interior became more accessible to foreigners. Palestine was of particular interest due to the biblical associations it carried. As I highlighted at the beginning of this chapter, Europeans saw themselves as embarking on a 'Peaceful Crusade' to reclaim the Holy Land. The upsurge in visitors during the nineteenth century also coincided with the upturn in the conflict between scientific rationalism and established religious belief. In Europe, Charles Lyell's book on the "Principles of Geology" published in 1833 challenged the established knowledge of the history of the earth, showing it to be thousands of years older than previously presumed. In addition, biblical scholars of the German school of Tuebingen, who studied ancient languages, argued that the Bible was not a single document but a collection of texts and "pointed out inconsistencies and chronological impossibilities" (Shepherd;1987;77). Such an assault on the Bible stimulated a quest to authenticate the text and spurred a host of 'scriptural geographers'. Their methodology was guided by the hypothesis that they could verify the Bible and throw light on the past by subjecting the land to detailed scientific study (Parmenter;1994;9).

"They measured distances, calculated temperatures...they poked around in rock tombs and copied inscriptions in churches and monasteries...they collected samples of water from the Jordan and scraped up the soil from the shores of the Dead Sea not for baptisms and burial rites, but for analysis in European laboratories" (Shepherd;1987;15).

For the scriptural geographers, elements from the landscape were used as means towards validating their ideas, thus the materiality of the landscape was given heightened importance in the representation of the Holy Land.

The depiction of the Holy Land occurred in numerous fields from science to literature to art. As part of an artist's training in Europe, an artist was expected to execute paintings on biblical themes. Numerous scenes from the Old Testament were re-created and re-invented as artists demonstrated their visual skills, and in so doing

built their professional reputation. In these canvases, Palestine was transformed into the vision of the Roman Campania and every tree appeared to have its roots in a painting by Claude Lorrain. This legacy of representation served to nurture images of the Holy Land in the European imagination. Nations during the eighteenth and nineteenth century fashioned their vision of the Holy Land in their own image; thus the British expected the Holy land to resemble a piece of the English countryside and were disappointed when they discovered it to be unfamiliar (Parmenter;1994;10). This disappointment manifested itself in their colonial projects in which they attempted to re-invent and re-shape the landscape so that it more closely resembled their imaginary representations.

Countless tourists and worshippers make the pilgrimage to the Holy Land every year to walk the same streets, dwell in the sites that Christ and his forefathers once did, and to testify to the authenticity of the Bible. Even today groups of tourists will read relevant passages of the Bible while in situ as a way interpreting the significance of the landscape. The schedules of tours centre around visits to Jewish and Christian holy sites. Israel receives a significant revenue from tourism, while also using this industry to re-enforce the mythologies of the Jewish state and strengthen the associations between Christianity and Judaism. Israeli tour guides mould their commentaries and tours to the visitors' expectations while at the same time incorporating their own political agendas, since tourism is considered an important public relations arena that fosters international support for Israel. As one Israeli guide commented,

“What they see is because I point it out...Herod could be walking down the street, and if I didn't point it out they wouldn't know it...you get to the point that the Christian is seeing his Holy Land through a Jew...This has political implications. Israel needs public sympathy very badly, especially in Europe and America. How do you get through to them you [travellers from Europe and North America]? Give them an Israeli guide we'll sneak propaganda in through the back door” (Bowman;1992;123).

Tours have become another one of the spaces which are utilised to elide the presence of the Palestinians. Mention of the Palestinians is avoided in these tours and tour guides take routes that bypass Palestinian areas. When visiting Palestinian areas that cannot be excluded from the tours, such as Bethlehem, tourists are informed, as Bowman highlights, that the inhabitants are dangerous (Bowman;1992;130).

Representational practices and colonisation should not be seen as separate discourses, for it is not matter of mere coincidence that political projects and visual representations grew up at the same time. Edward Said, in his seminal text 'Orientalism', suggests that there is a significant relationship between conventions of representation and colonial power. An understanding of the relationship between colonialism and the representation of landscapes can inform our study of the representation of Palestine. This is not to imply that there is a cause and effect relationship operating where landscape is concerned, but rather, as Mitchell proposes that,

"Landscape, understood as a concept or representational practice, does not usually declare its relationship to imperialism in any direct way;...Landscape might be seen more profitably as something like the 'dreamwork' of imperialism, unfolding its own movement in time and space from a central point of origin and folding back on itself to disclose both utopian fantasies of the perfect imperial prospect and fractured images of unresolved ambivalence and suppressed resistance" (Mitchell;1994 9-10).

Imperial designs upon the landscapes of other places were facilitated by the representational technique of perspective. The invention of perspective during the Renaissance transformed the way in which space was perceived and experienced. Perspectival representations afforded a sole observer command over the visual field, in which the landscape was represented as stretching into infinity (Harvey;1990;244). Perspective gave the individual a unique vantage point from which to survey the prospect. The ability to see and chart the space into the distance supplied the

observer with strategic knowledge (I say knowledge because the philosophers of the Enlightenment believed that knowledge was attained through the faculty of sight). Space was thus potentially and infinitely knowable, and by analogy conquerable, for the vantage-point did not only produce a pleasing aesthetical view of a natural environment, but a potential military position. In fact one could argue that the aesthetics of landscape representations were intimately bound to the fantasies of conquest. One of the aspects of the East that frustrated intrepid colonialists were the absence of a vantage points from which to acquire images of the terrain. Dissatisfaction arose because it was believed that conquest and the subjugation of the land and its population could be achieved and maintained by a scopic regime of visibility. Timothy Mitchell comments on how in Egypt, foreigners scrambled to find possible sights from which to survey the landscape, which included climbing to the top of the Giza pyramid (Mitchell;1991;24).

The rise of landscape painting which Kenneth Clark claims reached its height in the nineteenth century (Clark in Mitchell;1994;10) also coincided with the era of European imperialism. Representations of untouched virgin terrains were readily consumed in the capitals of Europe alongside images of cosy domestic landscapes of the home country. These images were part of a discourse that sustained the fantasy of infinite empty lands, even after large tracts of the world had come under the grip of European imperialism. The desire for images of virgin landscapes conceals the ambivalences of imperialism. The images carried various connotations. The foreign lands were seen as an unspoiled terrain, a potential site of conquest, as well as a source of nostalgia for the observer who knew how the landscape would be transformed as a result of the power of his intervention. All that ultimately remained was the romance of the image. The tranquillity of these landscapes however disguised the violence that took place in them, for in order for the imperialists to create their utopian landscapes the inhabitants of the landscape had to be erased.

A fundamental shift occurred during the period of Imperialism in the way in which external space was perceived. David Harvey explains that during the Middle Ages external space was conceptualised as “a mysterious cosmology populated by some external authority, heavenly hosts or more sinister figures of myth and imagination” (Harvey;1990;241). The voyages of discovery, however, produced a considerable flow of knowledge that needed to be represented. The solution, to the problem, of how to incorporate this new found knowledge into the way people understood the world came by adopting such tools as the map and perspectival representations which stripped space of its mythological and religious content (Harvey;1990;249). The map enabled the world to be seen from an outside position in which every place was allocated a fixed position on the grid; this in turn facilitated easier conquests of unknown terrains (Harvey;1990;250). The rationalism of the map also helped to strip foreign lands of the evidence of their inhabitants and ignored local knowledge by applying a universal principle to all the terrains. With the grid, landscapes were pulverized and homogenized into equal units (Harvey;1990;254). Land was transformed into a malleable material. It was viewed in terms of its potential use and exchange value. With these transformations, land was increasingly seen as property and an economic asset as capitalist values began to supplant other religious and social associations which had previously grounded the meaning of land. In this climate, place increasingly became vulnerable, as every unit of land theoretically speaking became equivalent to the next. Place no longer had an unassailable quality, as everything was reduced to its monetary value. The re-organisation of space did not occur without transformations in the social relations that were embedded in these landscapes. In Europe, landscape was liberated from dynastic rule and the privilege of place, and was supplanted by democratic parliamentary rule (Harvey;1990;257).

In Palestine these changes began to occur during the last phase of Ottoman rule. By 1881 the Ottoman treasury was seriously depleted as result of the costly Crimean War. The Ottoman administration was unable to repay loans to the British and the French. As a consequence, these foreign governments reached an agreement with the weakened Ottoman administration, in which all taxes imposed on foreign traders were abolished. What ensued thereafter was the exploitation of the most valuable natural resources of the provinces. The Egyptian economy, for example, was exclusively orientated towards the production of raw cotton for the textile mills of Europe (Mitchell;1991;16). Palestine, on the other hand was given over to the production of wheat, barley, sesame and olive oil (Scholch;1993;81). In addition the Ottomans radically transformed the Land Laws of the Empire in an attempt to acquire the rural surplus of its provinces to trade on the world market (Asad;1976;3). Land was to be registered to individuals, whereas previously it had been collectively owned and farmed by its inhabitants. The peasantry of Palestine feared the consequences of this legislation, for they believed it was an attempt to extract greater taxes from them and conscript them into the army. In order to avoid this, they registered the land in the name of a village elder or respected figure in a nearby city or to a religious foundation. As a result, the growing urban elite of merchants, government officials and religious persons acquired huge tracts of land (Divine;1980;217). The agricultural way of life and the cycle of production was largely alien to these urban notables; thus the land of the country came to be owned by absentee landlords who had a weak relationship with the land, which made it easier for them to trade land and perceive it as a commodity (Smith;1986;33). The majority of the population did not however initially perceive land as a commodity. On the contrary, in Palestine, land was considered an important power base which conferred status upon those who governed it. For the peasantry, land was a source of livelihood and was invested with spiritual significance. It was the emerging urban elite within the province that Palestine belonged to, who were looking for ways in which to secure their power base, who extolled ideas of the

monetary value of the land and its products. It was precisely these landowners who were ready to alter the patterns of production on their land in order to gain profits from their yields on the world market and through sales to foreign traders. Their lack of a strong tie to the land, as many of them were absentee landowners resident in different parts of the province of Syria, made them far more willing to trade land as a commodity which they sold to the Zionists. The Zionists' demand for land inflated its value, thus making sales a profitable enterprise.

While early forms of capitalism were transforming land into a commodity by "homogenising and pulverising it" as Harvey suggested, land was simultaneously undergoing increasing fetishisation in the form of territorial nationalism. What might be seen as contradictory developments are in fact two sides of the same coin; for as place became more vulnerable people articulated their relation to place in more pronounced and organised ways. We can see both these aspects in operation in early Zionism. Zionism was based on the fetishisation of Palestine, which was believed to be 'The Land of Israel'. Zionists set about to acquire this land through the capitalist mode of purchasing the land. Commodification of land, in a sense, facilitated its fetishisation. What is pertinent in this discourse is the way in which land moved in and out of the market. Once bought, the land the Zionists acquired was taken out of circulation and declared legally to be the property of the Jewish State and thus alienating Palestinians from their land. In recent years, since the signing of the Oslo Accords, land has come back into the space of exchange as Israel's current Government headed by Prime Minister Barak, has been approaching peace with the Palestinians under the idea of 'Land for Peace'. His policy is to trade land in return for Israel's security. Once again, land is seen as transferable. The fetishisation of land, however, makes this a highly emotive issue among both communities. Israeli settlers for example, had to be evacuated by force when they refused to leave settlements at Havat Maon that the Government was dismantling as part of the peace deal with the

Palestinians in January 2000. Palestinians, on the other hand, view the negotiations over small percentages of land as a 'sell out' by the negotiating team. 'They have sold Palestine' is an expression you will often hear expressed by Palestinians. Both communities view the sale of land to the other community as tantamount to an act of treason. Thus, the exchange of land can only be carried out by symbolic figures from each community. At the same time the monetary value of land in Palestine has risen dramatically: a dunum of land in El Bireh which has worth 6,500 Jordanian Dinars eight years ago is now worth 100,000 JD.

A cornerstone of territorial nationalism is the worship and fetishisation of the landscape, and from this there has evolved a whole discourse centring around the landscape. My concern in this chapter is to focus on the visual representations of the landscape in the discourse of Palestinian nationalism. Thus, how is the worship and fetishisation of the landscape articulated in the visual arts? As became apparent in the discussion of perspective, representations of the landscape are often bound up with fantasies of power. Communities create representations of landscapes as a way of fantasising about power over the natural environment. The questions then are what are the discursive ways in which these fantasies are articulated and whether the relationship with the landscape has always been imagined in terms of the domination of the landscape? In addition how has the representation of the relationship with the landscape evolved over time?

Art in Palestine

What we understand today as a definition of art is dominated by European modes of visual expression. When examining Palestinian visual arts it is important to recognize that the practice of creating paintings that were exhibited in a designated space and that were set apart in the community was not a traditional form of visual expression in

the region. This form of art was more common in Europe and has a much longer history there. Art increasingly came to be defined in terms of European practices of painting, drawing and sculpture during the period of colonialism when correspondingly other forms of visual creativity became categorised as craft or design. This hierarchy of values was in many cases transported to the areas that fell under colonial administration, where much of the art of the 'natives' was seen as 'handicraft'. This prejudice against indigenous forms of visual expression was part of the widespread belief that the 'natives' were less civilized and at a lower stage in the evolutionary ladder, and therefore unable to produce works of art of a European standard.

The avant-garde artists of the European capitals who were disillusioned with the values of the 'West' looked eastwards for inspiration from the 1880's onwards. They read the work of the Middle East, Africa and Oceania, as more in touch with the human spirit and as manifestations of an innocence and spontaneity that had been lost in field of European art. In addition they also saw 'native art' as possessing forms which could be used to challenge the conventions of Renaissance perspective. This lists just a few ways in which the art of other places was appropriated into European art. In many cases there was a salvaging of dying art traditions from the 'third world' by Europeans. What was disavowed however, was the role the Europeans had played in the destruction of these cultures (Nochlin;1991;50).

The representations of the landscape in the Arab World prior to the 1900's were not dominated by conventions of perspective. It was not that there was an absence of representations of the natural environment, on the contrary Arab art and Islamic art were filled with patterns inspired by natural forms, the abundance of which was evident in the absence of figures, the depiction of which was viewed as an attempt to aspire to the creative abilities of God (Brend;1991;19). The religion of Islam is a faith based on the word which stresses the importance of the message not the messenger,

hence the importance of the art of calligraphy in Islam and the absence of figurative representations (Brend;199;18). In their representations of natural forms, Islamic artists differed in their perspectives from their European counterparts for the artists did not position themselves in a position of power vis-a-vis the natural world. Islam was the predominant religion of the population of the region and inspired a whole field of art in which the emphasis was placed upon the spiritual representation of objects rather than a mimetic representation of their material qualities. This meant that the art leaned towards abstraction and ornament (Wijdan;1989;xii). The representation of the landscape was understood in terms of spiritual beliefs. The artist did not see himself as being in a position of conquest rather, visual representations were a celebration and worship of God's creativity. The representation of the landscape was not dominated by the issue of perspective; landscape was not, as Mitchell suggests, "what can be seen from a distant point of view, a 'prospect' that dominates, codes and frames the landscape" (Mitchell;1998;4). Thus a whole other form of subjectivity in relation to nature was experienced in the Islamic world. The emphasis was placed on the transient and insubstantial nature of all that was not God (Nasr;1987;185). Thus, it was in the spaces which were empty of objects that God was symbolised (Nasr;1987;186). This is evident in the arabesque whose form is derived from nature (Brend;1991;12). The arabesque is significant for understanding the issue of perspective in Islamic art for, "through its extension and repetition of forms interlaced with the void, removes from the eye the possibility of fixing itself in one place...man does not project himself outwardly by identifying himself in one way or another with the image of God-man" (Nasr;1987;187). Even today the use of perspective is not the dominant method of representing space.

The representation of nature occupied a special place in Islamic art as it was intimately linked with the idea of paradise. Heaven was described as a luscious garden with rivers, fountains, flowers, date palms, pomegranate trees etc.

(Reinhart;1991;17). Barbara Brend suggests that the image of heaven as a garden of paradise related to the vast expanses of desert from which Islam emerged (Brend;1991;12). The depictions of elements from nature were not confined to the representation of particular places on earth, but rather made reference to the image of heaven as described in the Koran. It was not therefore uncommon to find the interior of mosques decorated with trees, plants and flora, as is the case with the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem and the Great Mosque in Damascus. The great domes of these mosques also represented the 'dome of heaven' (Denny;1991;34-35). Another popular motif was that of an arched gateway filled with flowers, which can be found in Islamic architecture, textiles and carpets and makes reference to the supposed entrance to paradise (Denny;1991;38).

As part of living in Palestine, the Palestinians would have had access to visual representations at religious sites, such as icons in churches and the mosaics and decorative ornamentation in mosques. These would have included the visual representations found in the Dome of the Rock, the Ibrahim Mosque in Hebron and the Nebi Musa pilgrimage site. In addition, the country was littered with archaeological sites and ruins, many of which had ornamental work relating to natural forms.

The Peasantry's Representation of the Landscape

Today 'art', defined as painting, sculpture and drawing has become a tradition in its own right within Palestine and other Middle Eastern countries who all possess contemporary art movements. Before I examine the question of the representation of landscape in these forms in Palestinian art, I think it is necessary to examine what has come to occupy the peripheries of art practice as a consequence of privileging painting and sculpture. The importance given to painting and sculpture has meant the marginalisation of other forms of visual representation. Nonetheless, these arts are the precursors of fine art in Palestinian visual culture and contemporary Palestinian

artists have used them as a source of inspiration and as a way of linking their work to the visual traditions of their society. As recently as seventy years ago, 'art' was integral to everyday life in Palestine and expressed the predominant beliefs and values of the community. Early representations of the natural environment could be found in Palestinian costume, architecture, wall paintings, folklore, jewellery and body decoration, which I will discuss in turn.

The population of Palestine during the 1920's was predominantly made up of the peasantry who lived in villages.¹ It was the culture of the peasantry therefore that was the main culture of the population. However, the histories of the lower classes have largely been marginalised in the accounts of the past (Popular Memory Group;1982;210). These histories are difficult to trace, as very little has been written down or documented visually (Khalidi;1997;89-90,Doumani;1995;1). The culture of ordinary people regularly goes undocumented as they are not in possession of tools to express or document their lives, or else their methods rely on oral traditions and the stability of communities over time. Thus, the main sources upon which one often has to rely for information about the Palestinian peasantry are accounts written by foreign missionaries, administrators or travellers. Information from these texts has to be gleaned with care as their narratives are often coloured by the prejudices of the authors who travelled to Palestine with certain preconceived ideas.

In the case of Palestinian histories, particular problems arise due to the absence of documentation on Palestinian material culture. The fragmentation of Palestinian society as a consequence of the war of 1948 and the unsettled situation of the Palestinian people has hampered the development of archives (Khalidi;1997;89). During the war of 1948 people were forced to leave their homes and all their belongings and were denied permission to return (Sayigh;1979;84,88). Complete

¹ There were, however, important cities in existence such as, Jerusalem, Nablus, Hebron, Jaffa and Haifa.

villages were destroyed and razed to the ground (Khalidi;1992;xxxii). One cannot estimate the wealth of historical material that was lost material that might provide important insights into the development of Palestinian culture. Regardless, there has been a consistent effort by Palestinian to preserve what remains of their culture and to piece together the fragments in order to reconstruct a picture of the past. For example, The Sakanini Cultural Center in Ramallah (during 1998 which marked 50 years of the Nakba and correspondingly 50 years of the state of Israel) held a year long series of events in which survivors of the 1948 war from different parts of what was then Palestine gave accounts of their experiences. In the absence of written or visual documentation, oral history provides a valuable historical record. The Centre for the Documentation of Palestinian Society at Birzeit University has also worked on reconstructing the histories of numerous villages that were destroyed in 1948. The issue of representing past will be looked at in more detail in the following chapter.

Although there is a lack of evidence from the early part of the twentieth century regarding the Palestinian peasantry by Palestinians, from the few texts that are available one can compose a rough image of the values and beliefs which conditioned the ways in which the peasantry created their representations of the landscape. One of the most significant scholars to conduct research on the Palestinian peasantry was Dr Tewfiq Canaan. Dr. Canaan was a physician who worked in Jerusalem between the 1920's and 1950's. Many of his patients came from villages that surrounded Jerusalem and from them he documented popular religion and medical practices. In the course of his lifetime he accumulated a vast collection of amulets and talismans which were used by the peasantry, a tradition which was in decline. His publications include 'Mohammadan Saints and Sanctuaries', 'The Palestinian Arab House', as well as numerous articles on Palestinian folklore were published in The Journal of The Palestinian Oriental Society. His writings are of particular significance because they

are some of the few Palestinian studies of the peasantry written in the first half of the century.

The peasantry's representation of the landscape can be found in all areas of the peasant's life as the land was their main source of livelihood. The way in which they represented the landscape reveals the ideologies which governed their perception of the landscape. As suggested, above architecture was one of the primary sites of visual articulation. The relationship with the landscape was expressed in terms of the use of the land, the choice of materials, the organization of space and the furnishing of the home. The Palestinian peasantry endeavoured to be economical with in their architecture so as not to waste land that could be valuable for cultivation. The architecture of the villages was tightly packed together to serve this end, but in addition it also provided a form of security against outside intruders. The village had no walls around them, but the outer buildings were constructed from particularly thick stone, and there were also a limited number of entrances to the village. A visitor would normally have to make his/her way to the main village square to be received by the male inhabitants of the village. Space was divided into clearly demarcated areas of the private and public spheres. The buildings were made of local stone, thus were camouflaged with the stony hillsides. Most homes in a village were organized around a central family courtyard. The extended family was the main unit of production in a village and each village consisted of several large extended families known as *hamulas*. The homes of the male members of the family would open out onto the courtyard where the women- folk would carry out their daily household tasks, supervise children and undertake agricultural work such as drying or preserving foods (Amiry & Tamari;1989;7-25).

The house of the peasant was usually a one room structure with a space underneath which served as a pen for storing animals at night. The heat generated by the animals

would provide warmth for the upper level of the house. The house was normally used in the winter months, and for family gatherings, but the majority of the peasant's time was spent outdoors. The house was sparsely furnished with cushions, mattresses and mats which were made from by-products of the peasants' livestock and agricultural production such as straw and wool. Storage facilities for clothes and bedding took the form of niches which were built into the walls. Large bins and jars were made and decorated by the women of the family and were used for storing the yearly supply of grains, dried legumes and olive oil (Amiry & Tamari;1989;17-20). The windows of the house were normally small in proportion to the rest of the house and contained no glass. The aim was to prevent the entry of rain while providing enough light for the interior. The stone structure kept the interior cool during the day, and warm in the evening, as the stone would absorb the heat of the sun during the course of the day.

The above description of the peasant's home gives us an indication that the peasant lived in close relation to the landscape, rather than imposing himself upon the environment. The peasant did not perceive of himself as the omniscient subject of enlightenment rationalism in which nature was under his command, but as John Berger an analyst of the environment, has suggested in 'Pig Earth',

"Each day a peasant experiences more change than any other class...many-like the weather from one day to the next, like the cow choking to death on a potato, like lightening, like rain which comes to early or too late, like the fog that kills the blossom... are unpredictable" (Berger;1979;206-207).

The peasant did not set himself apart from the world he inhabited, placing himself at an observer's distance rather, he situated himself in the midst of the elements of his existence. Timothy Mitchell, writing on Bourdieu's work on the 'Kayble House', suggests that the peasant's life in the Kayble house was not made up of, "Inert objects to be ordered but demands to be attended to and respected according to the contradictory ways in which they touch and affect each other working in harmony and opposition, or resemble and oppose one another" (Mitchell;1991;51). Thus peasants

were involved in harnessing the inherent potentiality of elements, but this activity always encompassed the possibility that an element because of its qualities would destabilise the fragile equilibrium. This way of life is evident if one examines the peasantry's folklore about the landscape. Scott in his work on peasant resistance strategies has suggested that through reference to "'off stage' comments and conversations, their proverbs, folksongs and history, legends, jokes, language, ritual and religion", that it is possible to discern the ideology of the peasantry (Scott;1985;41). One of Canaan's articles entitled 'Plantlore in Palestinian Superstition' written in 1928 provides a rare catalogue of place names, popular sayings and beliefs derived from plants that were commonly used by the peasantry. These provide an insight into the importance attached to elements of the natural environment by the peasantry. What is evident from the information Canaan gathered is the way landscape was used as a form of expression in the form of place names, advice about the consumption of fruits and vegetables, relationships between men and women, and the description of a person's character. The peasantry used the landscape as its main term of reference and it is with the landscape that a peasant described how a person looked, their characteristics, or gave advice. Names of villages, valleys, mountains and ruins also originated from names given to plants (1928;131) for example: *qariet el-'inab* (the village of grapes), *wadi et tuffah* (the apple valley) *qasr el malfuf* (the palace of cabbages) or *djabal ez zetun* (The Mount of Olives). A saying that used the property of a vegetable was "Cucumbers extinguish the fire (the thirst) of the stomach" (*el-hiar bitfi an el qalb en nar*) (1928;142), since cucumbers are known for their high water content. When choosing a bride the advice was,

"sahn el mismis la tikmis dauwir 'al-loziyeh, zen el banat la tohid dauwir 'al-asliyeh- Touch not the apricot pudding but seek rather the almond pudding! Take not beautiful girls but seek rather one that is well bred...Although apricots are more beautiful than almonds they owe their existence to the almond tree onto which they are, as a rule, grafted" (143;1928).

Parts of the body were also likened to plants in the following sayings, “*Ideh mitl en na’na-* (his hands are (as soft) as peppermint)” (144;1928). “*Sanha zaiy el qahuan-* (her teeth are (white and symmetrical) like the camomile flower)” (1928;145). A person’s character was also likened to plants for example, “Boasting: *inti zaiy el-harua-* You are like the castor oil plant (whose branches extend outwards, thus depriving neighbouring plants of light and air” (1928;146). “Pride: *mitl el baqdunis sursuh al hara ubi asir el –akabir as sufar* –Like parsley, its roots are in the dung yet it courts high company at table” (1928;148). The peasantry’s use of the landscape in expressions recalls the earlier reference to W. J. T. Mitchell, who proposed that the landscape was a medium of exchange. This constant reference to the landscape reveals that the experience of landscape informs the peasant’s understanding of the world. The landscape therefore should be acknowledged as an infinite source of expression in the oral domain.

The landscape was not perceived as inanimate by the peasantry, The natural environment was believed to be inhabited by good and evil spirits who dwelled in water, around trees and ruins, and who sometimes could be heard or who appeared as animals or human beings.

“ [the peasantry] did not distinguish between official religion and its teaching on the one hand and the beliefs and superstitions of folk religion on the other. Naturally no sharp distinction exists between the domain of the supernatural and that of everyday life, or between the realm of the spiritual and the material” (Kanaana1989;41).

The forces of good and evil were believed to operate continually throughout the life of an individual, yet the powers of good were not sufficient to eliminate the evil spirits therefore the two forces had to co-exist. The individual in the middle would therefore have to be constantly vigilant and protect himself against the presence of *ghouls* and *jinns* (the names given to the spirits) (Kanaana;1989;43). This was achieved through the recitation of blessings and the requesting of permission from the spirits to use the

areas they were believed to inhabit. Different trees are associated with good and evil forces, as Canaan notes, the carob tree was believed to be a dwelling place for the demons, therefore before tying his donkey there a peasant would request to do so from the *jinn* (Canaan;1924;37). Certain trees were held in particular reverence as they are associated with the spirit of a *weli* (a holy person or saint who used to live in the ruins or the area and whose spirit was believed to inhabit the area). If such trees happen to be fruit trees then everyone who passed was permitted to eat from its fruit, but no fruit could be taken away, and it was forbidden to cut even the smallest branch from a holy tree (Canaan;1924;36). The reverence given to ruins can be understood as yet another a way in which the peasantry articulated their relationship to history. These sites were preserved, and set outside of the areas of land that the peasants used for cultivation and habitation, due to the belief that spirits dwelled there and in accordance with the customs which forbade the removal of anything from the vicinity. For example, a peasant could leave his tools and grains under the protection of the *weli* without fear that they would be taken away from the location. These spaces fell outside of the general social order and were spaces in which different rules of conduct applied and where there was an alternative temporality to that of the cyclical time of the village.

Peasants did not see themselves as powerless against elements in the natural world but they understood their limitations and vulnerability. This did not exclude their desire to have power over elements of the landscape, particular over the forces of evil *jinn*s who inhabited it. The peasants used elements from the natural world to create amulets and talismans to protect themselves against these evil spirits. An amulet or talisman can be understood as a natural element that is taken out of its context and invested with particular significance; the fetishisation of this object relates to the belief that the object could provide protection and cures for various ailments. Amulets and talismans were another way of representing the landscape, for if we recall

W.J.T. Mitchell's argument, he suggests that pictorial representations of landscapes express fantasies of power and conquest over the landscape in the same way that an amulet or talisman did. The difference lies in the fact that amulets were made from a material element hailing from within the landscape while pictorial representations are mimetic. Paintings are not believed to possess magical properties, but work indirectly to express fantasies of power, power the individual believed himself as capable of possessing. Amulets on the other hand were seen to have a direct effect on ailments caused by *jinn*s and spirits. Amulets worked in the space in which individuals could not protect or cure themselves and were a way of empowering individuals and giving them a means to conquer elements which were outside the sphere over which he/she had control. The peasants who used amulets believed that there were forces in the landscape who were more powerful than themselves, and thus they needed extra powers to counter the spirits and the *jinn*s. Amulets were frequently used for children and new born babies and for breast feeding women, who were considered to be most vulnerable in society. Many amulets were organic or made from particular stones. A dried lemon was hung over a child's bed to protect it from the *qarineh* (-a particular female *jinn*). A thread of cloves was also worn to protect oneself from the *qarineh*. A white stone with a brown spot was worn by women in order to end hate between a her and her husband. A dark green stone was worn to protect one against bleeding, while garlic was used to protect one against the evil eye. The upper part of a snake's body would also be worn the belief was that it gave long life to its wearer. The beak of a partridge was worn by children and was meant to make them run like a partridge.² With the last two amulets an element was taken from the object to which the superstition relates. A beak of a partridge was worn so one could run like a partridge. Therefore owning an element of the creature enabled one to take on its qualities. These amulets were thus perceived as indexical signs in the peasant's world. The

²The examples of amulets are taken from Dr. Tewfiq Canaan's catalogue (unpublished) located at Birzeit University in Palestine.

snake's head worked in a similar way. The snake was seen as a symbol of life, again, wearing a part of the snake allowed one to take on the significant qualities of that element.

Amulets can still be found in use today, most popular is the blue eyed stone that is used to ward off the evil eye; it can be found on bracelets, pendants and key-rings, although it functions more as a decorative element rather than as a talisman. For those who are superstitious, the blue eyed stone protects them from the gaze of the malevolent evil eye, not necessarily an evil spirit, but rather the glance of a jealous person. It became fashionable in the 1930's to have jewellery inspired by natural motifs, for example women would wear pendants in the form of golden almonds, earrings in the shape of a bunch of grapes, bracelets taking the form of snakes. For those families who still marry according to tradition (which involves giving the bride a *mahr* (a bride price) of gold and gifts), it is common for each family to have a tradition of what jewellery the bride will receive, which relates to the number and type of bracelets and jewels she will receive. This type of jewellery can be found in any goldsmiths shop in Palestine. By the 1930's jewellery was changing from monetary form, (women normally wore their *mahr* of silver coins on their body in the form of necklaces and head gear), to organic motifs cast in gold.

Adorning the bride in forms taken from nature was not only confined to styles of jewellery but was part of the wedding rituals of Palestinians. The night before her wedding a bride would receive the women of her bridegroom's family who would visit her to prepare her for her wedding day. The women from her own family and her female friends would also be present. The henna night as this evening was known was full of singing and dancing, and as part of the celebrations the women would paint henna onto the girl's hands and feet in the form of palm, cypress trees and floral patterns. However it is the bride's wedding dress that can be read as the main

representation of the landscape and bore its relationship to the landscape in numerous ways. A village girl would normally learn to embroider at an early age and would thereby be initiated into the language of the costume. Her wedding dress would represent her village, family and sexual identity and differed in these respects to the man's costume. Each region of Palestine had a particular style of dress, which was distinguished by its embroidery patterns and how they were organized within the space of the costume. Villagers could therefore easily recognize from where a woman originated by her dress. Village identity was one of the main forms of affiliation and the wedding dress served as an important space for a woman to announce her pride in being a member of her community. The land was also represented indirectly through the fabrics used and the density of the embroidery, for they revealed how much money had been invested in the dress by a girl's father and how much time had been spent by his daughter on the stitchwork. The money would have been gained from the tiling of the land, which was the source of his livelihood, while the time taken to embroider indicated that a father could afford the absence of a labourer on his land. The costume also related to the land through its decorative patterns and motifs, which in many instances were derived from nature. Costumes were covered with cyprus trees and palms, for example. Although not often sited as a possible source of inspiration, there is a considerable similarity between the effect the wild flowers of Palestine create in the landscape and the visual effect of the embroidery visible on the costumes. Shelagh Weir in her in depth study the Palestinian costumes notes that many of the techniques associated with making the costume are given organic names, for example, " *sabaleh* ('ears of corn')- herringbone stitch; used as a joining stitch for seams, for framing applique panels and for re-inforcing decorative hems...*megajel* ('sickles') a joining stitch for seams, especially sleeves...*tinbiteh* ('planting') running stitch" (Weir;1989;107). Each type of stitch was given a name one that derived from nature but was not always a mimetic representation (Weir;1989;112). This form of signifying relates to my earlier discussion of how nature

is used as a language for communicating. Weir also suggests that women did not only use nature as their source of inspiration, but also other artifacts from their environment like uniforms of men, church furnishings, tiles, architectural motifs etc. (Weir;1989;113).

With the loss of the land, the significance of these modes of representing the landscape were transformed, as the context which had grounded these representations and which had given them meaning was destroyed. Land, whose representation had been implicit in the forms of representation of the peasantry was no longer present. In this chapter, I set out to explore the representation of the landscape in the visual arts in the Palestinian national discourse. The first part of this chapter explored a definition of landscape by looking at the work of W.J. T. Mitchell who suggested that representations of landscapes visualised fantasies of power . Mitchell's ideas were examined in relation to colonialism and territorial nationalism, which I suggested established a discourse through the fetishisation and worship of the landscape. The chapter then progressed to examine whether these modes of representing the landscape were present among the peasantry who made up the majority of inhabitants in Palestine. What became evident was that the landscape was used as medium of exchange. The peasantry used the landscape to represent their ideas and the landscape informed these representations. The peasantry did not see themselves as more powerful than the natural environment for they acknowledged the forces that were present in the landscape. They did, however, have representations which expressed the desire to have power over those forces that they believed to be present in the landscape, in a way similar to how Mitchell suggested paintings operated.

The above discussion provides insights into the contemporary representation of the landscape by Palestinian artists. After the loss of Palestine, the relationship to the

land was transformed and new ways of perceiving the landscape emerged. What I intend to explore is the subsequent transformation in the representations of the landscape. I intend to investigate how representations that came from the fact that the community's life was centred around the landscape shifted to representations which were informed by this and by the fact one had been dispossessed from the land. The representation of the landscape was central to the representation of a Palestinian identity both before and after 1948. However, what it meant to be a Palestinian after the loss of the homeland transformed the representations of the landscape and landscape in turn, became central to the Palestinian national discourse.

As I suggested earlier, the hierarchy of 'art' has successfully prevented embroidery, architecture and henna drawings from being considered art. Art in Palestine is now defined as drawing or painting. The former modes of artistic expression continue today albeit in different contexts and carry different meanings. The ways in which the peasantry's former favoured modes of representation are interpreted today in the national discourse will be examined in the next chapter, in which I explore how the peasantry of the past are used to articulate a national identity and sustain a fantasy of the nation's past.

As land has become central to the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis and is the cornerstone of the definition of the Palestinian nation one finds that it is implicit in many representations in Palestine art. The development of Palestinian art inside the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem closely follows the political developments of the Palestinian national movement. The artworks can in many cases be seen as a discursive response to the political climate. My discussion of the representation of the landscape in Palestinian art will therefore follow its progress in time starting with paintings executed prior to the war of 1948. My discussion concentrates on artwork mainly created by Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem but also

includes a number of works by Palestinians who are resident in Europe and inside Israel. Palestinian artists, it must be remembered are not all resident in one place; thus their representations of the landscape of the homeland are informed by the various locations from which Palestinian artists create their representations. However my discussion centres upon the representations by those artists who live in Palestine.

The Context of Art Practice in Palestine

There exists little critical writing on Palestinian art in either English or Arabic. Within Palestine the field of art criticism is seriously underdeveloped in the public and academic sphere. This perhaps can be attributed to the fact that art education in schools was absent for many years. The few essays and catalogue introductions that have been published during the last twenty years have tended to give an overview of Palestinian art or focus on the different historical stages through which the Palestinian art movement has passed. Articles do not address particular issues that arise in Palestinian art, such as genres of representation, the depiction of women, or of conflict. After the outbreak of the intifada uprising however, articles did begin to appear which specifically addressed issues of the art of that period and the ideologies of the artists. It is in this context- namely in the absence of a canon of art history that I will attempt to explore questions of the representation of landscape in Palestinian art. My aim is to investigate the development and significance of this genre within the art of the Palestinians. (For that reason, what follows is a survey of the representation of the landscape. Thus I will examine numerous paintings rather than focus on few representations).

The art of Palestinians in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem has been produced in a heavily laden political atmosphere that has affected art practice. In

order to inform our understanding of the Palestinian art that will be discussed in this thesis it will help to understand the general context in which art has been produced.

One of the cornerstones of Israeli identity was the denial and suppression of expressions of Palestinian identity. Any claim to a national identity by the Arabs who inhabited the area was interpreted as posing a direct challenge to the founding mythologies of the State of Israel. The suppression of Palestinians took numerous forms and intervened in every part of daily life from the trading of goods, to movement within and beyond the occupied territories, to the building of homes, to water accessibility, to literary material. The Israeli military orders provide detailed documentation of Israeli policies on the areas mentioned above; for example permission was required from the Area Commander to drill wells and permission could be refused without a reason being given (Shehadeh;1985;153). In addition there were restrictions on the books and periodical that could be imported into the occupied territories (Shehadeh;1985;158-159). For example the play Hamlet was banned in the occupied territories (Slyomovics;1991;291). The arena of culture therefore, was not free from repression, for culture is one of the spaces in which a nation creates representations of its identity and this was recognised by both the Palestinians and the Israelis. For example, theatre performances required permits from the military governor for which scripts, video- taped performances and 'command performances' needed to be submitted for a permit to be granted. For Palestinians, culture was a space in which they could define their identity and culture as a collective. Culture was the space in which the past of the community and the basis for the nation's sense of belonging was articulated. Culture played an important role in the formation of Palestinians as a people. The Palestinians, as Julie Peteet notes, "were not resurrecting traditional culture but rather consciously devising a blend of old and new to form a 'culture of resistance' "(Peteet;1993;50). In turn, Palestinian support for cultural activities was seen as a way of expressing commitment to the national cause.

Palestinians went to art exhibitions and consumed art because it was a nationalistic activity and was thus a form of resistance. Art was not for art sake but was part of an expression of patriotism (Tamari in Murphy;1990;125, Shinar; 1984;13, Mansour in Giest;1981;13). Artists, saw their role during this time as political (Mansour; 14th February 2000). Sliman Mansour highlights that,

“People here do not esteem art for the sake of art. If I was to create something purely decorative I do not think that this would find a response....Art for people here means to make pictures exposing the problems of their life in a straightforward way and at the same time giving them a certain pride about their culture, their people and their land” (Mansour in Giest;1981;13).

During the intifada the artist Khaled Hourani argued that the production of art was part of the action and took its place along side other utilitarian activities such as the work of the popular committees and in so doing re-asserted the historical cultural link between art and function (Hourani in Murphy;1990;122-123).

The popular reception which art received from the general public from the mid-seventies to the mid-eighties alarmed the Israeli authorities (Mansour and Tamari;1990;2). The Israelis responded to the enthusiasm for art by closing down exhibitions and confiscating paintings which they declared contained political material (Murphy;1990;122, Mansour in Giest;1981;13). Paintings were classified by a military ruling as leaflets and thus subject to the same censorship regulations as any other printed matter:

“Military order No. 101, article 6 prohibits residents of the West Bank from printing or publishing “any publication, advertisement, proclamation, picture or any other document” which contains any article with “political significance” except after obtaining a license from the Military Commander. “Printing” is defined in the order to include “carving on stone, typing on a typewriter, copying, photographing or any other manner of representation or of communicating expressions, numbers, symbols, maps, painting, decorations or any other similar material” (Shehadeh;1985;157).

In this atmosphere, works of art were censored, and in order to hold an exhibition permission had to be granted by the Israeli Military Governor which, in most cases was denied. Exhibitions and artists were also banned from travelling abroad (Murphy;1990;123). Artists themselves were victims of discrimination and were placed under arrest, or prevented from travelling within Israel and the occupied territories (Murphy;1990;123). The artist Fathy Ghaban from Gaza for example, was sentenced in May 1984 to one year's imprisonment which was commuted to six months in jail and a fine amounting to 37, 000 shekels (approximately 5,000 sterling pounds) (Shehadeh;1985;159). He was accused of distributing inciting material in the form of his nationalistic artwork. Similarly an exhibition at the Gallery 79 in Ramallah on September 21st 1980 was closed and the paintings confiscated. (Shehadeh;1985;159) Sliman Mansour one of the victims of Israeli repression against artists was himself arrested for his art work has drawn a satirical cartoon about this issue (see fig. 1).

One of the most telling manifestations of the Israeli legislation against Palestinian culture was the prohibition of the combined use of the four colours of the Palestinian flag; hence red, green, black and white could not be placed in close proximity in any work of art (Shehadeh;1985;159). Nonetheless, the outlawing of the flag inspired numerous forms of creative resistance in response to this restriction. Palestinians have found many ways of challenging this ruling, for example, during the intifada youths would each wear a colour of the flag and group themselves together, women would hang their washing in the combination of the flag, while people marched in demonstrations with open watermelons which became a national symbol because they contained all the colours of the Palestinian flag (Eber;1982;109).

Artists in the West Bank and Gaza Strip were not only restricted in their creative expression by the repressive atmosphere created by the Israeli authorities but also by

the absence of a supporting infrastructure for art in the occupied territories. To the present day, there does not exist a college for the study of art. Those artists who wish to pursue a profession in this field are obliged to travel abroad for their education. Artists have mainly trained in Egypt or Iraq- for example Tayseer Barakaat studied at the Alexandria College of Fine Art. He was able to travel to Egypt to study as he had a travel document which, was issued to the residents of Gaza while it was under Egyptian rule. Some artists have been educated within the Israel system, for example Sliman Mansour graduated from the Bezalel Art Academy in Jerusalem, the first art institution established in Israel. Others who have not had the privilege of such opportunities have taught themselves, or have been instructed by other painters- for example Jawad al Malhi was trained by Tayseer Barakaat. Artists are also confronted by the lack of museums in which they can see first hand representations of the visual traditions of other cultures. Similarly the travel restrictions imposed on artists and the difficulty created for art works from other parts of the world to tour within the occupied territories has meant that Palestinian artists have been isolated from the art movements and developments in different regions of the world.

Up until the early 1990's no permanent gallery or art centre for the exhibiting of artworks existed in the West Bank, (after the swift closure of Galley 79) Gaza Strip or Jerusalem. Exhibitions were held in schools or universities (such as Bir Zeit University) and union halls or other makeshift locations. In Jerusalem, the National Palace Hotel was an important venue for art exhibitions, particularly as it was a place that had an international clientele and thus provided an outlet for the Palestinian viewpoint. The Hakawati National Theatre and The YMCA in Arab East Jerusalem also played important roles in hosting art and cultural events. The lack of galleries also had repercussions on the artistic community, as the absence of venues hampered the development of a purchasing public. Thus artists struggled to support themselves financially. The League of Palestinian Artists was established with the

aim of tackling the difficulties that confronted these artists. The League would hold an annual exhibition that was run on an open submission basis rather than organized around particular themes; however most participating artists were working on issues relating to Palestinian identity. The League of Palestinian Artists would normally hold their exhibitions in the Hakawati National Theatre, and received financial support from the PLO.

The absence of galleries, the populism of art and the perception that the artists had of their responsibility towards the community contributed significantly to the development of art in Palestine. The lack of traditional white cube gallery spaces that one is accustomed to in Europe meant that art was accessible to the general public, for art was not rarefied and placed outside the realm of people's everyday lives. Art was not seen as a pursuit in itself but as a medium for expressing the experiences and the values of the Palestinians.

Although in the majority of cases, the public were unable to purchase original artworks, visual images circulated and were consumed via other means – mainly that of the poster. According to Mansour and Tamari, “people rushed to purchase them (posters) treating them with the same protectiveness as valuable museum pieces” (Mansour and Tamari;1990;2). Mansour highlights that 50, 000 posters of his ‘Camel of Hardships’ paintings have been sold (Mansour in Giest;1981;13). Posters were published underground to avoid the Israeli censors were able to reach people in the villages and the refugee camps and were easily affordable. The popularity of art posters came at an important junction in the development of the formation of Palestinian identity. Benedict Anderson, in his major contribution to the study of nationalism ‘Imagined Communities’, argues that the spread of print culture is a crucial medium for facilitating the development of the national imagination (Anderson;1991;33-36). Central to the success of a nationalist ideology is that

individuals imagine that the other members of the nation share the same experiences as themselves and feel that they are personally addressed by the content of printed material. Printed matter of a national inclination can thus be seen to quilt together the community. Military order 101 of the Israel Military Authority quoted above is evidence that the Israeli authorities recognised the importance printed material bore in fostering a national identity.

Painting the Palestinian Landscape

Having outlined the context in which art was produced in Palestine, I would now like to move on to discuss the representation of the landscape in Palestinian art. Some of the first spaces in which painting began to appear was in the home and on its interior surfaces. Tewfiq Canaan recorded some of the different patterns that could be found in village architecture which we can see in the background of the *madafeh* (the village guest house) in fig 2. Organic motifs were commonly utilised to decorate interiors. In addition entrances to buildings would be painted if someone had returned from a pilgrimage to Mecca. While older examples of these drawings have not withstood the weather of time, this art form is still practiced today. In contemporary Palestine the houses are usually lit with strings of lights and the outside of the house is covered in representations of flowers, geometric patterns and images of the Kabaa at Mecca.

The evidence that exists of art prior to the war of 1948 is fragmentary, as is the material of the years in the immediate aftermath of the war. From the images that have been recorded it can be argued that depicting the landscape of Palestine was not a defined genre. Paintings in general tended to be executed in oil and the subject of which were portraits or historical figures, or events or images with a religious theme. Palestinian artists did not see the landscapes that they inhabited as a subject for their art, although many foreign painters were obsessed by the theme of the Holy

Land and its environs. For the Palestinian artist, 'landscape' was represented by snow capped mountains, lakes, evergreen trees, a humble rustic cottage, or a forest scene. These were the types of landscape paintings that Palestinians produced prior to 1948. The idea of a representation of a landscape was of an imagined European terrain and would have most likely been copied from books or postcards.

Daoud Zalatio from Jerusalem was born in 1907. His works typify the treatment of landscape that I have been describing, but unfortunately no information about titles or dates are available for these paintings. In fig. 3, the artist has chosen to represent a small, tranquil river which is framed by autumnal trees and in the distance a rustic figure is seated by the river side. All the predominant colours are from the same family and create a feeling of an autumnal landscape. Another of his paintings is a winter scene with the landscape covered in snow (fig. 4). Butrus Lusia, (an untrained artist living in Shefa'amr, an Arab village in the north of Israel) was also producing landscapes of a similar kind, see fig. 5 (Untitled, oil on canvas, 1935). Again the image is of an autumnal scene of trees on the bank of a river, however in this image we have a wider perspective on the flat planes of this landscape. In another of his works, (fig. 6) (Untitled, oil on canvas, 1951) he depicts a small village scene, with thatched cottages and gardens in which a young girl is feeding ducks by the side of the river. This village bears no relationship to the architecture or form of an Arab village but rather has many elements landscape executed in the Picturesque tradition of European painting, in which the landscape is imaged as a place of enjoyment and a quintessential lifestyle. We could speculate however that these idyllic pastoral landscapes are images of the tranquillity of rural life expressed through a European form, an interpretation which is probable if one considers the dates in which Butrus Lusia's painting (fig.6) was executed. The 1950's, it will be remembered, was the immediate aftermath of the war, a time in which the position of the Palestinians who

remained inside Israel was precarious as they had been severed from the rest of the Palestinian community and their own identity was outlawed in Israel.

These landscapes may not seem relevant to a discussion on the representation of the Palestinian landscape, however they are significant because they reveal the elements artists believed constituted a landscape painting, and the appropriate conventions of how a landscape was to be represented. This is evident from the similar ways in which trees are used to frame the images, of how a waterway is used to create a sense of a perspective and of how the inhabitants are depicted as living in small communities of one or two isolated dwellings. In a sense, European aesthetics completely dominated the field of landscape painting with no element of the artist's environment being appropriated for use in the creation of the images.

These types of paintings were popular among the emerging urban elite who used them to decorate their homes. From the 1920's onwards, the elite in Palestine were adopting the aesthetics of the lifestyles of upper class Europeans. Members of the upper class adopted European styles of dress and furnished their homes with European furniture and objects. Italian glassware, French and British fine china, chairs and divans from France and Italy were all popular among this class. Landscape paintings were part of the general ambiance of such an interior. The appropriation of European styles was part of a display of power by the upper class who wished to mark their affinity to the ruling authorities and who desired to see themselves as part of the European world. Perhaps then what was occurring prior to 1948 was an expansion in the field of the arts. The peasantry continued to represent the landscape in their traditional forms, evident from women's costumes that date back to that time. Meanwhile artists who had been exposed to European art forms began to emerge to meet the demands of upper classes who lived in the growing cities and suburbs, such as Jerusalem, Bethlehem and Jaffa.

These types of landscape representations continue to be popular today and can be found displayed in salons and dining rooms, often in the form of fake tapestries whose images bear a resemblance to the European countryside and are populated by shepherds and milkmaids. These landscapes are landscapes of enjoyment and escapism. They represent fantasies of other places, in the same way that images of the Holy Land were popular in Europe. These landscapes challenge our idea that places and people who are often the object of European representation do not create their own representations of other places. In a sense these paintings challenge our idea of the passivity and absence of agency that is attributed to colonised people. Homi Bhabha argues that colonial mimicry betrays the agency of the colonial subject and simultaneously destabilises colonial authority for “The ambivalence of mimicry - almost but not quite – suggests that the fetishised colonial culture is potentially and strategically an insurgent counter- appeal...For the fetish mimes the forms of authority at which it deauthorises them” (Bhabha;1994;91).

The work of Mubaraak Saad differs from the paintings discussed above. Saad’s works are some of the early evidence we have of a Palestinian artist painting at the turn of the century who represented the landscape of Palestine. From his Self Portrait of 1906 (oil on canvas) (fig.7) we can form an idea of his status. The suit he wears was part of the style of dress of the urban establishment, as many of the men from the urban centres of Jerusalem, Jaffa and Bethlehem were adopting the European suit with its collar and tie. In Abraham’s Oak dated 1909 (oil on canvas) (fig.8) Saad engages in representing the landscape of Palestine but through the prism of religion. The oak is the central subject of his painting, with the other trees in the landscape functioning as a mere backdrop. The tree is represented in considerable detail yet its worthiness as a subject of artistic study depended on the religious associations it carried. Saad was reading the landscape as a terrain of religious significance, not

unlike the painters who journeyed to Palestine to paint the Holy Land. Where however his work differs from the panoramas of David Roberts is that this is a study of a single tree. His ground level perspective is more apparent in a rare seascape of 1909 entitled Jaffa Landscape (oil on canvas) (fig. 9). The position the artist seems to have adopted is one taken from a boat the rocking effect is suggested by the angle at which a distant ship has been painted, while no shoreline is visible and the cliffs tower above, consuming the skyline. Interestingly, Saad has chosen not to represent the port of Jaffa. Nor the city that was growing up in its midst which became an important centre for the export and the main disembarking point for tourists coming to the Holy Land. Instead he chose to represent the boundaries of the coast paying particular attention to the representation of the sea. Unfortunately, no other works by the artist have been documented and therefore one cannot study the direction in which his perspective on the landscape was developing. Nor is one able to compare his work to that of his contemporaries as evidence of the painting tradition prior to 1948 in Palestine has been lost. Saad's work, however, indicates that at least one Palestinian artist was beginning to represent the landscape of Palestine in his work and saw it as material that inspired artistic creations.

The events of the war of 1948 completely transformed Palestinian society, as over half the population was rendered homeless. Palestinians were transformed into refugees and hundreds went into exile in nearby Arab countries (Khalidi;1992;xxxii). A total of 711,000 of the 861,000 who had lived on the territory that became Israel were became refugees (Morris;1987;297-298). Palestine itself was fragmented; part of the land became the new State of Israel, the West Bank came under Jordanian rule and Gaza under Egyptian governance. Palestine no longer had any unity, as each area was segregated as were the Palestinians who lived in these regions. The aftermath of the war was a period of flux and uncertainty as Palestinians waited to return to their villages in the belief that the Arab nations would quickly deliver a

solution to their plight. Families struggled to survive physically as well as mentally, for they had to cope with a severe shortage of food and lack of shelter, as well as with the shock from the events that had just taken place (Sayigh;1979;107). People were assembled together in refugee camps in the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem these were a new environment for the residents of the towns in which the refugee camps emerged, and for those peasants who had previously lived in close-knit communities. Thus major social transformations occurred as a consequence of the war. In circumstances in which people had lost their livelihoods and had their previous ways of life effectively destroyed, there was little time or resource for artistic creativity.

Several years after the *nakba*, Palestinian artists began to emerge. One of the main artists was Ismail Shammout. It was while he was in Cairo that he began to create images of the plight of the Palestinian people. He returned to Gaza to exhibit his canvases in 1953. (Shammout;1989;10). The paintings he brought with him represented the experience of the loss of the homeland and the landscapes of exile which Palestinians were forced to wander and inhabit. Shammout's canvases depict images of human suffering and misery, and the state of Palestinians as homeless. The central subjects of these paintings are figures who express anguish and trauma through their facial expressions and bodily postures. The paintings mark a significant turning point in Palestinian art, for they reveal that artists began to perceive the landscape, in some cases landscapes of their experiences, as a distinct genre of representation. It is noteworthy that Palestinian artists did not create representations of the war of 1948, (in fact this whole aspect of history painting is absent in Palestinian art), rather the focus of art works was upon the emotional experience of the loss of the land. Although the landscapes predominantly serve as backgrounds in Ismail Shammout's paintings they do have particular salient qualities in terms of how the space in which the *nakba* is experienced is represented. In Where To? of c.1953 (oil on canvas) (fig.10) the landscape of exile is barren, dark, stormy, unwelcoming and

an empty space. All the colours of the painting are muted and work to give a sense of lifelessness.

One of the central aspects of '*nakba* landscapes' is the representation of wandering in the landscape of exile and of being in an unfamiliar terrain. Much of the work from the 1960's created by Palestinian artists has gone undocumented. However, a painting created in 1974 by Sliman Mansour from Jerusalem bears a relationship to Shammout's work as it dealt with the experience of exile which Mansour developed through the representation of the landscape. Mansour's The Camel of Hardships of 1974 (oil on canvas) (fig.11) became one of the most popular posters among Palestinians. It is noteworthy that what became the image of exile for the Palestinians was created by an artist living in Jerusalem and not in the Diaspora. The painting has been reproduced on posters, postcards and t-shirts. The artist was asked in 1999 to paint the image in Jericho near the Allenby Bridge border, where hundreds of refugees crossed over to Jordan in 1948. In addition, in an exhibition to mark fifty years of the *nakba* in an children's centre in Hebron one of the children participated with their own version of Mansour's painting; thereby revealing the extent to which the image has entered the visual vernacular. In this image the landscape of exile is imaged as a void, a no-place; it has no distinguishable features and stretches out as an endless terrain, in which the Palestinian is delegated to be a perpetual wanderer. The landscape of exile or the landscape beyond the boundaries of the homeland is an empty homogenous space. Its qualities are brought out by the corresponding image of place and home, which the wanderer carries with him as his load. In this image, the old city of Jerusalem is imaged as a golden city; full of homes and sites of worship. The image then creates a marked distinction between home, community and place, and it's opposite exile and empty space. The vacant space of exile is not a space to be conquered as empty landscapes were for the Europeans. Rather they were meant to communicate a sense of rootlessness of the individual who was lost in the midst of

the terrain. In a sense, what is expressed is the insignificance and humility of the individual vis-à-vis the expanse of the wilderness, which in some way recalls the way the Palestinian peasant perceived himself in relation to the landscape. Thus empty space is employed to signify the perceptions of the landscape and the individual's relationship to it. Many of Mitchell's ideas discussed earlier arise in this painting. The image of Jerusalem that the wanderer carries on his back represents a fetishisation of the landscape of the homeland. Jerusalem is represented in a utopic light and is painted as an unblemished city. The positioning of the city above the wanderer's head suggests a certain worshipping and fantasy about the city, for the image of the city that he has created is from his imagination and is informed by his memory. The painting points to a very important issue in the representation of the landscape in Palestinian art, namely the issue of memory and fantasy- for after 1948 Palestine was a lost landscape. Thus, Palestine is constituted in the space of memories and fantasies. It is a space of imagining. Therefore images of Palestine are representations of the past.

If the landscape of exile is a boundless space, then it significantly acts in fashioning an image of Palestine in an opposing light. Exile was a space in which memories, idealised images and reconstructions of Palestine could flourish in the imagination and in so doing informed the way in which the landscapes of the homeland were remembered. Numerous artworks refer to this process of imagining. Vera Tamari's piece Nostalgia of 1980, (ceramics) (fig.12) for example, features a young girl posed at a windowsill daydreaming, surrounded by flowers and organic motifs. The suggestion is that from her window she looks out upon a view that we the audience cannot see, while simultaneously dreaming of a place that we do not see either. What is significant is the very act of imagining itself. Thus, a landscape is referred to even if one is not depicted. Many of Tayseer Barakaat's paintings from the 1980's through to the early 1990's also refer to the world of day dreams and this space of escapism and

fantasy as in Untitled (c.1990, mixed media) (fig. 13). The characters in his painting are often flying or floating into the clear sky among the trees and above the rooftops leaving the landscape of palm trees and houses behind them. With these images of flight Barakaat seems to refer to the space of the dream world and the subconscious. The style in which these paintings are executed also enhances such readings. The actual dream world of the characters is often inaccessible to us as we are interpellated to occupy the space of the observer who watches the characters float into their own space. Barakaat, however, often hints at a narrative as in fig. 13 in which a silhouette of a young woman sails into the sky while a young man looks up from down below. The painting leaves us to build a scenario of their relationship. Thus, the dream world is a private space, not unlike the experience of exile which Edward Said describes in the following terms: “Exile is a jealous state. What you achieve is precisely what you have no wish to share with others” (Said;1984;162).

The sense of displacement from the landscape was not only the experience of Palestinians in the Diaspora, as those who remained in Palestine, in the West Bank or in the Arab villages within Israel, also suffered a form of estrangement. Although they continued to reside in what was Palestine, they experienced a feeling of alienation as a consequence of the rapid transformations which took place under Israeli occupation, and what exaggerated this condition was the continual denial of their identity as Palestinians. In this context Palestinians did not see themselves as living in what they imagined the Palestinian homeland and nation to be. Glenn Bowman argues that,

“The fact these people, technically, still live on the land that was Palestine in no way refutes their assertions that they are exiled from their homeland. For ‘homeland’ is itself a term already constituted within nationalist discourse; it is the place where the nationalist imagines his or her identity becoming fully realised. A domain where Palestinian identity is denied cannot be considered the Palestinian homeland, even if it were the very same ground on which they imagine the future Palestinian nation will be built” (Bowman;1994 ;139).

Khalil Lubbad's painting *Biladi* (My homeland) of 1997 (oil on canvas) (fig.14) visualises the experience of distance and separation from one's homeland even while being situated on its actual terrain. The political significance of a figure or figures looking out upon a landscape, which in the European tradition was often used to represent a fantasy of conquest, is transformed in this painting and is used to express a sense of separation and loss. In both the European tradition and this example the figure looking out onto the landscape expresses a sense of longing. From the title it is evident that for the old man and his son that the landscape was once their home. The knowledge that the town is now occupied sets up an invisible barrier preventing one from proceeding into the landscape. Thus, the former site of habitation can only be viewed as a 'landscape'- that Mitchell suggests can be "seen but not touched", and never experienced again as the place of a lived community. Its loss only serves to increase its desirability, which is part of the operation of fetishism.

The alienation and separation from the landscape was compensated for through the articulation of memories. With the distance from the landscape, memories served as a way of holding onto place. Fathy Ghaban's *My Grandmother's Stories* of 1996 (oil on canvas) (fig.15) makes a direct reference to the stories of the older generation of Palestinians, who would gather together in the camps and recall all the details of the former way of life in their villages and in so doing transported themselves and their listeners back in time and place. The significance is not in the landscape in which the people were present- which in this painting is dark and stormy, but rather the landscape which they were remembering and exchanging in their recollections. For the generation who did not know Palestine, it was upon these memories that their image of Palestine was built as Glenn Bowman notes in his study of Fawaz Turki's autobiography 'The Disinherited' (Bowman;1994;148). The memories of Palestine instilled in the younger generation a sense of loss not a loss that they experienced

directly but rather a legacy which was passed down to them. Remembering Palestine became a crucial aspect of Palestinian identity, as Rema Hammami (who I cited earlier) suggested, the idealised Palestine becomes almost a burden, not dissimilar to the heavy load that Mansour's wanderer carries on his back.

If exile, is then a limitless space, the void of non-place, and the inaccessibility to the homeland, then Palestine becomes defined as a bounded space, and one of the ways it has been represented is by the map. Thus we find that numerous artists have used the outline of Palestine in their work and many Palestinian organisations utilise the map in their logos. The outline itself comes to signify everything that the landscape of the homeland contains. The outline functions as a screen upon which to project imaginings of Palestine, in a similar way to the way in which a national flag operates. The map allows everyone to see themselves as part of the nation, without defining the specificities which might then privilege certain imaginings over others. The map also became the signature of different political groups. During the intifada the graffiti of the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine was marked with their emblem which was a combination of the map, the gun and the flag (fig.16). Hamas also used the map in their graffiti, combining it with a symbol of the Dome of the Rock (fig.17). In the former the map also became a gun, while in the latter it is marked as a sacred space which visually articulates Hamas' claim that the land of Palestine is a sacred *wafq* – a religious endowment from *Allah*.

In Fathy Ghaban's poster (fig.18) the map is a container for the collage of identity. The outline of Palestine is filled with two strong arms and the architecture takes on the characteristics of a face. The artist uses the map as a space to fill with markers of identity: the village, the elderly peasant man and the peasant woman. The use of the map acts as a way of affirming and defining the space of Palestine as a Palestinian territory, for the same outline is also used by the State of Israel to represent its

country. Thus, using the same outline serves to contest Israel's claim to the terrain and re-appropriates it as a Palestinian space. The numerous logos of Palestinian organisations also employ a similar visual rhetorical device of using the outline of the map to reclaim the land of Palestine. Hence, the drawing of the map in paintings and graffiti operates as a continual affirmation of the land as Palestinian and is very much part of a political discourse.

Mona Hatoum is one of the few artists to have worked with the new map of Palestine, which depicts the autonomous areas that come under the governance of The Palestinian Authority. Part of the appeal of the former map of Palestine was its sense of unity and defined boundaries. In contrast the map of the autonomous areas has no defined form and consists of a fragmented space that lack continuity, which perhaps explains why it has not become a popular symbol, nor is it frequently represented. In her recent residency in Jerusalem at the Annadiel Gallery, Mona Hatoum worked with the new map of Palestine, creating a piece that dealt with the lack of permanence and indistinguishability of the new map. (fig. 19). Using Nablus soap cubes she created a site-specific installation in the gallery on the floor of its main room. Nablus has a long history of being an important producer of soap an industry which contributed to the growth of the city's prosperity. Hatoum herself said,

"I saw that particular soap as a symbol of resistance. It is one of those traditional Palestinian productions that have carried on despite the drastic changes in the area. If you go to one of the factories in Nablus, the city north of Jerusalem that specializes in its production, you feel you have stepped into the last century" (Hatoum;1997;27).

Soap was made from olive oil, which was taken from the olives groves that surrounded the city. Hatoum used this material which is a product of the landscape, to create another landscape within the gallery. The piece has a mosaic like form as the cubes are placed side by side recalling the mosaic map of Madaba, which detailed the landscape of Palestine. Soap is somehow an ambiguously permanent and non

permanent material, diminishing with its use. Perhaps the analogy then, is to the very lack of permanence of the map. The small beads that were inserted into the soap to create the outline are barely distinguishable it is only from a distance that one is able to visually assemble the outline. The small red beads can also be read as droplets of blood. Such a reading situates the work in the language of motherland and martyrdom, in which the blood shed is symbolised as inseminating the soil to produce the birth of the nation- an idea I will explore in greater depth in the chapter on the representation of Palestine as a woman. The use of soap and the way in which the beads create only a faint outline draws on the wealth of political associations that map-making carries, for there are no other features of the landscape. In a sense the landscape has been 'washed clean', prepared for a new inscription. Maps are used for stripping the landscape of personal significance and naturalising power relations, thereby creating an authoritative viewpoint of the landscape. In the case of maps of Israel, the West Bank is never delineated while names of Palestinian towns are changed or their spellings altered. Aspects of the landscape such as refugee camps and certain roads are also not included.

From the landscapes inspired by the experience of exile there emerged a new genre which was to define the field of landscape painting in Palestinian art. The memories and fantasies of the past which were implicit in representations were now articulated in the depictions of the village, the peasantry and an agricultural way of life; a subject which was popular among artists in the late 1970's and 1980's. During this period, inside Palestine Palestinians were engaged in affirming their identity in the context in which their identity was constantly under threat. The artist, Nabil Anani, described the atmosphere of the period in these terms: "We were defending our identity, people were losing their identity and we needed to reveal it. The exhibition we organised on the Palestinian village was the most important thing we did" (Anani; 14th February 2000). Sliman Mansour, Anani's contemporary, speaking of this period in retrospect

said, “In the old times our concern was to make a Palestinian art, to give it an identity” (Mansour; 14th February 2000). The symbolic vocabulary of identity drew upon Palestinian folklore and the culture of the peasantry as a way of expressing the long history Palestinians had of being inhabitants of the landscape and as a way of imaging the nation’s past. An example is the image by Fathy Ghaban reproduced on postcards (fig. 20) showing a traditional peasant dance and a woman in peasant costume making *taboun* bread. In many paintings the landscapes were represented as rural utopias with an abundance of agricultural produce and a harmonious community an example of the former is Taleb Dweik’s The Earth (1989, gouache) (fig. 21) and the latter Sliman Mansour’s Olive Pickers (1986 oil on canvas) (fig. 22). The landscapes constitute the ‘Picturesque’ in Palestinian landscape art as they represent an idealised image of the landscape and its inhabitants. Yet what the Picturesque means in the Palestinian context stems from the way in which the landscapes were idealised. The representations are idealised images in that there is little historic specificity. No reference is made to transformations that had taken place in the landscape. If these were landscapes of the past then they were stripped of any suggestion of disharmony or change, such as the events that led up to the war of 1948, and the subsequent increasing landlessness that the peasantry experienced. No reference is made to these changes in The Peasant by Taleb Dweik (1990, gouache) (fig. 23) for example in which a peasant is seated under a tree in front of what we can presume is his home and his land. The picturesque paintings were situated in an ambiguous past, a vague golden age. These images offered a fantasy of a stable past and an egalitarian communal life evident in the images of olive picking discussed below. These landscapes, then, are both a projection back to a reconstructed utopic past, but can also be read as representations of an ideal Palestine situated in the future. In this case the past and the future elide into each other serving to erase any reference to present landscapes in which Palestinians experienced feelings of alienation, isolation and displacement.

One of the most popular themes in the paintings of rural life was the depiction of the harvest, in particular the collection of olives. Numerous artists have used the theme of olive picking as a subject of inspiration for their work. Saed Hilmi in Olive Picking of 1993 (oil on canvas) (fig.24) for example, places his figures in a field of endless olive groves. The sunlight casts a general golden glow over the landscape suggesting the richness of the land. The figures who are collecting olives are mainly women who are dressed in traditional Palestinian costumes and each figure represents a different part of the process of gathering olives. This visual device, however, creates a sense that the figures are artificially posed in the landscape, especially if one compares it to the painting Olive Pickers of 1986 (oil on canvas) (fig.22) by the artist Sliman Mansour. In this work we are not presented with a wide panorama of the landscape. The main figure in the foreground stands high on a ladder picking while behind him there is a swirl of activity around an olive tree. In contrast to Hilmi's painting, the figures are robust and actually engage in agricultural labour.

The differences between the two paintings raise an interesting question of when does a landscape become a national landscape, and what constitute the elements of a national landscape? In other words when is the fetishisation and exchange of the landscape seen in terms of the idiom of nationalism? I would propose that it is precisely when there is a consensus over the meaning and representation of the landscape. It is when the landscape is seen as the space of the 'imagined community' and the memories of it are the experiences of the collective. Representations of the national landscape are not images of private property or the community of the village rather they represent the idea that the land belongs to the nation. What has emerged from this consensus is the use of particular signifiers such as the peasant, the olive tree and the village to denote the landscape of Palestine. Thus, an image of the national landscape can be assembled by placing together all the key symbols. This

creates a generalized national landscape in which the specificity of the landscape is sacrificed for the larger national message, as is evident in the differences between the two nationalistic paintings by Mansour and Hilmi. The symbols themselves take on an exaggerated meaning, as for example with the olive tree, which Palestinians read as a sign of their steadfastness, strength and traditions. Palestinians liken themselves to the olive tree, which is able to survive harsh conditions and has been a part of the Palestinian landscape for centuries. Thus, the representation of an olive tree is not just a representation of an element in nature, for olive trees can be found in the landscapes of the Middle East and the Mediterranean, rather in Palestinian art it operates as a national signifier. Hence the olive tree is an example of how the meaning of an element from the landscape is transformed through its incorporation into the national discourse.

As part of the genre of rural life artists created representations of a sole Palestinian peasant woman working in the landscape. Abdel Muttaleb Abayyan's Harvest (1990, oil on canvas) (fig.25) and Fathy Ghaban's Almond Picking (1986, oil on canvas) (fig. 26) are such examples. What these paintings hold in common is that the community who work the land who we saw in the previous images discussed are absent, the rural utopia is no longer articulated in the terms of community, nor is the wealth of the landscape the product of any labour. The Palestinian woman who is always in traditional dress serves more as a sign for inscribing a Palestinian identity upon the scenery. The women all seem to be located in a generalised Palestinian landscape which has enough produce for everyone. Taleb Dweik in Collecting Olives (1990, gouache) (fig.27) also takes up the representation of the olive harvest and creates an image of a labourless and feminised landscape in which faceless peasant women sit idly among the olive groves. The style of the painting inclines one to read the landscape as the product of a child's fairytale with its simplistic houses and multi-coloured terrain. What is evident in this painting is the shift from Palestine being a

landscape of labour to Palestine being a landscape of leisure. The association of women and the land is whole field of representation in the Palestinian national discourse in which women are seen as closer to the land and in which the land is represented as a peasant woman, issues I will specifically address in chapter four. Above, I have only outlined the representation of rural life in Palestinian art which is an important area in the national discourse, a discussion of which is the subject of the next chapter which examines the re-presentation of the village and the peasantry.

At the end of the 1980's, there was a decline in the production of utopic images of agricultural life and the celebration of Palestinian identity and the aesthetic concerns of creating a beautified fantasy of Palestine with representations of village life, the landscape and the community of the past. (However this genre did not disappear altogether and did continue, the significance of which will be discussed in the following chapters). The landscape became one of heroes and of conflict as the intifada uprising broke out in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem. The images artists produced were no longer set in an ambiguous future/past but rather were inspired by contemporary events on the ground. Thus, Palestinian artists had to meet the challenge of representing the grassroots uprising that was transforming Palestinian society. Artists were also confronted with having to consider what message they desired to impart to their audience and what was appropriate in such a political climate.

Unlike the previous conflicts with Israel, which in a large part went undocumented by artists, the intifada was represented in painting through heroic representations of the young fighters. The landscape was one of violence, a violence that arose out of the desire to liberate the landscape from Israeli occupation. The popular paintings of the Intifada normally featured a young male child throwing stones, an image which became a symbol of the intifada both locally and internationally (Usher;1991;1). This

symbol was not an image of collective resistance which was the ethos of the intifada but the image of the heroic stance of a young boy or youth. Thus in visual images it was the male boys or youths who represented the uprising. The 'children of stones' was the name given to this young generation who took part in the communal confrontations with soldiers. The patriotism of the younger generation and their will to revolt surprised both the Israeli and the Palestinian communities. Yet at the same time, the Palestinians were inspired by this courageous generation who were attempting to take the course of history into their own hands (Darweish;1989;57). Children in reality sustained hundreds of injuries, but in nationalistic paintings they were usually depicted as invulnerable to attack. The landscape became the location in which confrontation took place as in painting Face Off by Hashem Klub (1988, oil on canvas) (fig. 28) Numerous paintings featured a single male child confronting the soldiers. The child is seen crossing the threshold into a violent landscape, often his back is turned to the audience whom he walks away from. This crossing into the public space for children, youths and women was a significant aspect of the intifada, as the boundaries between public and private were challenged during the uprising, as violence was indiscriminate and penetrated all spaces (Mayer;1994;63). In addition the call of the nation weakened the authority of the elders of the community and families, as individuals were willing to sacrifice themselves for the nation. The representation of young boys and men in heroic positions as in painting by Sliman Mansour (c.1989, oil on canvas) (fig. 29) and in fig. 30 from the Middle East collection at Harvard, (artist unknown) and in Khaled Hourani's Untitled (1987, oil on wood) (fig. 31) can be seen as addressed to the Palestinian male youth. The images, we can argue, represent the strength and invincibility of the male youths and are intended to inspire the young generation to join the uprising. These images correspond to the tone in which the youths were addressed in the popular leaflets. Thus, these type of images were celebratory of the struggle. Participation in the national struggle became an important rite of passage for young men; it was seen as way of defining and

expressing their masculinity and as a way of displaying their arrival into manhood (Kuttab;1996;93). The defiant stance of the Palestinians was inspired by the fact that they could successfully challenge the occupation even if they were the weaker party. One of the important changes in perception during the intifada, among the Palestinians was the idea that Israel was no longer invincible (Bowman;1994;160). It was this sense of confidence that informed the bravado and machismo that is expressed in the images, which also appeared in photographs. Noteworthy is that in these images importance is attributed to the figures, rather than the landscape, the landscape functions more as a setting, showing walls with graffiti (fig. 28) and burning tyres (fig. 30). There is a significant shift in the representation of the landscape that corresponds to the move from the strategy of *sumud* to active resistance in the intifada. *Sumud* was a strategy of steadfastness of bearing all aspects of the occupation without succumbing to the temptation to migrate or to perpetrate violent acts against the authorities it also involved a celebration of Palestinian traditions. Thus, the picturesque genre previously described was a discursive response to the political climate of the time, in which Palestinians were adopting a strategy of preserving their culture, the land and their traditions. It would appear from the popular images of the intifada that once Palestinians shifted their political strategy, the national subject took centre stage in the paintings.

Absent from the images of stone throwers are any indications of the threat posed to the individual by the conflict, whereas photographs and news coverage showed the injuries sustained by Palestinians paintings did not. Laila Shawa's piece Targets (1992, mixed media) (fig. 32) is a reaction to the popular painted imagery. A photographic image of a young boy is reproduced in multiples on the canvas with the sign of a gun target aimed squarely at his forehead. The child's vulnerability and powerlessness and the imminence of his death are suggested in the piece. The image brings home the inequality of the conflict in which young children were the victims of

military force. The Israeli Defence Forces during their confrontations with Palestinians used rubber coated metal bullets, live rounds and bullets which exploded on bodily impact, all of which caused hundreds of injuries and deaths. The IDF did not distinguish between children and adults, and did not recognise Palestinians under the age of ten as children (Usher;1991;2). It is this dehumanisation of the Palestinian youth that Shawa suggests through the multiple reproduction of the child's image. Noteworthy is that Shawa uses the same technique (screen printing on canvas), as Andy Warhol did to represent his image of death: the electric chair.

One of the issues with which artists were confronted during the intifada was the fact that their paintings had to operate alongside the media images that were relayed daily to both local and international audiences. The speed with which events transpired on the ground challenged painters to consider what was an appropriate medium with which to express the conflict. Laila Shawa, for example, expresses that she no longer found painting a suitable form of expression and turned to photography, which she felt was more appropriate for representing the conditions of events on the ground. Paradoxically other artists were inspired to take up painting as a way of expressing the magnitude of events and they created overtly political images (Murphy;1990;120). The majority of images functioned to revere the events and were heroic representations. A generalised image was created rather than the representation of a specific series of events that happened in an area or a town. Most of the generalised scenarios functioned to interpellate the viewer to see himself (as most of the images were of males) as part of the events and thus served a direct political end.

The paintings of Jawad al Malhi differ in this respect, for his canvases are some of the few representations that contain numerous narratives about the experience of the intifada and in which the landscape is integral to atmosphere and activities of the intifada. One such example is the painting The Day of Peace (1988, oil on canvas)

(fig.). The title of the painting plays on the irony of the notion of peace for the image is in fact a representation of a night during the intifada. This play on words is an attempt to highlight that what Palestinians have come to understand as 'Peace', is in fact for them, a continuation of the occupation. Jawad al Malhi was one of the few artists who worked on a grand scale, this particular painting measures 200 x 240 cm. The choice of scale can be seen to make reference to European monumental battle paintings. The painting represents a night during the intifada when hundreds of Israeli soldiers descended onto the Shufhat Refugee Camp where the painter lives, placing the camp under siege. The perspective of the painting is taken from a subject lying on the ground, where he has fallen, looking up at the action that is taking place. Thus we the audience view the scene from the same position. The landscape is an endless road through the camp lined with concrete houses the end of which is unclear, but where the enemy is situated. Malhi does not represent the enemy in the form of soldiers, but rather represents them as part of the landscape, differing significantly from the popular imagery in which they enemy was depicted via tanks or soldiers or was outside the frame of the painting. He draws on the way in which one imagines the enemy and their power rather than creating a literal depiction; so that the clouds become figures and the sky takes on its own character. The representation of the enemy fills the sky, dominating the viewer who lies on the ground, thus creating a feeling of the omnipresence of the enemy. We can make out a large aggressive face, a fist and part of the star of David. The sky is full of light, flashes and takes the form of a heavy blockade. It is almost as though the enemy takes on mythological proportions becoming an indistinguishable machine of aggression and force moving towards us in a cloud of white gas and smoke. Such a reading has a lot to do with the events that took place that evening. According to the artist, hundreds of soldiers descended upon the camp and lit up the whole place with flares and spotlights; night was turned into day which explains the colouration of the people and their homes which recalls the effect of artificial lighting. The different figures are involved in tending to the wounded;

a stretcher is being carried from the corner of the painting, a group of figures carry a person, while another is leaning over a figure who is being handed water by a woman in a nearby house. In addition a line of women are represented as rushing to the doors of their houses to observe the events. The painting represents the community under attack and their actions to assist one another. A strong sense of solidarity existed among the Palestinians during the intifada. The sense of unity among the community is suggested in this painting by the similarity in the colour of their clothing and their human forms (they all are robust, sturdy figures). Malhi's painting represents a form of social organisation in which everyone is designated with a particular responsibility, thus the 'social' functions as unit in which everyone has their place. Malhi's painting makes reference to the ideology of the intifada, which was based on communal solidarity and self reliance, and in that sense it is a rare documentary painting which captures the spirit of the intifada. During the intifada Malhi produced numerous large canvases depicting life in the refugee camp, and he is one of the few artists who depicted the camp landscape as a lived space rather than as a general stereotype. Many of his canvases portray narratives of everyday life in the camp such as The Game (1987, oil on canvas) and Winter (oil on canvas) (fig.25). The Game represent the play of children in the camp while Winter depicts the flooded street of the camp and the discussion of two characters. All the paintings are set in the main street, which gives us a sense of the way different stories and events take place in the camp. The main street is the same street that is featured in The Day of Peace thus viewed together the paintings give reveal how the space was transformed on that day of confrontation. These paintings of the landscape and daily life in the camp challenge the images of refugee camps as places of poverty and violence and of refugees being helpless. The media images of the intifada depicted camps as dominated by stone-throwing youths. Malhi's, paintings, however show a more complex image of camp life in which there is play, social relations and confrontations. Refugee camps it should be remembered are particular types of landscapes that differ from the other landscapes

within Palestine both in terms of their physical space and their social relations. Camps have their own society and sense of community which themselves have transformed over time. People from camps are also distinguished by other Palestinians, regardless of the economic position they might have achieved. In addition Many Palestinians who live in Palestine have never entered refugee camps, thus further marking the space of camps as a distinct and separate landscape.

Towards the latter half of the intifada there emerged a new trend in the representation of the landscape which was distinguished by the position from which artists painted. What seemed to occur was a move towards a closer proximity with the landscape and a treatment of landscape per se as material from which to create representations. The walls of the cities which were covered with graffiti became the subject of artistic contemplation. Artists began to reproduce these surfaces in their work as in a piece by Sliman Mansour (Untitled, mixed media) (fig.36) and in so doing brought the popular forms of visual expression into the space of the art exhibition. It was as though the artists were taking a microscope to the surface of their environment and reproducing fragments of it. In their representations artists were now less concerned with creating visions of the landscape and more concerned with the materiality of the landscape itself. As part of this trend, artist increasingly began to experiment with using both natural and found materials, such as mud, straw, wood, sand, leather, UNWRA flour sacks, fragments of Palestinian embroidery, old books and letters etc. The spirit of the intifada, the artists claim, gave them the courage to break out of traditional forms of representation and experiment (Murphy;1990;120). These objects and materials functioned as indexes of place; through their use artists were in a sense fetishizing these materials precisely because of the embodied associations that they carried of both place and landscape. These materials were used to express a sense of locality. Thus, a sense of place and rootedness could be created through both the representation of the village and the rural utopia and through the actual materials of

the landscape itself. These experiments with new materials by artists opened the way for diversification in the way in which artists expressed a sense of identity and belonging to place. Sliman Mansour produced abstract works using traditional methods of constructing pots and *taboun* ovens that he remembered from the time of his grandmother, thus rather than oil paints, hay and mud became his materials as in Composition (1991 mud, straw and dyes) (fig.37). Similarly Nabil Anani who had created numerous canvases of picturesque village life turned to experiments in leather and natural dyes as in Untitled (1989 leather and dyes) (fig.37). Natural materials were used as metaphors for the history of 'being from the land'. The figure of the peasant and the village were no longer the figurative forms for expressing a historicity of being from the land, rather artists worked with the idea that their abstract forms, inspired by the environment and created in natural materials, expressed their identity. History, then, is referred to through organic materials rather than figurative representations. Sliman Mansour explained this phenomenon:

“In the beginning the trend in the intifada was to experiment with local material and to get away from direct political art although people continued to create posters but the main trend was a moving away from political art and many artists moved towards abstraction. It was a period of experimentation and discovery. Now, however, I am *working* with the materials, its like you find your medium, your language and you work with it, you find the language to express yourself in (Mansour; 14th February 2000).

This is noteworthy, for it reveals that the artists were experimenting with local materials as a way of exploring their possibilities. Initially the artists were using the materials because of their association with the landscape. However, as Mansour highlights, artists later transformed the materials into a language. We can take this to mean that the materials were appropriated in such a way that they could carry numerous ideas along side their indexical connotations. Thus, we can chart a transition in Palestinian art from creating representations in oil paint, a classic European medium, to the creation of art works in a local medium born from the artists

experimentation and which carried its own local history of use. Thus artists left behind the history of European art that came with the use of its mediums. Hence rather than creating an image of the virgin and child in oils in 1999 Sliman Mansour created it with mud. Nabil Anani who now predominantly works in collage and mixed media with natural materials explained that he is unable to return to working with oils (Anani; 14th February 2000). Tayseer Barakaat is another artist in whose work we can see a similar transition. From the early 1990's Barakaat's pre-occupation was the question of the individual's connection to place and the history of place. His work became an exploration into the relationship between the person of the present and civilisations of the past, such as the canaanites. Thus we find iconic figures inhabiting what looks like layers of rock and earth in his art. From his use of watercolours he went to burning the figures into old tree trunks and fragments of wood, so that today all his work is executed on these materials (see Untitled, 1998 wood) (fig 39). Thus, in a sense, he uses the history of the wood as a way of suggesting the presence of history and the link to history that is a theme that runs through his work.

The use of natural materials is also a hallmark of the work of Rana Bishara. The artist is a Palestinian, living in Tarsheeha, an Arab village inside Israel on the borders of the Golan Heights. Her work centres around the use of the cactus plant. Rana Bishara's work is informed by and elaborates upon the symbolism of the cactus which is an organic metaphor that Palestinians use to express their historical connection to the land in a similar way to how they use the olive tree. The roots of the cactus plant are very difficult to uproot, thus Palestinians perceive the cactus as a sign of their steadfastness. This meaning also plays on the name for the cactus plant in Arabic which is *sabre*; meaning patience. Palestinians have used the cactus plant as a way of tracing the sites and land of former Palestinian villages in the landscape as the cacti plant was often used to demarcate boundaries and divisions. Thus, whenever Palestinians see a cactus plant they read it as sign of the presence of former

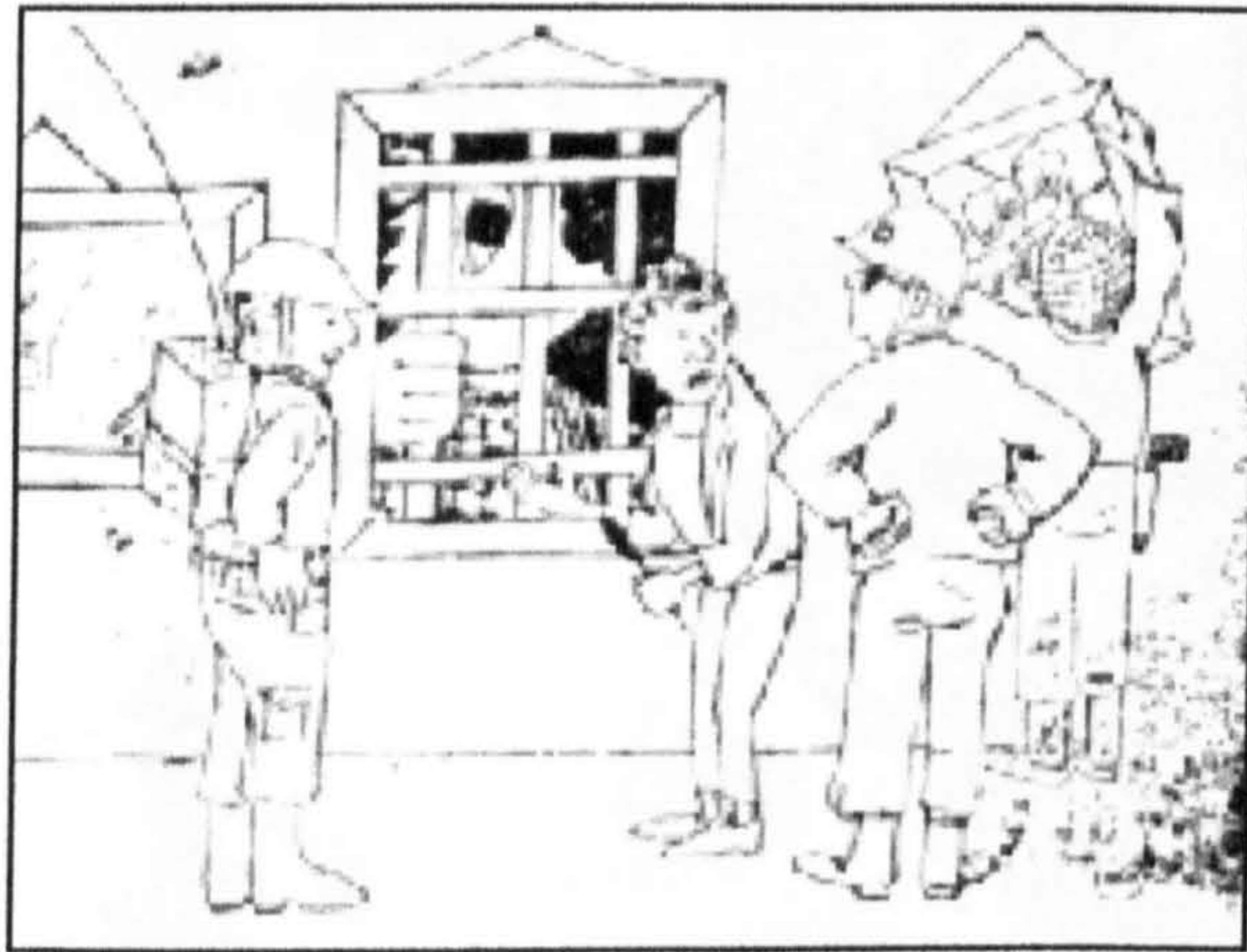
Palestinians. Rana Bishara uses the cactus plant as an identity representation employing its significance in Palestinian culture to evoke associations that are tied into the collective memory. In her works she uses different stages of the life of a cactus for example, she used the skeletons of the cactus plant to create organic forms, which hang like fragments of the body on gallery wall. In another piece she contorts a part of a cactus into a question mark. (? , 199 cactus) (fig. 41). The cactus has become a symbol of Palestinian villagers living inside Israel who have witnessed the loss of their land and the erasure of their identity yet still live in what remains of their village community. Bishara's use of the cactus recalls the discussion of how natural materials are appropriated by artists and transformed into a language, evident in the diverse ways she uses the cactus. Thus, in a sense, Bishara's work is constantly dealing with the preservation and affirmation of Palestinian identity via the representation of this icon. She also utilises natural materials from her domestic context, using henna and Arabic coffee as drawing materials. While for an installation in New York in 1996 entitled 'Smells of the East' she used sumac, henna, salt, cornmeal and vine leaves.

Khalil Rabah also used a natural form as metaphor for Palestinian identity in his piece Grafting (fig. 41) for the international exhibition 'Dialogues of Peace' held in Geneva in 1995. For this exhibition he transplanted three olive trees from Palestine to an international park in Geneva. Several trees were planted together, while one was planted in isolation. As I suggested earlier the olive tree is used as a sign by Palestinians of their presence on the land. Taken as a living, breathing species, Rabah's project can be seen as an engagement with the issues of uprooting and re-location, thus speaking of the experience of the Palestinians through the use of the metaphor of the olive tree. The project for him was to see if the trees would survive exile in a new environment and whether they sustained themselves better as a couple or in isolation.

What these works hold in common is that they use local natural materials to express an identity that relates to land and place. Artists take living elements from their environment and elaborate on the connotations they bear in Palestinian society. If we examine the trends in representing the landscape in Palestinian art that have been discussed in this chapter we find a continual search for metaphors to express the relationship with the land that was central to national identity. Thus, the development of different genres of Palestinian landscape art can be understood as the search to find ways of expressing the history, memories and sense of identity which is rooted in the landscape. The developments of Palestinian art and the representation of the landscape will be returned to in the final chapter, as part of the discussion of how Palestine has been represented since the arrival of the Palestinian National Authority.

Prior to 1948, the Palestinian peasantry, as we saw represented their relationship to the land in numerous ways; architecture, belief systems, amulets, architecture and use of the land. The loss of both the land and a whole way of life rooted in the landscape, led to the expression of new relationships to the landscape in the form of territorial nationalism and the emergence of a Palestinian national discourse. The landscape of Palestine was a land that had been lost to the Palestinians and had now been occupied by another people. Thus, Palestine was kept alive in the memories and representational practices of Palestinians inside and outside of the territories. Palestinian art, as it developed in terms of 'Western' art practice, was but one of the representational practices in which the significance of the land for Palestinian identity was continually being envisioned and visualised. The following chapter will look in more detail at the representation of the Palestinian village and the peasantry in a number of different representational practices in order to examine the ways they are significant to both the imaging of the nation's past and the formation of Palestinian identity. The representation of the Palestinian village has become part of the social

imagination of Palestinians and appears in numerous representations and it is this field which I will explore next.



Cartoon by Sliman Mansour, caption " ...But this one is about, a political prisoner in... er Sweden".
(From: The PLO Information Bulletin, Vol: 8 No. 1
January, 1982, p108).

Fig. 1



Village Madafah

Fig. 2



Daoud Zalatimo,
no information available

Fig. 3



Daoud Zalatio,
no information available

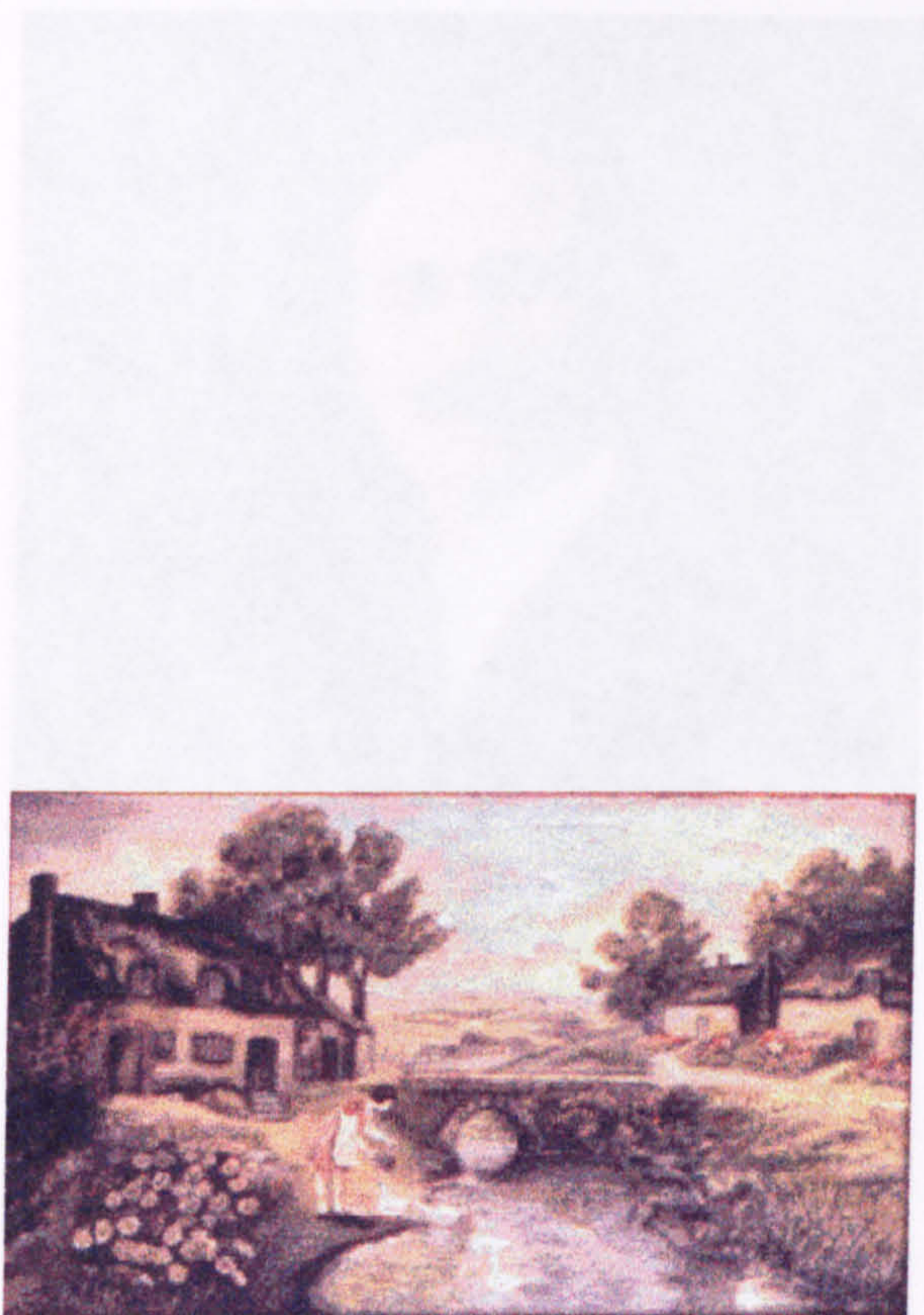
Oil on canvas, 54 x 35cm, 1935.

Fig. 4



Butrus Lusia,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 54 x 35cm, 1935.

Fig. 5



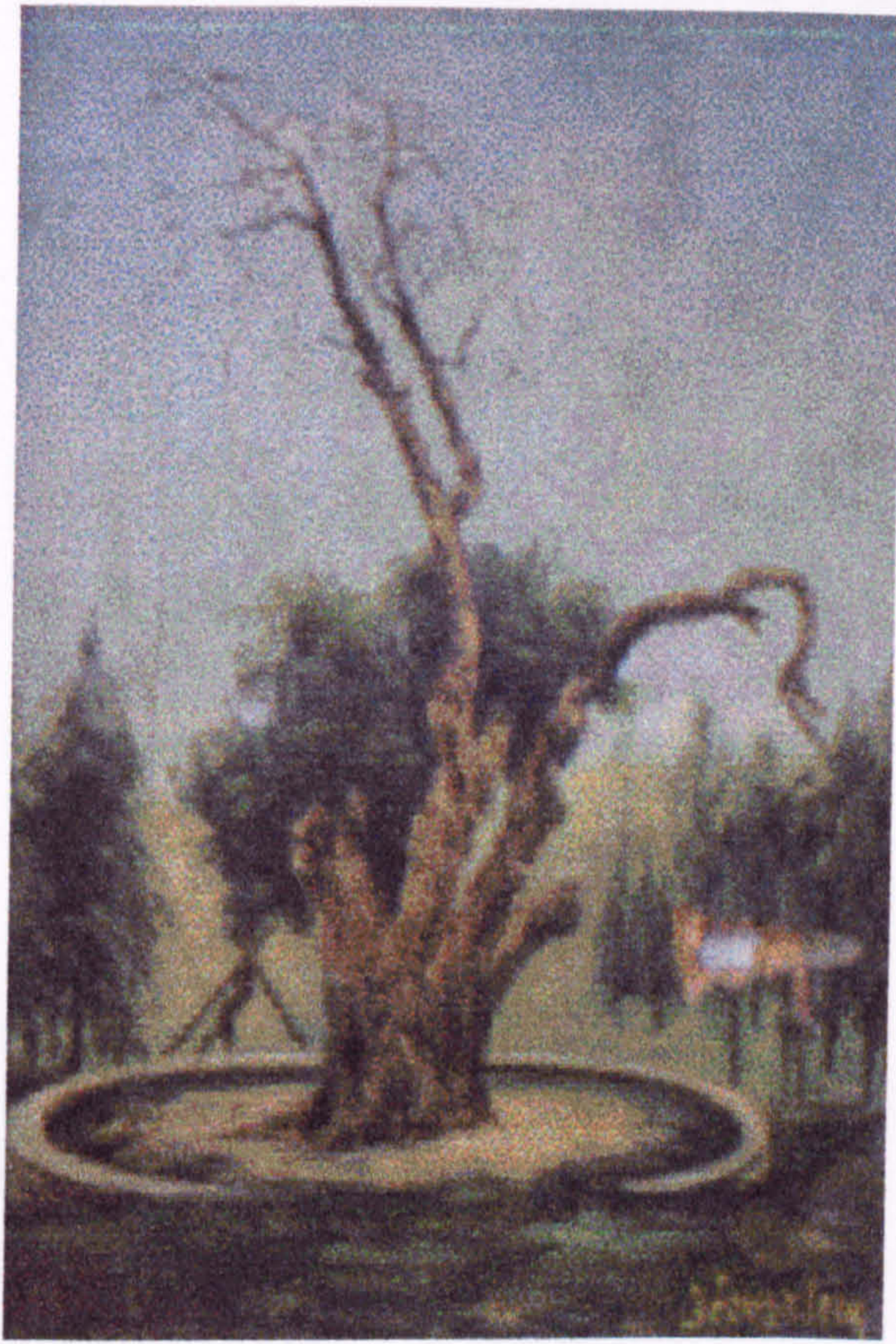
Butrus Lusia,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 71 x 41cm, 1951.

Fig. 6



Mubarak Saed,
Self Portrait,
Oil on canvas, 30 x 40cm, 1906.

Fig. 7



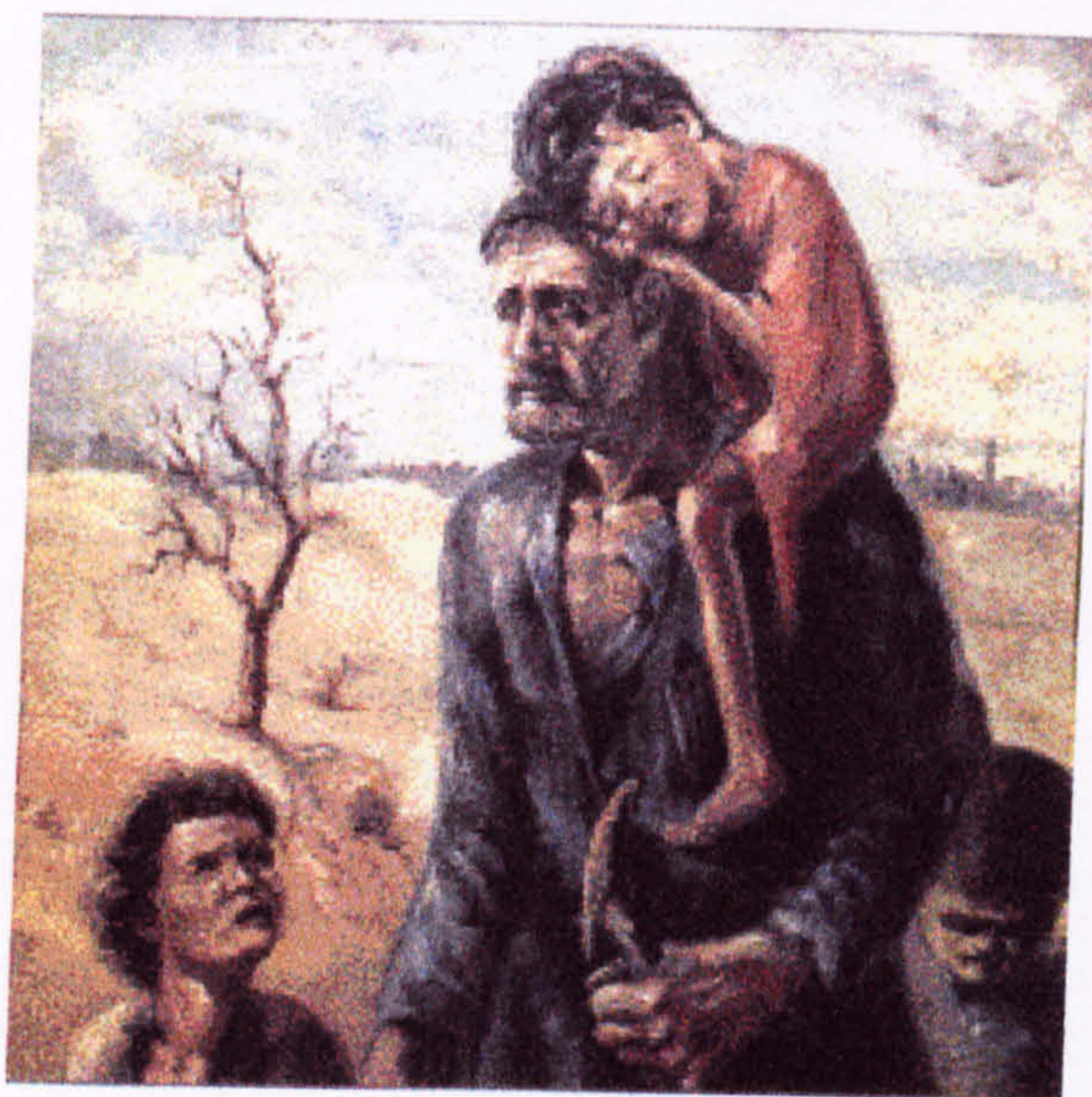
Mubarak Saed,
Abraham's Oak,
Oil on wood, 24 x 30cm, 1909.

Fig. 8



Mubarak Saed,
Jaffa Landscape,
Oil on wood, 24 x 30cm, 1909.

Fig. 9



Ismail Shammout,
Where To?
Oil on canvas, 1956.

Fig. 10



Sliman Mansour,
Camel of Hardships,
Oil on canvas, 110 x 70cm, 1974.

Fig. 11



Vera Tamari,
Nostalgia,
Ceramics, 32 x 37cm, 1980.

Fig. 12



Tayseer Barakaat,
Untitled,
Mixed media, 50 x 70cm, c.1990.

Fig. 13



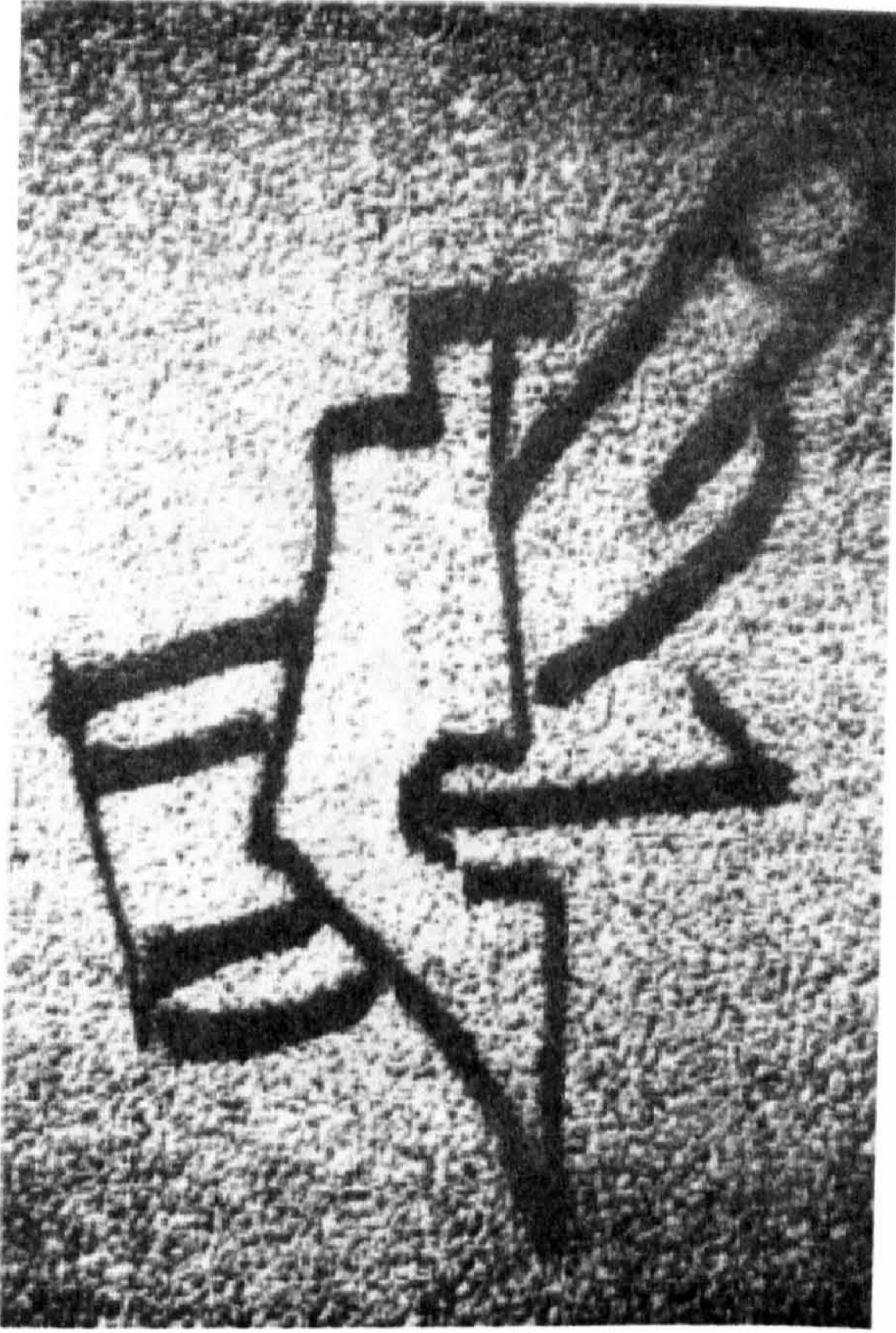
Khalil Lubbad,
Biladi, (My Homeland),
Oil on canvas, 100 x 120cm, 1997.

Fig. 14



Fathy Ghaban,
My Grandmother's Stories,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 50cm, 1996.

Fig. 15



Graffiti of The Popular Front for Liberation of
Palestine from the Intifada Period
(From, "The Graffiti of the Intifada: A Brief Sur-
vey". By Paul Steinberg & A. M. Oliver. Passia,
Jerusalem, 1994, p.25).

Fig. 16



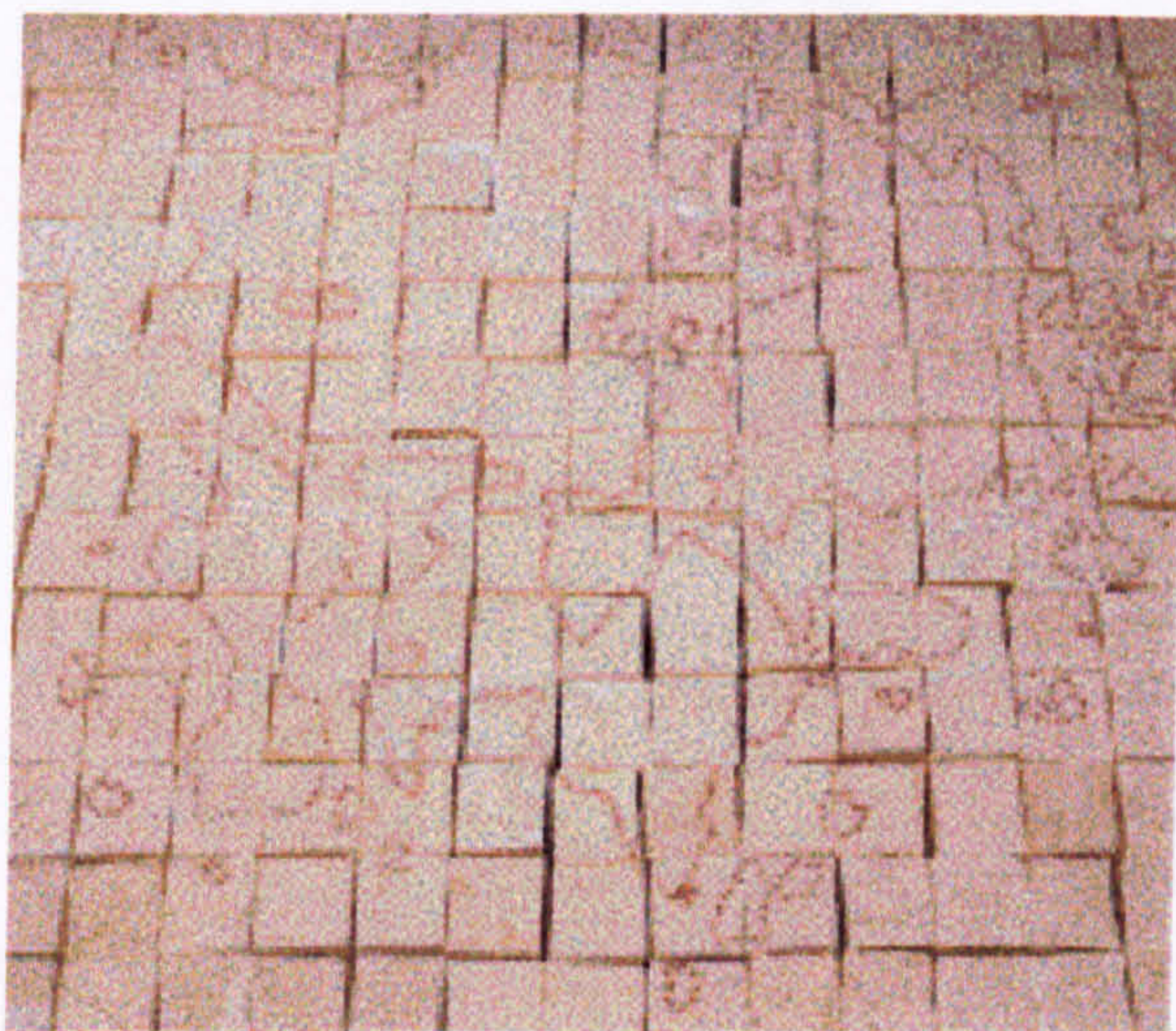
Graffiti of Hamas from the Intifada Period
(From, "The Graffiti of the Intifada: A Brief
Survey". By Paul Steinberg & A. M. Oliver.
Passia, Jerusalem, 1994, p.27).

Fig. 17



Fathy Ghaban,
Untitled,
Oil on Wood, 50 x 70cm, c.1984

Fig. 18



Mona Hatoum,
Present Tense,
Soap and Glass Beads, 4.5 x 299 x 241cm, 1996.
(From, "Mona Hatoum", by Michael Archer et al. Phaidon
Press, London, 1997, p 27).

Fig. 19



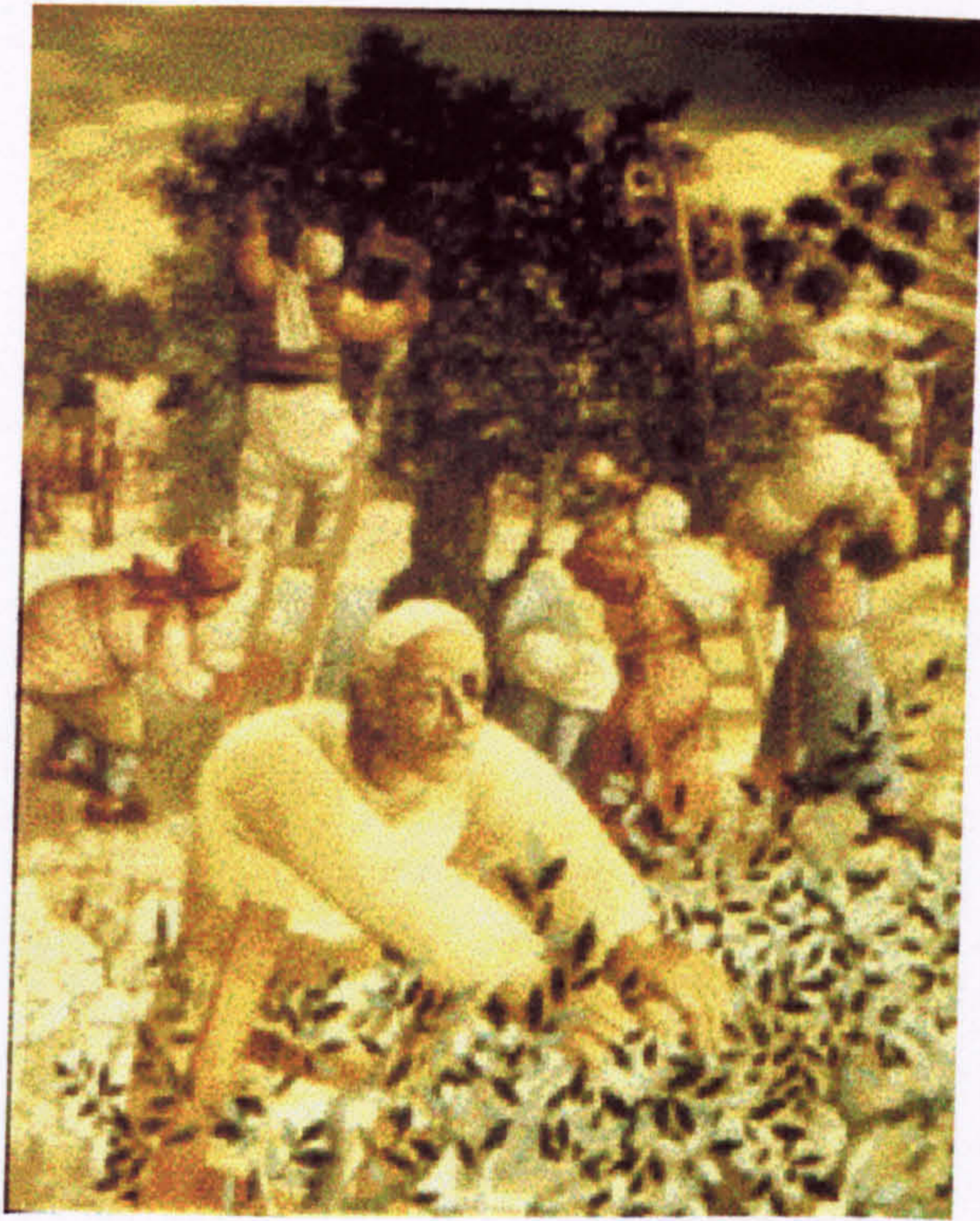
Fathy Ghaban,
information not available.

Fig. 20



Taleb Dweik,
The Earth,
Gouache, 35 x 50cm, 1989.

Fig. 21



Sliman Mansour,
Olive Pickers,
Oil on canvas, 80 x 100cm, 1986.

Fig. 22



Taleb Dweik,
Peasant, Gouache,
50 x 30cm, 1990.

Fig. 23



Saed Hilmi,
Olive Picking,
Oil on canvas, 170 x 150 cm, 1993.

Fig. 24



Abed Muttaleb A'Bayyan,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 100 x 80cm, c.1990.

Fig. 25



Fathy Ghaban,
Almond Picking,
Oil on canvas, 50 x 70cm, 1996.

Fig. 26



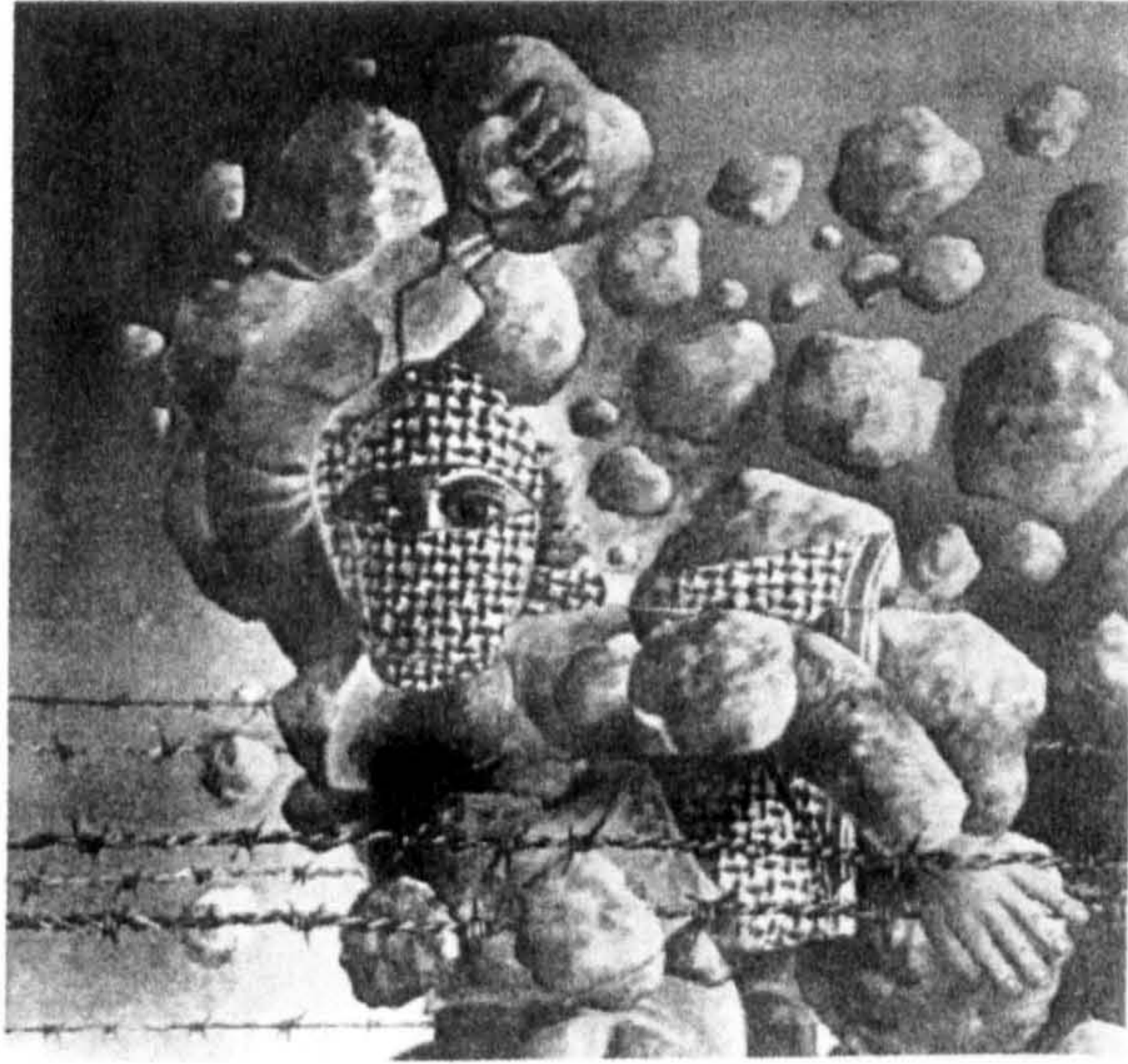
Taleb Dweik,
Collecting Olives,
Gouache, 50 x 35cm, 1990.

Fig. 27



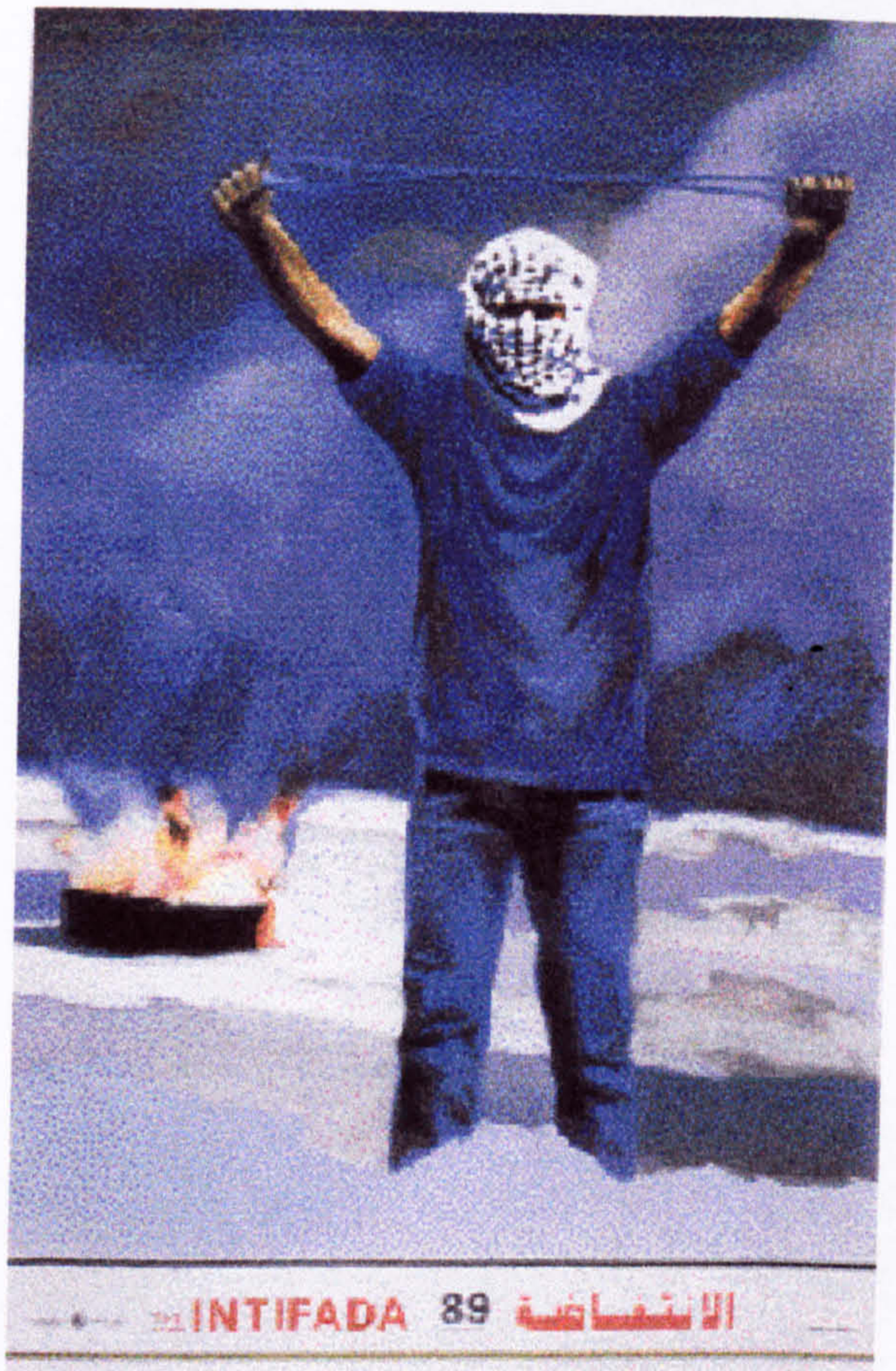
Hashem Klub,
Face Off,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 100cm, 1988.

Fig. 28



Sliman Mansour,
Intifada,
Oil on canvas, 120x120cm, 1989.

Fig. 29



Poster, *Intifada* 1989, Artist unknown.
(From: "Both Sides of Peace; Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art", by Dana Barlet et al. University of Washington Press, Seattle, 1996, p. 92).

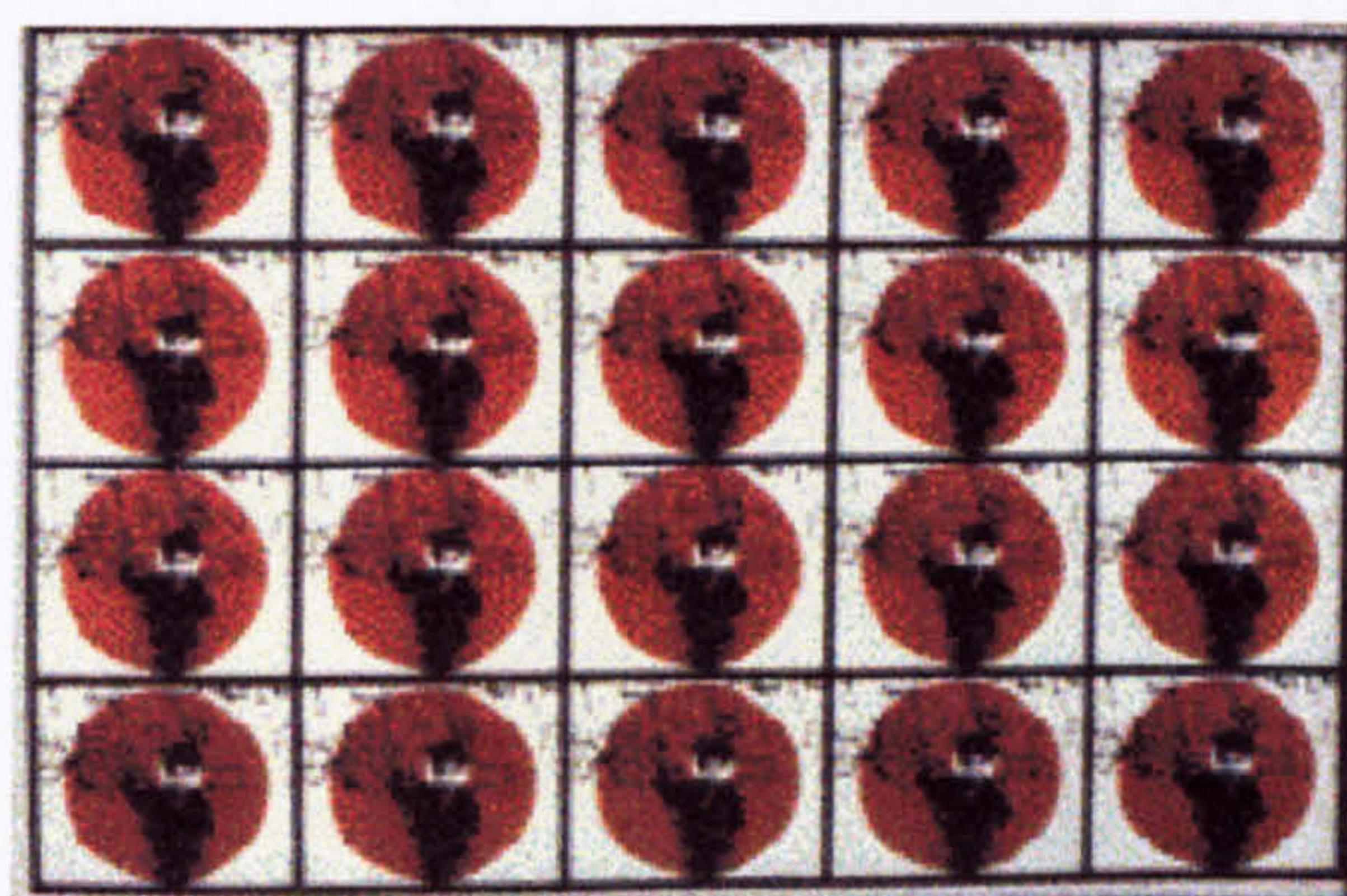
Fig. 29

Fig. 30



Khaled Hourani
Untitled
Oil on wood, 60x80 cm, c. 1986.

Fig. 31



Laila Shawa,
Targets,
Mixed Media, 90 x 160cm, c.1992.

Fig. 32



Jawad al Malhi,
The Day of Peace,
Oil on canvas, 200 x 220cm, 1988.

Fig. 33



Jawad al Malhi,
The Game,
Oil on canvas, 180 x 180cm, 1987.

Fig. 34



Jawad al Malhi,
Winter,
Oil on Canvas, 120 x 100cm, 1988.

Fig. 35



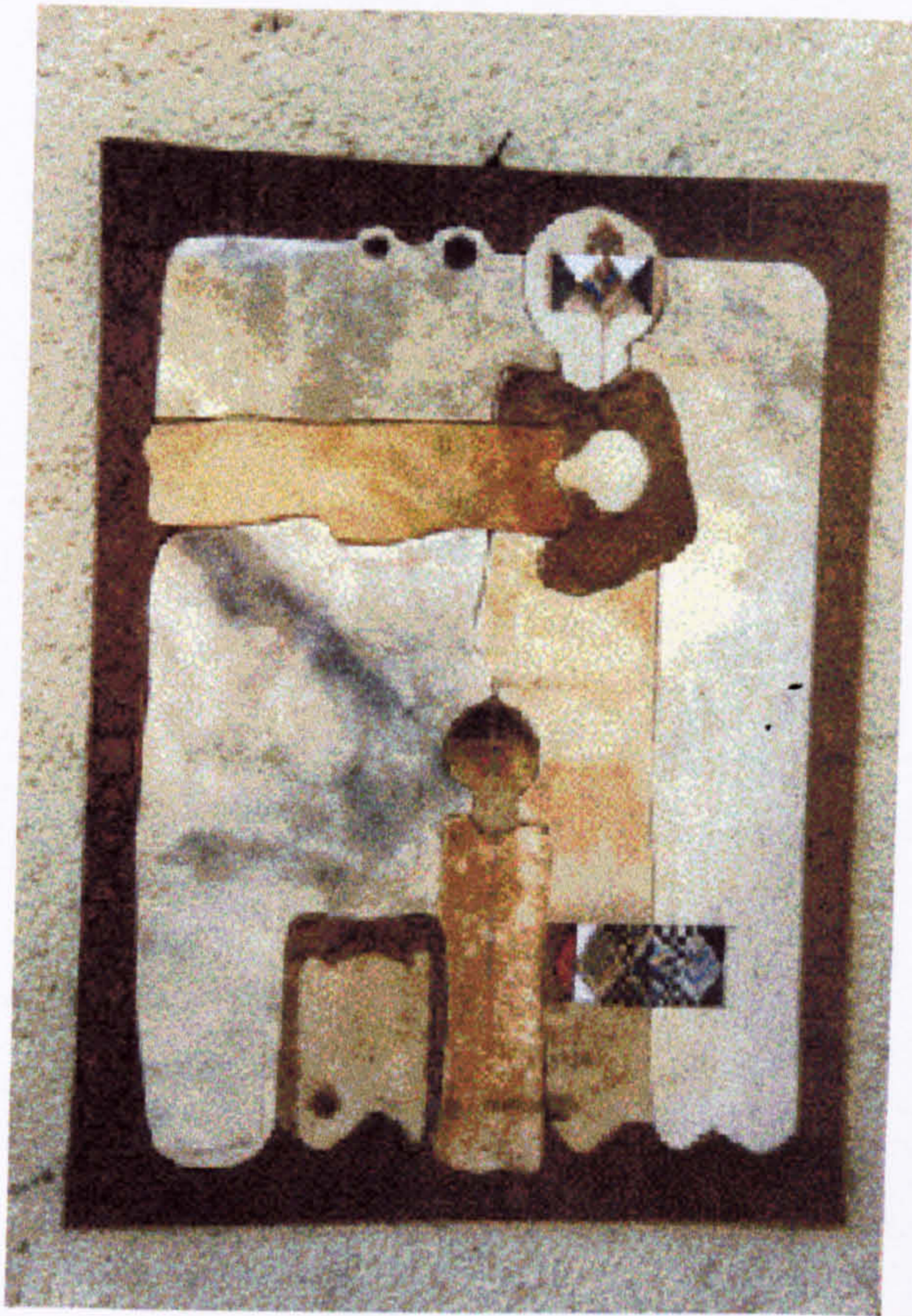
Sliman Mansour,
Untitled,
Mixed media, 140 x 100cm, c. 1992.

Fig. 36



Sliman Mansour,
Composition,
Mud, straw and natural dyes, 93 x 75cm, 1991.

Fig. 37



Nabil Anani,
Untitled,
Leather and dyes, 70 x 100cm, 1989.

Fig. 38



Tayseer Barakaat,
Untitled,
Wood, various sizes, 1998.

Fig. 39



Rana Bishara,
?,
Cactus, 16 x 35cm, 1997.

Fig. 40



Khalil Rabah,
Grafting,
Earth, olive tree and threads, 1995.

Fig. 41

Images of the Past: Re-Presentations of the Palestinian Village and the Peasantry

In his introduction to 'Fields of Vision', Stephen Daniels makes a very salient observation on the relationship between the landscape and the representation of the nation,

“Landscapes whether focusing on single monuments or framing stretches of scenery, provide visual shape; they picture the nation. As exemplars of the moral order and aesthetic harmony, particular landscapes achieve the status of national icons” (Daniels;1993;5).

Daniels' proposition is that out of the diverse landscapes that constitute the geographical terrains of a nation particular landscapes are selected to act as representations of the homeland. Daniels' theory is pertinent to the line of inquiry of this thesis, which sets out to explore the representation of Palestine by Palestinians. Taking up Daniels' cue, which landscape performs this function in the Palestinian national discourse? For although Palestine is not a country with defined borders, the struggle to regain the homeland positions the representation of the land as pivotal in the national imagination. In this chapter I would like to propose that it is 'the village' that has been selected from the landscape to be representative of Palestine. Imaging Palestine through 'the village' provides material for the articulation of a national identity. Symbols and images are drawn from the landscape of the village and its inhabitants (i.e. 'the peasantry and their material culture), each of which are explored in this chapter.

The representation of the village does not function as a reflection of reality, as will become evident when the transformation of villages and the history of the peasantry are evaluated; it is more akin to a discursive response to the historical and political situation in which Palestinians have found themselves. Palestinians employ the image of the village to express particular ideas about their past and about their identity; ideas which inform and contour the re-presentation of 'the village'. The idealised image of the village found in numerous representations may at first glance seem to bear little

relation to the condition of villages today or to the transformation the landscape has undergone. Yet it is not their similarity to reality that is the focus of this study, but rather how reality is re-presented through the lens of a national discourse, and what this can tell us about how Palestinians perceive their homeland. By adopting a discursive approach as opposed to a reflective model of semiotics for the reading of the images, one incorporates into the reading a consideration of the question of the desire and agency that go into contouring the form and content of an image. Thus, idealised images of the village are not dismissed as false¹ representations of the landscape but are examined with the aim of understanding what desires they express. The images are also deconstructed by taking into consideration the social circumstances from which they arise. The images of the village function to mediate reality, often opening up a space of fantasy and imaginings which influence the way people re-present the past, the present and imagine the future. Within this model, images can be seen to provide a means for communities to interpret their situations and construct ways of dealing with them. Images do not exist in a separate realm from reality, but rather the relationship is one in which reality works to shape the creation of images and the ways in which images are interpreted work to shape how social actors create reality.

The images to be discussed in this chapter stem from a broad range of representational practices. My intention is to explore how the idea of a Palestinian village is imaged in these different forms. In the course of this chapter I will examine the representation of the village in art, followed by everyday representations. My aim is to explore how the village is consumed in popular culture through folklore products, what fantasies these objects play to, and how they are used as props in the performance of identity. The chapter then departs to examine how the Palestinian village is memorialised in public projects aimed at preserving and commemorating the

¹False is understood to here mean that they are the products of false consciousness, which is the notion that subjects' representations of the world do not correspond to actual reality. The problem with this approach as Terry Eagleton highlights is that it implies that there exists a single correct way of viewing the world (Eagleton;1991;11).

past. It looks at museum displays and how the technology of the Internet has been utilised in an endeavour to re-present the past and make it accessible to an international audience. Finally, the chapter concludes by studying how aspects from the culture of the village form part of Palestinian everyday life as is evident in the rituals of Palestinian weddings and in the proliferation of salons (the spaces for receiving guests within the domestic abode which have their historical roots in the village guest house (*madafa*)). With an exploration of a diverse range of examples the intention is to demonstrate how the Palestinian village has come to occupy a place in the social imagination of Palestinians and how it has become part of the language and fabric of Palestinian identity representations.

The contrasting range of examples raises an interesting question for this chapter, namely, the importance of distinguishing between different types of representational practices. As I suggested above, my aim is not to render all these representations equivalent to one another, but rather to point to the degree to which the representation of the village pervades Palestinian culture. The examples to be discussed can be divided into those representations that arise from individual modes of expression, and those which are collective practices. How do these types of representations differ from one another, and how do the conditions under which they are performed compare? The Palestinian national discourse provides a case study in which to address the effect the absence of an official state apparatus and governmental institutions has meant on representations of national identity. In the case of the Palestinians, many representations have been the products of individual or group initiatives. Palestinians through these representations have attempted to articulate themselves as a nation, and have endeavoured to bring about the conditions for the foundation of a State. Hegemony in representation has been hard to impose upon the national discourse due to the many years in which a ruling authority based in the Palestinian homeland was absent. Thus even museums, to take but one example, whose establishment is

normally attributed to the state, turn out here to be projects taken up by women's charities, as for example the several museums in Palestine such as the Bethlehem Museum and the Museum of Palestinian Popular Heritage established by In'ash el Usra in Al-Bireh. Palestinian nationalism reminds those of us who are studying the workings of nationalism that a national discourse is not a single monolithic subject of enquiry, but rather that a national discourse is constituted through the imaginings and activities of national subjects. Thus, the study of nationalism can benefit from examining the representations of national identity created by national subjects.

The village and the peasantry have provided Palestinians with a repository of signs to utilize as part of their vocabulary of identity. From this historical repository, Palestinians have created identity representations which they have contoured to communicate their relationship with the land. Symbolism drawn from the village and from the peasantry has been used to express Palestinian identity for several decades. The popularity of these methods of signifying national identity matched with the decline of other signs such as the flag and the map raises an important question as to the 'life' of a sign. What is it that determines why certain signs continue to be transformed and remain in circulation? For instance, the symbol of the Palestinian flag no longer holds the same currency as it did previously. Outlawed for many years, the flag symbolised the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinians and their struggle to be recognized as a people in an environment in which their identity was constantly being suppressed. After the official recognition of the Palestinians and the arrival of the '*Sulta*' (The Palestinian National Authority) to rule in the autonomous areas the flag lost much of its potency. It became associated with the failure of the peace process and the disillusionment with the new ruling authorities. The flag became an everyday object; its proliferation in public spaces was a prelude to the demise of the importance of this signifier which had been banned for so many years. Therefore, signifiers of the nation remain part of the symbolic currency of a nation only in so long as they continue to be seen to be

meaningful to the people who use them. Therefore, for national signs to be popular, they must successfully interpellate their desired audience. By interpellation, I am referring to Louis Althusser's proposition from his book 'Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays',

"Ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among individuals (it recruits them all) or 'transforms the individuals into subjects...by that very precise operation which I have called interpellation or hailing and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey you there!' Assuming that the theoretical scene takes place in a street, the hailed individual will turn round. By this mere one hundred and eighty degree physical conversion, he becomes a *subject*. Why? Because he has recognized that the hail was 'really' addressed to him and that 'it was *really him* who was hailed' (and not someone else)" (Althusser;1971;163).

Glenn Bowman elaborates on this theory of interpellation in the context of the formation of a national subject. He suggests that in order for an individual to be interpellated he/she must recognise him or herself in the address, and that recognizing the address means being able to identify that the content of the text relates to his or her concerns. (Bowman;1994;141) Thus, subjects are successfully interpellated if they identify themselves with the community of the addressed, and for this to occur the address must be perceived as relating to the identity of the individual, otherwise it would simply be ignored. This suggests that national discourses are not at liberty to choose any sign as part of the visual repertoire of national identity, but that they are circumscribed in their choices by their subjects. National signifiers, therefore, are not completely arbitrary. Rather it is the case that for nationalism to emerge as the dominant discourse of identity in the Palestinian context it has had to adapt itself to pre-existing identities, a point I will return to a later stage in this chapter.

In order to understand the re-presentations of the village and a peasant identity within the nationalist discourse it is worthwhile briefly outlining how the village and the peasantry were represented prior to their central role in nationalist imagery. My

intention is not to essentialise the history of the peasantry, nor to place historical events in contrast to contemporary representational practices but rather to provide a historical background for the images Palestinians construct of their identity.

European Representations of the Peasantry

As we witnessed in the previous chapter, the landscape of Palestine was an important subject for European artists and travellers to the Holy Land. This genre of imagery comes under the broad title of 'Orientalism'. The images these foreigners produced of Palestine in their texts were largely coloured by the pre-conceived ideas which they carried with them to Palestine, which differed considerably to how the rest of the Orient was imaged.² The image of the peasantry was dominated by the belief that they were descendants of their biblical forefathers and were people who continued to live according to customs which had remained unchanged since the time of Christ. Writers, travellers, artists and pilgrims saw the peasantry as an important resource with which to authenticate the biblical texts. This idea is evident in books such as, "Village Life in Palestine" by Robinson Lees, dating 1883. He describes the grinding of flour by peasants in the following way:

"Grinding is always the work of the women, even slaves regard it as unfit for man (Exod.xi.5). Jeremiah includes in the petitions of his prayers to God (Lam.v.13) the lamentable fact that they took men to grind and Samson's servitude would become intolerable when the Philistines made him grind corn in the prison house (Jud.xvi.21) (Lees;92;1883).

This menial task is elevated to a biblical status, pointing to the way in which everyday activities of the peasantry were interpreted through the prism of the Bible. The same approach is evident in the classic work "The Immovable East" by P.J. Baldensperger, who describes the peasant's coat in the following way:

"This cloak is the *fellah's* most indispensable article of dress at night, for when away from home he knows not where he might be able to find lodging and may

²In his seminal work 'Orientalism', Edward Said demonstrates through examining numerous colonial texts the contempt the Arabs are held in. In general Said explains that Arabs are seen as backward thinking, void of reason, childlike, gullible, prone to uncontrolled sexual desire, lethargic and so forth, in short the opposite of the Anglo- Saxon race.

very likely be obliged to sleep upon the ground like Jacob, 'with a stone for a pillow' (Baldensperger;1913; 14-15).

No attempt is made to understand the significance of the cloak or its cloth in the peasants' contemporary culture, for the dress codes of the peasantry carried particular symbolism relating to social relations and village identity, as demonstrated in Shelagh Weir's seminal study of 'Palestinian Costume'. Rather, in this extract, the peasant inspires romantic analogies to the biblical past. Sleeping outdoors is not merely sleeping away from the village, it is read as an activity associated with biblical ancestors by the very fact that the activity takes place in the Holy Land. It was not only written texts that extolled such a view, but the visual imagery of the nineteenth century in the form of paintings, drawings, photography and popular postcards which were all contrived for the European market depicted the peasantry through a biblical lens (Nir;1995;186, Graham Brown;1980;1). The romanticism of the imagery which invested the native population with biblical authenticity was part of the same discourse that viewed the local population as "obstacles to modernisation" (Doumani;1995;6). The romantic images of the inhabitants did not preclude a view of the need for modernisation. Rather, this ambivalence was part of the structure of numerous colonial enterprises which expressed nostalgia and fascination for the lives of the indigenous inhabitants, while at the same time worked to overturn and obliterate those very same ways of life. Colonial texts espoused a racism in which the native population was seen as inferior, and such views were succinctly articulated by Baldensperger;

"Abu Ehmud... is a hater of innovations; his only wish is to be left under his vine and fig tree undisturbed, as in the days when there was no king of Israel. He cares nothing about immense financial speculations, the preparation of formidable arsenals of war...the construction of factories and the building of houses possessing hygienic conditions. He seeks neither to accumulate incommensurable wealth nor to obtain even a modicum of comfort. He is ignorant of modern astronomy and geology, history and geography, zoology and microbiology" (Baldensperger; 1913;7-8).

The emphasis in this description is placed on the peasant's lack of scientific knowledge, particularly in relation to the land and his inability to see the benefits of

modern technological advances. The view was also expressed that the *fellaheen* (the peasantry), "do not even know what it means, nor can they understand the feeling of patriotism that links people together into a brotherhood that co-operates for the well being of the mother country" (Lees;1883;70). The suggestion is that they lack the important hallmark of a civilized modern community- nationalism. Numerous texts gave accounts of the inter- clan warfare in Palestine picturing the inhabitants as prone to irrational violence, a stereotype that is frequently applied to Arabs. During the height of the colonial era, Europe saw itself as the pinnacle of advanced civilisation and by analogy so was its social order which was conceived around the nation-state and national belonging. The stereotyping of Palestine and the Palestinians in such texts as those cited above was significant in creating an image of Palestine's indigenous population as primitive and uncivilised. Upon that assertion, Europe constructed the foundations for arguing that these uncivilized people were not worthy of the rich biblical legacy that was the Holy Land. Europeans who were an example of advanced civilisation understood the worth of the Holy Land, and thus believed that they had the right to intervene in the course of the history of Palestine. Therein began a moral crusade which was espoused in many forms of popular discourse, which prepared the moral ground in Europe for support of the Zionists' project to colonise Palestine and establish there a national homeland for the Jewish people.

It was probably, however, the perception of the peasantry as it was expressed in Zionist ideology that was to have the most significant effect on the lives of the inhabitants of Palestine. Zionism claimed Palestine to be "a land without a people for a people without a land", implying that the peasantry who constituted the major population in Palestine were not considered to exist, or if they did, their presence was seen as insignificant. By labelling the inhabitants of Palestine 'Arabs' it was implied that these people did not have a homeland or that their homeland was in the Arab World not in Palestine which was the promised Land of the Jews. Tom Selywn highlights that

the first aliyah of Jews saw the peasants as descendents of the biblical ancestors like their European counterparts in line with the popular sentiment in Europe: “being descendents of the Jews of Palestine the *fellaheen* have preserved the ancient Hebrew way of life, as such they provided models for European immigrants unfamiliar with work on the land” (Selywn;1995;118). Thus although the first wave of settlers sought assistance from the peasantry or employed them on the settlements, in the preceding years the ideologies of Zionism espoused the exclusion of the peasantry from the Jewish landscape. A policy of exclusive Hebrew labour was adopted which prohibited employment of Arabs on the growing Jewish settlements, for Zionist rhetoric proclaimed that the redemption and rejuvenation of the Jewish people would come from working the land which would create the foundation of the nation’s people (Selywn;1995;117). Yet if one examines Zionist policy it becomes apparent that there was no doubt as to the Zionists’ knowledge of the existence of the Palestinians. Zionists set about acquiring the land through purchase and pressure upon European governments to establish a Jewish State. In the war of 1948 the acquisition of the land was achieved in piecemeal fashion, with each village being targeted individually, a strategy aimed to sever the village from support within the surrounding area. One escape route was often left open for villagers to flee, with the intention that they would escape to nearby villages and subsequently raise the alarm for their inhabitants to evacuate. This war plan proved successful and enabled the small force of Jewish military units to initially occupy the country and acquire vast stretches of land. (Sayigh;1979;83). Thus, the policies of the Zionists reveal that the land was in fact populated and had to be emptied of its population in order to realise the vision of “a land without a people for a people without a land”.

The Peasantry of Palestine

The important identity representation for the Palestinian peasant was as a member of a collective, primarily that of his *hamula* (the extended family unit and as a member of

the village community). Life in a Palestinian village was organised around the *hamula*, which was the main unit of production and consumption. A village usually consisted of several patrilinear groups who were responsible for their members, and each family would be represented in the community by the family elder- a *sheik*. The *hamula* was responsible for ensuring the survival, protection and honour of the family and it co-operated economically and socially to achieve these ends. It was involved in the distribution of farmland, choosing marriage partners for sons and daughters of the family and seeking retribution for physical or verbal harm inflicted upon its individuals (Doumani;1995;29). Thus, even if there were differences between members, these were superseded by the commitment to protecting the group's honour and interests. This important identity was represented and facilitated through the style of peasant architecture. *Hamulas* would occupy particular quarters within a village and members would occupy adjacent houses organised around a central courtyard (*hosh*). The village was based upon two main forms of identification: the *hamula* and village identity, which contoured the governance of the village for “the individual's rights were always expressed as a fraction of the whole” (Ruedy;1971;123). This form of social organisation stemmed from the absence of strong state protection for the peasantry, and thus the peasantry relied on the *hamula* and the village to provide it with security, and consequently a system of mutual reciprocal aid was evident in the organisation and values of the village community (Migdal;1979;10). The peasantry often aligned themselves with other villagers in conflicts to give themselves strength in numbers, and alliances were often drawn up along clan lines or from identification with two main tribes. Palestinians believe themselves to be descended from the *qays* and the *yemini* tribes who migrated to Syria after the Islamic conquest. Selim Tamari highlights that the identification had been a form of affiliation which “had the primary function of establishing the basis for loose alliances in the event of inter-clan conflicts”. (Tamari;1982;181). The peasantry represented themselves through daily forms of

social life, patterns of social interaction, styles of clothing, local religion, architecture and communal rituals.

The urban dwellers who constituted a minority of the population of Palestine held an ambivalent attitude towards the peasantry which at the same time facilitated their ability to exploit them, and in some cases dispossess them of the land upon which their livelihood and way of life depended. It also meant that the leadership of the national movement, which was mainly drawn from the urban elite, was unable to successfully represent or control the population. This was due to the fact that authority had traditionally been held by local *sheiks* and the peasantry enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy in relation to the Ottoman authorities. Since the national elite's power depended on remaining in favour with the ruling authorities, their political strategies diverged with those of the peasantry (Waines;1971;227). The local urban academics such as Dr. Tewfiq Canaan and William Haddad represented the peasantry in their research as a community of people distinct from the inhabitants of the city. None of their work includes a study of city populations, as Selim Tamari notes, whose customs and traditions could have been studied (Tamari;1991;79). Despite being local ethnographers they contributed significantly to the understanding of the peasantry, as their texts were not completely predetermined by a biblical frame of reference (Tamari;1991;81).

The other inhabitants of the city, such as the emerging elite, saw the peasantry as simpletons lacking culture and etiquette (Tamari;1991;75). There was stereotypical contempt by the *fellaheen* for the city folk and vice versa. The simpleness of the peasant was referred to in this saying "The *fellah* remains a peasant even when he eats soup with a fork', a designation to which the peasant had a ready reply: 'The *fellah* is a basket of apples, while the townsman is a basketful of smallpox'"(Tamari;1991;75). The inhabitants of the cities and the peasantry fostered a more dependent relationship

after the Palestinian economy was drawn into the sphere of world markets and forms of political affiliation shifted in the following way of which I will give a broad outline.

The peasantry were represented vis-a-vis the Ottoman authorities by a local *sheikh* who was responsible for collecting taxes paid in grain to the authorities. By the second half of the nineteenth century, "Ottoman rulers began shifting their alliances, leaving the village *sheikhs* and joining the more powerful city dwellers. The right to collect taxes now went to the highest bidders instead of automatically to the sheiks [and] was increasingly in the hands of urban forces" (Migdal;1979;11). The urban elite were able to build up their economic and social influence through the Tanzimat reforms³, which provided greater opportunity for administrative positions in local councils. They were also able to wield considerable influence over the fashioning of legalisation with the aim of it benefiting their own interests (Divine;1979;21). Two changes in legalisation were pivotal in transforming the lot of the peasantry and increasing the fortunes of the urban elite: The Land Laws of 1858, which I cited in the previous chapter, stipulated that land was to be registered as private property. Land up until that point had been seen to belong to the Muslim community - *al umma*, which manifested itself in the state and was personified in the Sultan (Sayigh;1979;30). Land was held collectively by the village and regularly re-allocated so that all types of land were equally distributed, enabling the peasantry to remain subsistent on the land. This method of collective farming was known as the *mashaa'* system (Sayigh;1979;32-33). The peasantry primarily viewed the Ottoman authorities with mistrust since their experience had taught them that they received little from the authorities who only collected taxes and conscripts for their wars (Sayigh;1979;28). The peasantry were suspicious of the changes to the regulations, fearing it was another method of extracting higher taxes and larger numbers of conscripts from them. It is also suggested that the urban elite

³The Tanzimat Reforms were aimed at modernising the armed forces, centralising political power and increasing the revenue from agriculture, trade and manufacturing. All this required more knowledge and greater control of the subjects of the empire: population counts, conscription, direct collection of taxes and the establishment of political institutions, which could facilitate direct central control". (Doumani;1995;49).

purposefully mis- represented the changes in legalisation for their own self benefit (Sayigh;1979;31). Talal Asad highlights that “the registration of land titles thus became an instrument for stepping up the appropriation of the cultivators product by his exploiters and not merely the occasion of legal misunderstanding and deception”. (Asad;1976;4). Suspicious of the changes which were not concurrent with the peasants’ ideology of collective property, the villagers, to their own detriment, registered land in the name of urban notables, or even fictitious individuals, in order to protect their anonymity. In this process the urban elite were able to acquire huge tracts of land in Palestine (Ruedy;1971;124). The urban elite initially had no intention of evicting the peasants from their land, for they were dependent on their manual labour for farming the land and they also required the allegiance of the peasantry in order to increase their power and influence. The unproductive urban classes also desired an ever-increasing amount of the rural surplus for their own personal consumption, but more significantly for trading on the international market in return for European goods (Asad;1976;4). The other significant change in legislation was the shift from collecting taxes in tithe to the payment of taxes in cash, a resource the peasantry did not readily have available. This forced the peasantry into increasing indebtedness, as they were obliged to borrow money from moneylenders, who in many cases were the suppliers of seed and purchasers of the peasants’ grain yields. Thus peasants were placed in a disadvantaged negotiating position vis-a-vis their moneylenders (Sayigh;1979;29).

With the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the British Government was given the Mandate to rule in Palestine. The British continued to use many of the Ottomans’ policies, yet they differed due to the fact that the new rulers possessed a more effective administrative system. Taxes, for instance, were now collected with the aid of soldiers, a strategy which the peasantry had not witnessed before (Sayigh;1979;29). Similarly the British co-opted the local elite to work with them in their extended bureaucracy.

Thus, in many ways, the elite which had gained a stronghold in Ottoman times, were able to safeguard their privileges by working with the new ruling authorities.

From the late Ottoman period, the plight of the peasantry had been deteriorating as a result of heavy taxes and failing harvests which lead to a rise in the number of peasants who fell into debt. The peasantry began to drift to the cities to find supplementary incomes in order to support their families and to enable them to remain on the land. The peasantry's conditions worsened when cultivatable land became alienated from them by the sale of their land by absentee landowners to The Jewish Land Agency. The demand for land by the Zionist organisations seriously inflated the value of land, which previously had not been perceived as a tradable commodity, since landowners had been more interested in securing the yields from the land. Peasants found themselves evicted from the land that they had cultivated for years. The Zionist policy of employing only Hebrew labour denied the peasantry access to employment and land at a time when the current land resources were straining to support the population (Ruedy;1971;131). Part of the overflow of the peasantry into the cities to find work was absorbed by public work projects such as road and railroad building, however this did not sufficiently alleviate the plight of the peasantry. The peasantry's economic situation was compounded by the mass immigration of Jewish settlers, 61,500 of who arrived in Palestine between 1923 and 1932. (Abu-Lughod;1971;146). Their arrival in Palestine was supported by the British administration, who were committed under the Balfour Declaration of 1917 to the establishment of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine.

By 1929, peasant grievances had erupted in riots in Jerusalem, Hebron, Safad and other settlement areas; the riots were an important warning of the unrest to come. By 1936, a peasant rebellion had erupted in Palestine which continued until 1939. Rosemary Sayigh states, "The Palestinian Rebellion of 1936-39 was the most

sustained phase of militant anti-imperialist struggle in the Arab world before the Algerian War of Independence” (Sayigh;1979;43). The Rebellion should be seen as a response to the failure of the national leadership to represent the grievances of the peasantry to the British Administration. Thus, the peasantry took it upon themselves to represent their community and air their grievances regarding their tenuous situation after having been continually represented by people from outside their community. Thus, the 1936 rebellion can be viewed as an attempt by the peasantry to represent themselves to the foreign authorities. This was hardly an unprecedented move by the peasantry who in the past had also instigated protests against the occupying authorities. Selim Tamari notes that during the first half of the last century, “Jerusalem villages were the sites of frequent rebellions against the central authority, most notably against the central administration of Ibrahim Pasha. The main target of these rebellions was not taxation, as one might expect but conscription” (Tamari;1999;74). Tamari also notes that during the Ottoman period, in the course of disputes with Muhammad Ali Pasha and Ibrahim Pasha, the notables frequently allied themselves with the peasantry (Tamari;1999;74). In contrast, at the time of the 1936 rebellion, David Waines suggests, the national leadership feared the prospect of violence from below, for the interests of the peasantry and the upper class who comprised the leadership were divergent. The latter were seeking a political solution to the question of Palestine in which they would be able to secure political power in an independent Palestine, which manifested itself as a strategy of repeated appeals and the use of diplomatic methods in order to win concessions from the British. The elites, however, were careful to safeguard their positions having no desire to anger the British, upon whom their future power depended. The elites, as Waines notes, “could not think in terms of being obligated to the lower classes in the context of a total national struggle; they could only feel some obligation for the lower classes insofar as it did not conflict with their own vital interests” (Waines;1971;228). The peasantry, on the other hand, were fighting to protect their economic resources and their whole way of life, centring is it did around

land which was under serious threat as a consequence of Britain's decision to support the Jewish colonisation of Palestine. The rebellion met with serious reprisals from the British who draughted in extra troops and set about disarming the peasantry and enforcing collective punishment upon the villages. Meanwhile the British supported and gave training to Jewish paramilitary troops who were permitted to carry and accumulate military arsenal. By the time the rebellion was crushed, 7,000 Palestinians were dead and wounded, while detention camps were filled with political prisoners who were tried and executed (Waines;1971;234). The members of the elite's leadership were either arrested and deported or fled into exile; this left the lower classes with no leadership or party which might have been able to co-ordinate a national resistance during the war of 1948 (Waines;1971;234). As a consequence of the events outlined above, the Palestinians were seriously disadvantaged when it came to defending themselves since they lacked both a unified central command and a reliable source of information about the developments of the war.

It is important to note that not all villages underwent the economic and political changes that I have discussed above in the same way, rather what I have described are the general conditions that were prevalent during the late Ottoman era and the British Mandate. Villages could be distinguished by the different relationships they had with the developing urban centres. The circumstances of villages surrounding Jerusalem differed from those around Nablus for example, and were governed by different social relations. This is evident in Selim Tamari's study of Jerusalem's hinterland in his book "Jerusalem 1948" and Beshara Doumani's research on the peasantry of Nablus in his "Rediscovering Palestine". What comes to light in both of these studies is that alliances between merchants and peasants, or notables and peasants, would alter in line with mutual interests. Life in the villages was evidently changing from the mid 1850's onwards. The general level of prosperity of certain villages grew while other members of the peasantry found themselves experiencing increased hardship. For example, one

of the villages close to Jerusalem, Ein Karim, could be regarded as fairly prosperous, boasting two elementary schools (one for boys and one for girls), a bookstore, pharmacy and social and athletic clubs. Performances took place in an open-air theatre and there was a village café from which the radio was broadcast over loudspeakers through the town so that the villagers could listen to the programmes. The village also had its own council who were responsible for the running of village affairs. The neighbouring village of Deir Yassin developed quarries for stone, establishing a stone cutting and processing industry, which was much in demand from the increase in building activity that was occurring in Jerusalem. Peasants were therefore already beginning to diversify their skills and trades and in addition they were brought in to work on public projects such as roads and railroads for the British authorities.

Villages were therefore undergoing a 'natural' transformation as part of the economic and social changes that were affecting the whole region from the 1850's onwards and as an upshot of the European interest in Palestine as the Holy Land. Palestinian villages would have undoubtedly continued to undergo change even had the State of Israel not been established in 1948. However, the course of Palestine's social, economic and political developments was drastically transformed by the colonisation of Palestine and the war of 1948, which led to the dispossession of half its indigenous population. 418 villages were completely destroyed and their inhabitants turned into landless refugees, while those Arab villages which fell inside what became the Israeli state found themselves transformed in the words of Sarah Graham Brown "from a settled, predominantly peasant society to a minority of village dwellers with drastically reduced access to land" (Graham-Brown;1990;56).⁴ The villages in what was to become known as the West Bank came under Jordanian rule. Jordan's policy centred upon investment and industrialisation of the East Bank of the Jordan River, thus to a large extent the West Bank maintained its former status as an agricultural hinterland

⁴This points to a whole area of potential research, which is the examination of how the Palestinians inside Israel have maintained a village identity with the loss of their land.

(Hilal; 1991;45-47, Graham-Brown;1990;56). Between 1948 and 1967 there was a significant out-migration of Palestinians to Europe and America, while others went to nearby Arab countries in search of work (Graham-Brown;1990;57).

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank which began in 1967 had an overall adverse affect upon agricultural development and thus upon those traditional forms of land management which villagers relied upon to subsist. The restrictions of access to water, the export of large quantities of Israeli agricultural products to the West Bank, and the confiscation of Palestinian land created a situation for Palestinians in which sustenance from the land alone became untenable. Palestinians were consequently obliged to look for wage labour and were forced to seek work in Israel. Palestinian labourers predominantly found work in the construction industry and as unskilled labourers. However, unlike in other 'third world' countries, the drift to the cities to find employment was not accompanied by large -scale rural out-migration. One of the main reasons for this was the refusal of Israel to permit the long- term stay of wage labourers within its borders. Thus villagers commuted to their places of work, returning at the end of every day or week. Rather than contributing to the demise of the village, as the bulk of its manpower was absent, this state of affairs in fact served to maintain the village. By this I mean, as work was insecure and seasonal in the Israeli labour market, the villager was able to free himself at important times of the year, for example at harvest time to tend to his land (Tamari;1981;51). During other periods in the year work on the land was predominantly undertaken by women, creating the feminisation of agricultural labour (Swedenberg;1990;23, Tamari;1981;51). Employment in Israel also worked towards maintaining the village's familial relations, as employment came through the extended family network who were often hired as part of the teams that worked on Israeli construction sites (Tamari;1981;45). Thus, with salaries from employment in Israel and from remittances sent from abroad, most often by family members working in

America, Europe and in other Arab countries, villagers were able to sustain themselves.

Peasant Identity as National Identity

Villages have not been maintained as relics of the past, but the conditions described above have played a significant role in the formation of modern day Palestinian villages. Returning to the question of nationalism, as I suggested earlier, national symbols need to be meaningful to national subjects in order for them to sustain themselves within a national discourse. Many Palestinians have their roots in villages and identify themselves as possessing village origins. However this fact alone is not sufficient explanation for the role the village has come to occupy in the national discourse. Many of us possess particular roots and origins which we regularly forget and disregard. What is significant is rather the politicisation of this identity. It is the transformation of a peasant identity into a political identity that contours the way the village and the peasants are perceived by others and how they perceive themselves and what they see as a fit way of maintaining and articulating that identity. Under Jordanian rule and Israeli occupation many villagers in the West Bank continued to live in their villages, eking out an existence on their plots of land, while many refugees established camps in close proximity to their former homes. The significance is that these survival strategies were later re-interpreted within a national discourse as a form of political activism. Palestinians began to see their coping strategies as part of a wider political discourse, and more importantly began to identify with other Palestinians engaged in similar circumstances, perceiving them to be part of the same community. Articulating a pronounced peasant identity provided Palestinians with a way of understanding their crisis. They began to see that it was because they were peasants, or formerly peasants, who were inhabitants of a land desired by another community that they now found themselves dispossessed. Glenn Bowman has suggested that an identity formation solidifies when individuals begin to recognise themselves as sharing

the same antagonists (Bowman;1994;161) The Israeli policies of the de-development of Palestinian agriculture and the confiscation of Arab land served to further this recognition and the politicisation of this identity, thereby providing a new impetus to the articulations of this identity. Preserving and safeguarding peasant identity can therefore be understood as a response to these circumstances. However, what becomes the subject of enquiry are the forms via which these re-presentations are expressed and who creates them, questions which I will explore in this chapter.

Ted Swedenberg suggests that, “through the identification with the figure of the peasant a scattered population acquired a sense of itself as a community with roots in a specific place”, (Swedenberg;1990;24) and with that the culture of a specific place. So place and the importance of a culture derived from place play a vital part in the process of the identity formation of a Palestinian. This is significant because half of the Palestinian population (over four million persons (PCBS population census 1997 in Passia Diary;1999;228)) do not live in Palestine but are resident in the Diaspora. The identification with the peasantry and the village works to homogenise the cultural identity of the community which is made up of Palestinians from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. This situation has been intensified by the fact that Palestinians are not resident in one single geographical territory. A peasant identity is called upon as a way of re-presenting the roots and origins of the nation, in other words the essence of Palestinian identity. The peasant identity operates in a way suggested by Stuart Hall, “such images offer a way of imposing an imaginary coherence on the experience of dispersal and fragmentation which is the history of all enforced diasporas” (Hall;1990;224).

The identification with ‘the local’ serves to tie Palestinians into specific places from which they have been estranged for the last fifty-one years. Place, however, is not an empty field of reference but one which is associated with a particular culture. Two of

the dominant identities in Palestine prior to 1948 were village and regional identity. Nationalism, therefore, was introduced into a society which already had strong pre-existing local loyalties which nationalism has been unable to supplant or erode. Thus, nationalism has had to adopt a strategy of incorporation and co-existence. Nationalism's incorporation of these identities into its national discourse necessitates a re-articulation of these identities in order to de-politicise the potential conflict these identities could pose to national unity. In order to prevent tension between these two identifications, the local is often represented as a way in which the individual citizen contributes and participates in the nation, thereby incorporating this mode of belonging into a national identity. Nationalism achieves this end by re-presenting these identities not as antagonisms, but rather as members of the national community who share the same experiences and origins. Nationalism mobilises local identity for its own objectives. The first years of the intifada demonstrate this point; local committees in each area were responsible for the organisation of resistance and the maintenance of social order in neighbourhoods, refugee camps and villages. The intifada is an example of how localism could be mobilised to express a popular will.

The diversity of localism is accommodated within the discourse of belonging to the nation in which each person is represented as hailing from a particular place in the landscape. It is the sum of all these places that makes up the nation. For the Palestinians this way of re-presenting local identity served to underline the bond with place and created a strategy of resistance, as it provided a way of holding on to the landscape in the context of the struggle with Israel over rights and historical claims to the land. Thus identification with the local enables each Palestinian to imagine themselves as located in the terrain of the homeland, even if they reside in the Diaspora. The constant articulation of local identity casts a shadow over Israeli sovereignty, which has attempted through numerous methods to erase the historical traces of Palestinians in the landscape.

In the re-presentation of the village Palestinians found a framework for articulating the social relations of a nation. The familiarity of close-knit relations in the village was projected onto the larger, more anonymous national community. Before the war of 1948, Palestinians had been transforming from face-to-face communities to larger, more anonymous units. However the war abruptly ruptured communities and divided families, as people from different regions found themselves thrown together in refugee camps or in new towns that were new environments. As a result, new forms of community needed to be created to cope with this forced transformation. In the chaos of the first years after 1948 those who had lost their land moved frequently before finding a place to finally settle (Sayigh;1979;104-105)⁵.

'The Village' in Palestinian Art

The re-presentation of the village was appropriated into the national discourse. What was imposed onto its form was the idea that it embodied traditional social relations, conservatism, family values and respect for authority. It provided a way of imaging the nation- Benedict Anderson's 'imagined community'- in terms of the familiarity of a prior social formation which many could remember. Thus, a new political identity which emerged from a period of crisis and social upheaval employed an old social formation to image itself, and in so doing suggested a continuity between its identity and the past. As I highlighted above, the village provided a point of reference from which Palestinians could imagine themselves as having originated and which they held in common. Being able to unite around an image of the past assisted in the process of rebuilding their lives and new communities in which Palestinians found themselves.

The representations of the village found in popular images are generalised and are not

⁵Abu Ibrahim, after leaving Al Malha with his Mother in the war of 1948, went to Beit Sahour and then Bethlehem, and afterwards Harat el Yahud in the Old City, after which in 1966 his family was moved to the Shufhat Refugee Camp.

usually depictions of any one specific locale. The landscapes that are represented are of a composite type, constructed from a variety of elements which are arranged to produce an aesthetically pleasing representation of a village and its surrounding environs. The aesthetic elements normally include a landscape in full spring bloom, or at harvest time with fruit or olive trees, buildings in the traditional style of Palestinian village architecture, a well and the depiction of women and children or an elderly peasant. The village is predominantly represented from the exterior and from a distance rather than taken from a perspective from the interior. The generalised images come to stand for every village and, by analogy, Palestine. The individual identities of the villages are often lost, as the majority of artists will simply title their paintings, 'A Palestinian Village'. The aesthetic pleasure of these landscapes derives from the idealisation and romanticism contained within them. The landscapes show no sign of social change, modernisation, hardship or conflict. These images do not attempt to be documentary landscapes, but rather are landscapes of imaginings.⁶ The elements that are represented are positioned in order to evoke the image of the village as being that of a utopia - a particular domestic utopia. Through representing the village in these ways an idealistic image of the past is re-constructed and imaged through the village form. Life in the village comes to be representative of comfort, security, stability, tranquillity and the absence of want. The image of the past (as I highlighted earlier, the village is conceived as the root of Palestinian identity) is cleansed of all suggestions of the disharmony or insecurity that the peasantry experienced. In a sense these images of the past are divested of all references to historical specificities. Golden ages are always reconstructed retrospectively and involve a certain projection onto the past, which is invariably tempered by the desires of the present. Nabil Anani's painting A Palestinian Village (1981, watercolour) (fig.41) and Taleb Dweik's Peasant (1990, gouache) (fig.23) can be seen to be part of the utopian idiom that I have been describing. The theme of the village was very popular among artists during the 1980's

⁶ I do not mean to suggest that documentary art work is not also contoured by pre conceived ideas but that the artists who created these paintings did not explicitly set out to create documentary works.

in Palestine, as could be seen at the 9th Annual Exhibition of the League of Palestinian Artists in 1986 which was dominated by representations of the village and the peasantry.

Imaging Palestine as a utopia performs a dual role of reconstructing the past and establishing an image of the future. The desire to return to a Palestine of older times can also be understood as the desire to create a future Palestine in the image of the past. In a sense, these images function as projections both forward and backward in time. The painting The Village Awakens (1990, oil on canvas) (fig. 42) by Sliman Mansour incorporates many of the ideas discussed above. The painting is an image of community with each member engaged in a different activity: harvesting, fruit picking, stone carving etc. Men and women march out from the village centre, which is represented as the body of a young peasant woman, eager to take up their activities. The image is one of self-reliance and productivity. This particular painting was executed in 1990 during the midst of the intifada and can be seen to be informed by the political ideology of the uprising, which attempted to dis-engage from the Israeli economy and occupational institutions with the aim of setting up local alternatives. In a sense Mansour's painting is a national allegory. The village is represented as a microcosm of society and as the vision of the ideal community in which every person is designated with a particular job that contributes to the life and productivity of the village; repeated on a grand scale this system provides a prototype of the nation. The utopian image of the village stems from the idea that it evokes a sense of independence and self-sufficiency. These idealistic landscapes are free of humiliation. Thus, they are discursive responses to the actual experiences of Palestinians living under occupation. In a sense, these images recall the descriptions of villages by elderly Palestinians who speak of the abundance of agricultural produce in the village which

provided for everyone's needs and was generously exchanged among the community.⁷ Villagers are represented as having enjoyed a certain degree of autonomy and it is that association that is called up in these paintings. Thus, the re-presentation of autonomy in the past informs the imaginings of independence and freedom in the national discourse. The imagined utopia of the past in which the peasants enjoyed autonomy in the village community is imaged as a state which can be returned to in the form of the nation with the liberation and independence of the homeland.

During the 1980's a group of artists that included Sliman Mansour and Nabil Anani conducted excursions into the 'countryside' to paint 'en plein air'. Their main concern was to represent the villages rather than the landscape. The intention of the artists was to take themselves out of their studios, where they had been creating representations of the village, to actual sites in the 'real landscape'. Plein air painting enjoys a lengthy history in the visual arts, however the myth of first-hand contact with nature is precisely that, a myth, since the artists always enter the landscape with pre-conceived ideas which govern the way in which they interpret and create representations. For the artists the village represented a site of authenticity, somehow untouched by change. In a sense, Palestinians were searching from within their environment for a site which represented Palestinian identity, a role that was ascribed to the village. Existence in a climate whereby overt expressions of Palestinian identity met with harsh reprisals from the Israeli authorities fostered among the Palestinians the need to create a vocabulary of identity representations which would be understood by the Palestinian community, but might not immediately be read as political by the Israeli censors. The idealistic landscapes performed this function because of the associations the village conveyed and came to carry through its re-presentation in paintings. Thus, images in the classical genre of landscape painting and the picturesque genre of representing the 'countryside' that were probably considered by the censors to be conservative or decorative images

⁷Reference to the sense of community and mutual obligation can be found in numerous sources, refugees I have spoken to who were not raised in the villages, speak of the village in these terms as do their parents.

were used as the form with which to express national sentiments. It is noteworthy that it was not only artists from the West Bank and Jerusalem who imaged the village as untouched by change; Palestinian artists inside Israel also created images of the village, which were contoured by similar aesthetics. In both Khalil Rayan's Landscape from Tamra (c.1983, oil on canvas) (fig.43) and Ibrahim Hijazi's painting (Untitled, 1995, oil on canvas,) (fig.44) the village is represented from a distance and depicted as located high on a hill top, free from the influence of the modern landscape of Israel. Azmi Bishara expresses the significance of the village for 'Arab Israelis' (Palestinians who remained on the land that became the State of Israel in the war of 1948), "The village has become an intimate haven, making it possible to return to the bosom of close social relations. It is the tangible homeland of those who are foreigners in their own homeland" (Bishara in Tamir;1994;88).

One of the images by Nabil Anani (Palestinian Village, 1981, watercolours) (fig.45) painted en plein air features village women and children, (it is unlikely that the villagers would have posed for the painter). It is evident from the composition that it is a combination of work undertaken both inside and outside of the studio. As with many of Anani's paintings, male figures are absent, thus creating a community of women and children. The viewer is interpellated to occupy a paternalistic position vis-a-vis these women and children, whose protection is also the safeguarding of the site of identity. The relationship between women and the site of identity will be explored in the following chapter, which looks at the representation of Palestine as a woman. The representation of women and the village as the site of authenticity also serve to contour the definition of male agency within the national discourse. Such representations worked to interpellate men to protect women and 'traditional way of life' which is represented as the repository of the nation's identity.

The association of women and the village is evident in Sliman Mansour's painting Palestinian Village (1986, oil on wood) (fig. 46) with which he participated in the 'Spring Exhibition' of the League of Palestinian Artists in 1986. The village seems to float among the clouds almost as part of a dreamlike space, while patterns taken from Palestinian embroidery also float in the sky like kites. A woman in traditional dress is depicted as she passes in front of the house. The painting is actually cut away i.e. the painting looks like a fragment, perhaps an analogy to the perception of villages as a fragment of the past, meanwhile the clouds and its fragmented form give the impression that this is possibly a dreamscape.

The idea of the nation as the village has pervaded the Palestinian vernacular in many spheres. Ramallah, which has grown significantly in the last five years owing to the establishment of many of the PA's ministries and the arrival of PLO members and has become the unofficial capital of the West Bank, is still referred to as having been a village. Palestinians will often proudly make reference to themselves as being one of the *fellaheen*, and of coming from *fellaheen* stock, even if they do not live in villages or bear any close ties to villages. This sentiment often cuts across class boundaries, expressed by those who are from the upper classes, as well as by the middle classes. Ted Swedenberg also observed this phenomenon, suggesting that the identification of people from different classes with the *fellaheen* is not merely a "romantic identification" but is more a metaphorical identification which expresses a sense of belonging to the Palestinian people and nation (Swedenberg;1990;18). Therefore, in examining contemporary Palestinian identity representations one is exploring how a metaphoric identification with the peasantry is articulated, and how due to its metaphoric nature it tempers the ways in which identities are imaged.

Representations of the Palestinian Peasant

The Palestinian Nation and homeland is not only visualised through the model of the village but also through its former inhabitants, the peasantry. Ted Swedenberg has argued that the Palestinian peasant has been appropriated for use within national discourses as a vehicle for signifying the people of the nation (Swedenberg;1990;18). Through using the figure of the peasant the Palestinians are able to create for themselves a national character. The stubbornness of the peasant which was a source of mockery in the past, as the peasantry were perceived by the elite and the Europeans as resistant to change and simpletons, is transformed into a national asset. This national stereotype, of course, creates an image based on one facet of the peasantry. Michael Herzfeld labels this signifying process 'cultural intimacy', which he explains in the following way; "It consists in those alleged national traits- American folkness, British 'muddling through', Greek mercantile craftiness and sexual predation, or Israeli bluntness to name just a few –that offers citizens pride in the face of a more formal or official morality" (Herzfeld;1997;3). That same stubbornness of the peasantry, which was previously seen as hindrance to development, was re-articulated as an empowering political strategy, commonly referred to as '*sumud*'. This involved remaining steadfast on the land and staying in Palestine despite the daily pressures and the temptation to leave. It also meant enduring hardships and fostering a patient attitude towards a political solution to the conflict. With this discursive operation Palestinians historicised their resistance strategy and re-presented their identity as originating from the village. All those elements that had resisted change began to be re-interpreted and re-presented as part of the action of *sumud*. Thus, Palestinians drew metaphorical comparisons between themselves and the landscape, the olive trees and the cacti, which had survived for decades in Palestine. These became identity symbols and markers of resistance, so that to represent the olive tree or the cactus now carried with it a whole range of new political symbolism. The image of *sumud* and a steadfast peasantry also helped to reverse the image of defeat associated with the peasantry,

many of whom left their land and fled their villages during the war of 1948 out of fear. Swedenberg also suggests that, "In order to fulfil a unifying function the peasant as signifier has been generalised into a homogenous composite" (Swedenberg;1990;25). In so doing, social distinctions among the peasantry were ironed out; similarly as part of the official narrative the peasants' divergent responses to the Zionist settlers was unified into a single vision of resistance.

The politics of *sumud*, however, meant that political struggle for change was designated as the responsibility of Palestinians on the outside, with those on the inside expected 'just' to survive while a solution was to be actively sought by those beyond the frontiers of Palestine. Swedenberg suggests that, "the chief duty of the Palestinian people on the inside imagined as peasants is to continue steadfast on the land and to follow the directives of the leaders and not to undertake their own initiatives" (Swedenberg;1990;27). For those on the outside, the peasantry of history, were imaged as brave but

"Inherently handicapped by their backward traditions, localisms, clan loyalties and susceptible to manipulation by conservative demagogic leaders. Although the Palestinian peasants were always ready and eager to resist imperialism, they required guidance because they lacked political awareness" (Swedenberg;1990;26).

Rosemary Sayigh observes a similar sentiment expressed by the refugees in Lebanon and writes,

"Looking back at their peasant parents today's Palestinians see them as good hearted and patriotic but politically unconscious...Sacrifice, steadfastness and faith- all the traditional peasant virtues are still needed as the moral base of the struggle. But the lesson of the disaster was that these qualities were not enough and they had to be guided by a correct political ideology" (Sayigh;1979;13).

This, as Swedenberg highlights, validated the role of the Diaspora leadership and historically legitimised their right to direct the course of the struggle for national self determination (Swedenberg;1990;26). In this rhetoric, the peasantry is not imaged as capable of leadership but rather as a subject class. This form of collective resistance

was practised for many years during the first decades of the Israeli occupation. However, it was later transformed when Palestinians inside the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza took the course of politics and of political leadership into their own hands in the popular uprising of the Intifada which began in 1987.

Using the peasantry to represent the Palestinians unifies the people into one homogenous class and does away with social differences by using the mass base of the population as a source of national identification (Swedenberg;1990;25). This in turn allows the middle and upper classes to disguise both their own identity and their former exploitative relationship with the peasantry. It also serves to obscure the failure of this class, who was part of the national leadership during the British Mandate, in the years preceding the war of 1948. Thus, the official national discourse allows the middle and upper classes to disguise their true class positions and enables everyone to proudly claim to originate from the peasantry regardless of their real origins and their actual relations with the peasantry. Later in this chapter I will discuss the ambivalences that are present in displays of Palestinian identity by the middle and upper classes who appropriate peasant symbolism for use as a sign of their national identity. Their representations reveal the ways in which class values temper Palestinian identity representations. Selim Tamari sums up the view of the peasantry in nationalist discourse by observing that, “the peasantry becomes the idealised cultural hinterland from which nationalist ideology can draw its uncontaminated inspiration and collective self- identity. The vision explains the static, naturalistic and de-contextualised manner in which the *fellah* appears” (Tamari;1991;82).

Saed Hilmi in his painting A Face From My Country (1996, oil on canvas) (fig. 47) and George Anastas' sculpture Patience (1985, building block) (fig.48) both concentrate on representing the stoicism of the peasant. In A Face From My Country, the peasant's body emerges from the land, giving a literal visual analogy to the idea of roots; his

expression is of someone deep in thought and burdened by them. Similarly, one half of the face of Anastas' peasant has been weathered away by time as he sits contemplating. The strength of the peasant figure is shown in both pieces as worn away by the vagaries of time- time in this case being the political context Palestinians have been forced to endure.

Asylum (c.1995 chair and man's jacket) (image not available), an assemblage by the artist Khalil Rabah, can be interpreted as a representation of the political response of the generation made up of the former peasantry who were defeated in 1948. In this piece an old man's jacket, indicative of the style of clothes habitually worn by elderly men, is dressed on to a small coffee table, and the table is suspended high on the gallery wall. The arms are seemingly pushed back by the form of the table into a defenceless position and thus an exaggerated pose of surrender is created. Through using the jacket and the coffee table Rabah calls upon the images these items evoke. The jacket is associated with the traditional clothing of the older generation and their style of dress which they still proudly wear today, while the coffee table recalls the tables that are used for playing *shedeh* (backgammon) or around which discussions are held. The objects conjure up a particular temporality and pace of time which differs from that of contemporary everyday life. These men seem to embody the passing of time both with their experience and how they utilise time. In a sense, the postures and habits of these men suggest that "in habitual memory the past, as it were, is sedimented in the body" (Connerton;1989;72). This image, taken with the title of the piece, 'Asylum'- the search for a safe haven- can be read as part of an idiom that represents the peasant in a passive position.

Mohammed Abu Sittah provides another example of the imaging of the peasant in this way. His painting, Man from Gaza (1986, oil on canvas) (fig.49) features an elderly peasant man rummaging in his purse for a few coins, his face is weather-beaten and

he wears a miserable and tired expression on it. The monochromatic colour scheme of the painting works to give the figure an aura of lifelessness. The elderly peasantry in paintings are rarely featured in heroic postures; rather they are used to signify a tired generation who wait for the return to their former way of life.

As part of the process of becoming a national signifier the figure of the peasant has come to carry multiple and often contradictory connotations. The peasant can be the personification of *sumud* and resistance to occupation, as well as of resistance to the operation of time that works to destroy memories of the past, or the representation of defeat or the image of the Palestinians' natural and historical ties to the land. One of the paintings that play with these multiple connotations is Sliman Mansour's portrait of an elderly peasant man (Untitled, 1986, oil on canvas) (fig.50) dozing in his chair. Executed in a realist style, the painting is an example of how the figure of the peasant embodies these tensions, because the way in which we view this portrait is informed by the symbolism of the peasant in the Palestinian national discourse.

The imaging of the peasantry, however, is a contested terrain and is subject to re-articulations. This is significant for our understanding of national symbols because it points to the fact that they are not stable referents but rather are symbols whose meanings are being negotiated by national subjects who invest these symbols with particular meanings. The UNC (The United National Command of the intifada who were one of the main popular committees) for example, drew upon the imagery of the 1936 popular peasant uprising in their representations of the intifada in their leaflets. The 1936 uprising was an instance when the peasantry's dissatisfaction with the national leadership and their inability to deliver a solution to the increasing landlessness of the peasantry led to a national strike and a popular rebellion. Popular intifada leaflets (leaflet 1 of the UNC "Oh people of martyrs, descendents of al Qassam...oh people of the uprising, which has been growing from the roots of our homeland since 1936"

Aharoni & Mishal; 1994;55) made reference to the 1936 strike and to the martyred resistance leader Izz al Din al Qassam who enjoyed support among the peasantry and the lower class urban workers of Haifa. The leaflet presents the intifada struggle as a continuation of the 1936 rebellion. This example suggests that the use of the peasant in the national discourse was not the sole property of the official leadership in exile, who capitalised on the symbolism of the Palestinian people as the people of *sumud*. It was also a contested signifier that was re-appropriated at the grass roots level. (My reference is to an early leaflet; in contrast to succeeding leaflets, which began with, "issued by the PLO and the UNC").

I would like to bring to a close the discussion on the representation of the village and the peasant in art by looking at one last painting. The work by the artist Sliman Mansour is *Taboun Bread*, dates from 1980 and measures 50 x 41cm (oil on wood) (fig. 51). This small painting is one of the few still lives that is well known and has made its mark in popular culture where it can be found reproduced on postcards. The painting is a depiction of *taboun* bread, olives, an onion and tomatoes laid out on a white scarf on a wooden table. An account by Edward Said sheds light upon the ways in which this painting can be read in relation to the importance of certain foods and national identity.

"A close friend of mine once came to my house and stayed overnight. In the morning we had breakfast which included yogurt cheese with a special herb *z'aatar*. This combination exists all over the Arab world and certainly in Palestine, Syria and Lebanon. But my friend said: 'There you see. It's the sign of Palestinian home that it has *z'aatar* in it'. Being a poet, he then expatiated at great length on Palestinian cuisine, which is generally very much like Lebanese and Syrian cuisine, and by the end of the morning we were both convinced that we had a totally distinct national cuisine". (Said;1986b;70).

Like the *z'aatar*, *taboun* bread and olives are seen as national foods. This still life touches on an important aspect of the imaging of the village and the peasantry, namely the fetishisation of the material culture and way of life of the peasantry, the latter

particularly being represented in food.⁸ The significance of the image comes from the idea that the food is a representation of the authentic diet of the peasantry. This frugal and simple meal of natural foods becomes the food that builds the national character—the *sumud* of the peasantry. The analogy therefore is that these foods embody the homeland. Their fetishisation comes from the idea that the food derives not only from the specificity of place but also from a past way of life which are both part of the national discourse which locates the roots of Palestinian identity among the peasantry. Being able to appreciate these foods and being able to recognise them as national dishes of the homeland becomes a mark of national identity. Consuming these foods becomes a way of being part of the national community and facilitates the idea of the imagined community, for one can imagine other Palestinians enjoying these foods, or the same breakfast that Edward Said described. This foregrounds the question of how identity is consumed or, put another way, what are the props that are utilised in the performance of this identity and how are they acquired. Food provides one example of how the metaphoric identification with the peasantry is acted out in anyone of a wide range of locations.

Displaying National Identity (and Re-Imaging the Peasantry)

Using the peasantry as a national signifier has provided Palestinians with a rich vocabulary from which to construct the signs of a national identity. A whole range of objects, foods and imagery have been re-created as props for the display of identity that has created within Palestine its own heritage industry. Shops in major towns or at tourist destinations sell products that are made for Palestinians and foreigners to purchase. The items tend to be dominated by objects embellished with Palestinian embroidery and include: cushion covers, purses, hair-bands, picture frames, handbags, slippers, waistcoats, shawls, jackets, tea-coasters, place-mats, table-cloths, table

⁸ Food is an important way of maintaining identity; many Palestinians extol the virtues of using *semena biladi*—local fats for example. While traditional ingredients and traditional ways of cooking commonly known as *tabih* are valued by many Palestinians.

runners, mirrors and stools. Some of them have new patterns, while others have traditional designs replicated on their surfaces. As evident from the above list of items, the objects are primarily intended for women and the home. Embroidery in the village was traditionally created for women's clothing and the home. To some extent there is a continuation of this pattern of production. However, nowadays it is more the case that new objects carrying peasant symbolism can be bought in order to furnish new homes with a traditional 'feel'. The consumption and display of these objects works to re-define the peasant/national identity particularly in the contemporary period in which Palestine's economy is moving towards commercialism. The popularity of these objects warrants investigation. The objects for furnishing the home provide a way of creating a setting for the performance and fantasy of identity⁹ and adds further weight to the idea that the home is the domain of identity for Palestinians, an issue I will take up in the following chapter. Clothing and accessories serve to mark out the body as a site of identity, a site that can be utilised for the expression of a national identity. I would like to explore the use of these objects in the context of the idea of the 'imagined community'. Why is it that Palestinians who live in Palestine find it necessary to signal their identity to a community that is predominantly made up of other Palestinians? The Palestinians inside, as Edward Said notes, are already considered by the Palestinian community as, "The people of the interior are cherished as Palestinians 'already there', so to speak, Palestinians who live on the edge, under the gun, inside the barriers and *kasabahs*, entitling them to a kind of grace denied to the rest of us" (Said;1986;51). Their daily resistance and strategy of *sumud* are in many ways already understood as representations of political identity. The symbols of peasant identity therefore operate as signs over and above the signs of identity and can be read as overt expressions of Palestinian identity. Imagined communities, as it will be remembered, are based on the premise of imagining the community to be 'like us'. Glenn Bowman suggests, " People

⁹My use of the words 'performance' and 'fantasy' are not to suggest that these identities are inauthentic, but rather refers to Judith Butler's theory that identities are created through performances that are repeated by subjects (Butler; 1990;24) Similarly fantasy highlights the importance of how one imagines oneself and how others perceive one.

create communities rhetorically through thinking that some people are 'like' themselves while others are 'unlike' them" (Bowman;1994;140). To elaborate on this idea and to understand one of the ways in which 'heritage/identity' objects function is to look at the question of 'the gaze'. The subjects of the imagined community are not only involved in imaging the others of the community who are like them. For it is not a one-way gaze of looking and imaging who is part of the community, it is also about being included in the imagining of the other members of the community, and to believe oneself to be part of others' imaginings. In this way one acknowledges how the gaze of others, real or imaginary, from within the community works upon the self-representation of individuals and brings to the idea of the imagined community the importance of an audience. What this raises is the issue of desire and the need to be recognised by the other as nationalistic and part of the national community. The objects are part of the props employed for the articulation of these desires. It is interesting to consider which individuals tends to purchase these items, for the clientele are predominantly drawn from middle and upper class Palestinians resident inside Palestine, but there is also a significant market among the Diaspora Palestinians. In some cases, members of the lower middle class also purchase these products, but the latter category tends to be related to region and stems from the fact that the town's women, such as in Beit Jala, are involved in the production of these self-same goods.

There is a wide diversity of objects originating from different time periods available for consumption; thus both older objects from the past and contemporary pieces have their respective values and are consumed by different people. The social context in which embroidery was created and which gave it its meaning was largely destroyed with the war of 1948. Yet peasant women have continued to embroider, albeit under different circumstances. It is often the case that they will be provided with cotton and fabric by merchants, women's unions or charitable associations who then purchase the work from the women. Thus, the relationship that determines the production of embroidery is

largely an economic one. However, women see themselves as contributing to the national cause by reviving and preserving traditions through their support for these projects and the women who work in them by purchasing these handicraft goods. What is significant, but largely unacknowledged, is that women, as they are the main purchasers of these items, consume other women's handiwork while the makers remain anonymous. These women literally provide 'the fabric' with which other women bear their national affiliation. The embroidery no longer signifies a woman's personal identity in the form of a familial and sexual identity, but regional identity is still expressed in the patterns of embroidery. The particular language of the costume has also been transformed. The embroidery patterns were a language which women used to communicate with each other: for example, a blue embroidered shawl was the sign that the woman was a widow. This form of communication is absent among people who display heritage goods in their homes or wear embroidered accessories.

The importance of these items for middle and upper class women is that it provides a form for displaying identity and membership of the Palestinian community, as the embroidery allows them to image themselves as one of the people. However the items retain a sense that they are accessories. This brings us to an important distinction, namely, the difference between an upper class woman who wears a jacket bearing Palestinian embroidery and a peasant or a refugee woman who wears the traditional costume. For the upper class woman this is just one of many styles of dress, while for the elderly village woman the dress is an intrinsic part of her identity, for it is rare that you will find her wearing anything else. The costume is not an additional garment. The identity of the woman who wears it is constituted in and by the dress in a way that weaves together her subjectivity. Kaja Silverman elaborates on this point: "Clothing exercises a profoundly determining influence on living breathing bodies...affecting contours, weight, body development...dress is one of the most important cultural implements for articulating and territorialising human corporeality" (Silverman in

Yegenoglu;1998;119). These women all wear the costume as signs of their national identity, but the significance of the dress differs for each one of them. This comparison highlights the fact that the same object can carry different meanings for different people even though there is a consensus that it is a national symbol.

Upper class women both inside and outside Palestine can be found wearing the traditional peasant costume for special occasions. They are never, however, seen wearing contemporary peasant women's costumes, which are worn by women in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem and can be bought in these locations. The patterns and fabrics of the contemporary dresses have evolved from their historic prototypes. However, upper class women often consider that authenticity lies in their costumes alone and not those worn by the contemporary peasant women, whose dresses are considered imitations and inauthentic, even if they are the dress of today's peasantry. It is significant that it is around the issue of authenticity that class distinctions are subtly articulated within the national discourse, for in order to mark oneself out as originating from the upper class one collects or possesses historical embroidery or objects, as opposed to contemporary versions. These women are not identifying themselves with the contemporary peasantry, and so what their displays of identity reveal are their fantasies of national identity. The Palestinian community is no longer predominantly an agricultural community. The signs of 'peasantness' have thus expanded to meet the different symbolic needs of different sectors of the community who desire to articulate their national identity via peasant symbolism. Thus, it is not one single peasantry that is being reproduced or re-invented in the consumer items and displays of national identity but rather numerous peasantries, revealing the different fantasies Palestinians have of their identity. Simultaneously, these objects operate as both everyday items of functional use (clothing, stools, cushions, etc), as well as being national symbols. This opens them up to different interpretations by their users, which was evident in the description of the different women who wore Palestinian costumes.

Maha Sacca has created a series of posters and postcards depicting Palestinian heritage. She also owns stores in Bethlehem for the sale of 'heritage goods'. Her postcards are aimed at both the local and the international audience and have captured the market in which there are few representations of Palestinian culture from a local viewpoint. The popularity of her images can be attributed to the way in which they play to fantasies about a peasant identity. The models in the postcards masquerade in traditional costume. Beautiful young women are chosen to represent Palestine and are posed in front of historic sites in Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jericho, but perhaps what are some of the more interesting images for our purpose are the interior scenes. In fig. 52 and fig. 53 (postcards) the young women are wearing historical costumes and are seated in a space which overflows with traditional items such as cushions, chests, coffee pots, etc. The scene is densely packed with objects and women in such a way that the surfaces of their bodies form a continuum with the artefacts in the room. The women seem almost unfamiliar with the items they handle and their poses lack the intended historical authenticity. The women appear more as though they are at a masquerade party, with the objects functioning like props for the articulation of their fantasies and for the acting out of their role-plays. Palestine in this image is set in the world of the interior. The historical context from where these objects originate is thus forgotten in the fantasy space of the postcard in which Palestine is reduced to a plethora of textiles and their aesthetics.

The organisation of the image and its density recalls the orientalist representations of harems, as evident in Malek Alloula's book in which he has documented postcards of this genre (see fig. 54). The main difference with these is that in Maha Sacca's postcards the women are fully clothed. However, this does not detract from the sensuality of the images, for the abundance of beautiful girls and the luscious surfaces were all part of the vocabulary used for creating an image of the secluded world of the

harem. Thus in these images Palestinian heritage is rendered exotic and sexy but in a way which does not cross the boundaries of respectability as defined by the predominantly conservative Palestinian society. This fantasy is marked by the absence of men, thereby rendering Palestine to be a community of desirable women, thereby directing the image towards the male gaze.

In this part of the chapter I have explored the way in which the village and the peasantry are re-presented in paintings and the way these images visualised a utopia of the past and a vision of the future. The chapter then went on to discuss the different manifestations of a peasant identity as they were reproduced in heritage objects and postcards. What became apparent were the ways in which these representations set up spaces for fantasies about origins and identities and about utopias of the past. This was achieved through the appropriation of the village and the peasantry in order for them to operate as national signifiers of the historical identity of Palestinians. Once 'peasantness' had been designated as a sign of national identity, the milieu of peasant life became open to re-presentation by different members of the national community and in so doing multiplied the meanings of these representations and generated the demand for new representations. I would like to move on to discuss how the village and the peasantry are represented in visual forms that aim to preserve the past. I will proceed by examining the re-constructions of the peasantry and the village in the age old form of the museum, and in contrast to that the modern space of the Internet web page.

Preserving and Recreating the Past

The preservation of Palestinian culture and the past has taken on a heightened significance in the context of Israeli suppression and denial of the history of the Palestinian people. Palestinian identity up until the recent signing of the Oslo Accords

was an identity under continual threat¹⁰. The war with the Palestinians was not only fought out in the territories and upon the spaces of people's bodies but was also waged against the history of the Palestinians. In this struggle, artefacts and evidence from the past became a way of validating the rights of each community to sovereignty over the land. Hence, "Images, words and things are intricately bound up in the objectification of memory in ways that elicit forms of remembering and means of forgetting" (Rowlands;1994;8). Israel engaged in this conflict using numerous methods, which for example included the re-writing of the significance and history of many historical sites in Palestine so as to exclude the presence of Palestinians or Arabs in the past and to erase Palestinians from the genealogy of the area. This is evident in tourist guides and information boards. The preservation of Palestinian culture became a way of contesting Israeli rhetoric and counteracting it by showing evidence that there was in fact a Palestinian people with a history of living in Palestine. The preservation of Palestinian culture has been underway for many years and has been the work of many different individuals and institutions. Widad Kawar, who lives in Amman, Jordan, has a significant collection of Palestinian traditional costumes, which she has been collecting since the 1970's while different Palestinian Women's organisations both within Palestine and in the Diaspora have engaged in similar endeavours. However, the public display of these collections encountered difficulties because of the Israeli restrictions upon Palestinians under occupation. Palestinians were also wary of putting their artefacts on show for fear that the Israelis would confiscate the collections. The fear for the safety of collections still exists today and access to view local collections is often by request. This inaccessibility is also related to the fact that the collections do not have adequate funding to stay open to the public.

Since the arrival of the Palestinian Authorities in the autonomous areas there has been a marked expansion of activities associated with preservation of Palestinian heritage

¹⁰ With the signing of the Oslo Accords the threat to Palestinian Identity did not cease but now manifests itself in different forms. Palestinians are still held as political prisoners by Israel, for example.

and culture that points towards an institutionalisation of the preservation of the past. These initiatives comprise of a combination of independent and 'governmental' projects. For the first time, Palestinians now have a recognised Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities enabling Palestinians to develop and build policies for their own culture. Official projects that are in the pipeline include the establishment of the Palestinian Remembrance Museum, while there has also been considerable financial investment in the restoration of Palestinian vernacular architecture. The Ministry of Culture's flagship Khalil Sakanini Centre is located in a recently restored old Palestinian house, while other culture centres such as the Al Wasiti Art Centre and the Issaf Nashashibi Centre for Culture and Literature are both housed in renovated historical buildings. Independent projects include the opening of the Dr. Tewfiq Canaan Gallery at Birzeit University, whose inaugural exhibition which was held in 1998 was a display of a Tewfiq Canaan's collection of rare amulets which he collected. Archives have also been established to document Palestinian culture, such as the archive of Palestinian art that was set up to document the work of Palestinian artists. While Riwaq- the centre for architectural conservation which was founded in 1991 and works to protect the architectural environment in Palestine, in which many old buildings have been abandoned, bulldozed or have fallen into disrepair due to a lack of resources. Knowledge of traditional building skills has also been lost. Riwaq's work has been to document, research and analyse Palestinian vernacular architecture and Riwaq has also established a database listing all the buildings in Palestine of historical significance.

James Clifford suggests that what communities choose to preserve and display tells us a lot about what is valued in a society (Clifford;1985;240). In the Palestinian context, the ethnographic museum or the museum of folklore has been used by the Palestinians as a location in which to display their culture and heritage, and so by examining this space one can discern the way in which the past is being re-created and re-presented.

The ethnographic museum, like other museums in Europe, was seen as a way of bringing together in one place information about different peoples as represented in their material culture. The ethnographic museum was also a place for classifying that material through the visual displays, which were used as evidence of the evolution of advanced civilisations. The displays tended to utilise the material culture of other peoples to show their relative degeneracy and backwards and in so doing discursively representing them as inferior. Some of these museums presented the culture of non-Europeans as unchanging, frozen in time and as objects of study. The local museum/museum of folklore can be understood as attempts to reclaim this space of representation in an endeavour to represent oneself and not to be represented by others. However, the reclaiming of this space is fraught with the problems of representation that are part of the museum discourse itself, in which museums presume to create adequate representations of cultures through displacing objects from their contexts and making them stand for the whole (Clifford;1985;239). In addition, displays are inevitably based on a selection process which sets up hierarchies of inclusion and exclusion (Clifford;1985;238). Culture becomes signified through the accumulation of a wealth of objects, which in turn sets up a competition to acquire and display these objects as a way of authenticating the history of a society.

The Museum

In order to explore what is valued from the past and how a hierarchy of cultural artefacts reveals itself in museum displays, I would like to examine one of the older Palestinian folklore museums which was established in 1974 by a local branch of The Arab Women's Union in Bethlehem. The Bethlehem Museum is situated en route to Manger Square and the Church of the Nativity and is tucked away down a narrow side street. The museum is located in a house in what is now the old part of the city, which would have previously been the centre of the town. Bethlehem under the British Mandate period developed from being a village to an important town, for it was both a

site of pilgrimage and many of its Christian inhabitants worked for the British Administration, a fact which increased the prosperity of the village.

The Bethlehem museum consists of six rooms. The first room is used to display samples of Palestinian costume and jewellery, in particular the style of Bethlehemites. Bethlehem was famous for the *malek* dress, ('royal' fabric of dress) and the specialised needlework of its women. Palestinian women in the past would send their costumes to be embroidered by women from Bethlehem who were held in high repute for their work on the chest panels of dresses (Weir;1989;128). Alongside the costumes are displays of jewellery (included among these are spectacles and watches). The items on display are accompanied by labels stating who has donated them; however one is not certain if these objects are heirlooms of the women from the Union or whether in some cases that they might have purchased the objects from the peasantry.

The second room is the main room in the museum and has been set up as a salon/living room. On display are traditional musical instruments, items for making coffee, a *kanoon* for heating the room (a metal container for heating coals), furniture, oil lamps, a Singer sewing machine, traditional rugs, an altar with icons, a baby's cradle, mattresses, which are stored in a niche, bridal chests and photographs on the walls. The upper room in the museum is recreated as a bedroom displaying a traditional bed from the 1920's, a bedspread, a jug and basin for washing, local herbs, photographs and memorabilia, such as books and travel documents. The bedroom is presented as a feminine space and the majority of photographs are wedding portraits. The final room is the kitchen space, and leading up to it in the passageway is a mock oven for making *taboun* bread. The kitchen is a square room with an arched ceiling which has on display a range of storage jars, and old bins; traditionally used for storing dried legumes, cooking utensils, and coffee grinders. The two other rooms are used for the display and sale of Palestinian embroidery that is commissioned by the Union.

Rather than displaying each object in isolation with lengthy textual descriptions, the display attempts to recreate the rooms as traditional settings with the intention that the visitor steps back in time. Yet as Barbara Kirshenblath-Gimblett suggests, “In situ installations, no matter how mimetic, are not neutral. They are not a slice of life, lifted from the everyday world and inserted into the museum gallery, though this is the rhetoric of the mimetic mode. On the contrary, those who construct the display also constitute the subject” (Kirshenblath-Gimblett;1998;20). The first room, through its display, attempts to make reference to the history of Bethlehem as a place reputed for the *malek* dress and its needlework by showing examples of local costume and accessories. Most of the items on display are made up of donations, in particular from women who are members of the union and aside from a title description of the item, this is the main information available on the labels. The museum is interesting for our study because of the different ideas it attempts to project under the rubric of a folklore museum and in the context of a home space. The in situ representations, the accumulation of objects and the photographs on display seem to impart different ideas about the past, particularly in regards to the culture of different social classes in Bethlehem which comes to the fore in the display of the upper room and the main room.

The upper room, as stated above, is very much a feminine space, with a double bed, female grooming items, etc. The portraits on display are mainly wedding photographs of families of the women who are members of the union who come from the middle and upper classes. The style of clothing in these images documents the influence of European fashion upon these classes, which is particularly evident in the designs of wedding suits. During the 1920's, the urban and suburban middle and upper classes in Palestine specifically those in the region of Jerusalem, Bethlehem, Jaffa and Haifa, all of which were open to foreign influences and tourists, drew their tastes and aesthetics

from the contemporary fashions of Europe. This was reflected in their styles of clothing, household furnishings and domestic architecture. In order to distinguish themselves from the lower classes they cultivated Europeanised aesthetics and tastes, which persist to the present day. The upper room can be understood as an attempt by these middle and upper class women to recreate a space in the house not in the style of the peasantry but rather of how they imagine the style of a predeceasing middle and upper classes to have been. It was only the wealthier echelons of the peasantry who had begun to create separate rooms for sleeping in their homes. The room also functions as a way of bringing domestic and women's history into the space of a museum of national culture. In so doing, they are also offering the aristocracy up for public consumption in a way not dissimilar to how the lives of important figures, leaders or royalty are visible for the public.

The main room in the museum (fig. 55) appears to re-present a number of different histories. The objects on display are predominantly characteristic of peasant and middle class furnishings. For example, the *sejlon* (couch), the Singer sewing machine, the musical instruments and the rugs were not objects uncommon to find in the homes of families from these classes. This room is supposed to be the main living space and is therefore multi-purposeful, and this explains why there is a range of different functional objects on display. The histories in this room seem to diverge, however, in the space of the photographs. Represented in the photographs are members of the Bethlehem elite attending different social events. Hence, there are photographs bearing the following titles: "Bethlehem notables and band in 1923 during tea party given for General and Lady Storrs by Mayor Mousa Kattan", "Kamal Pasha al Husseni and Rageb al Nashashibi, Jerusalem Mayor opening the Bethlehem Market in 1929 in the company of the Mayor, The British High Commissioner and his wife and Haj Amin Husseni". In the entrance to the museum are also to be found numerous images of the Jaccir house and family who were also part of the local elite. What is particularly

interesting is that these notables, namely the Hussenis and Nashashibis, are seen as partly responsible for the loss of Palestine in the national discourse. Their family rivalries are seen as one of the reasons why Palestinians were unable to present a united front during the years preceding the war of 1948. Similarly, the British representatives were seen as responsible for the crisis that ensued in Palestine. The placement of the photographs in a public space such as this reveals a certain ambivalence on the part of the women of the Union, who view the photographs as evidence of their family histories and achievements which override the political connotations that the photographs might carry for others.

This living space is also transformed into the space of the history of Bethlehem; note for example that there are no wedding portraits on display as there are in the upper room. Instead the history on display pertains exclusively to the elite and their relationship with the ruling authorities in their capacity as the town's political representatives. The photographs serve to image the elite as part of the development of the history of Bethlehem. In contrast, there are no photographs of the other inhabitants of the town, nor of harvests nor local industry. The room is neither a reconstruction of an elite family living room, nor a peasant interior. The furniture of the upper class was European in style and does not correspond to the interior that is recreated nor to the lifestyle portrayed in the photographs. Thus the displays in the museum are ambiguous, for different historical periods and different classes are imaged as occupying the same space. The identity which is clearly on display is a religious one, evident through the display of the altar of icons. The old aristocratic families from which many of the women are descended and whose powerful status and influence have significantly declined have adopted the material culture of the peasantry and sponsored projects seeking to preserve 'peasant' culture through collecting traditional costumes and cooking ware as displayed in the first room and the kitchen as

ways of showing allegiance to the national cause while all the time retaining a sense of their class superiority.

What comes to light is that many of the projects for preserving Palestinian culture have been undertaken by upper class women, as is the case with The Bethlehem Museum and The Dar it Tifl Museum. In a conservative society, charity work and work associated with culture have been designated as suitable work for women to engage in outside of the home and is not perceived to threaten the male dominance of the public sphere. One observes that women from this class have given themselves the responsibility of representing the history of the peasantry. What comes to the surface in these displays are certain class attitudes that manifest themselves as one class attempts to represent another under the guise of maintaining the unity of national identity. The domain of preserving culture has come to be defined through the activities of various women as an activity of the elite class, and those women who wish to show themselves to be part of this community have also taken up such projects. This is evident in the case of Maha Sacca, whose postcards were previously discussed.

Maha Sacca's dates her interest in preserving Palestinian culture from the time of the intifada, in which she claims to have found a new pride in her cultural heritage (Sacca; 2nd October, 1996). She openly admits that she salvages objects by purchasing them, (Sacca; 2nd October, 1996), for it is her economic resources that enable her to build and expand her collection. Maha Sacca does not play on the rarity value of the artefacts in her collection displaying each piece in isolation as though it was the last remaining vestige of a family of objects. Her collection, on the contrary, is presented as an abundance of artefacts which are often duplicated within the display. It is not the uniqueness and authenticity of objects that Maha Sacca is concerned with. Indeed, when asked about her display one finds that not all the items are from Palestine and not all of them are antiques. This observation came about in an interview in which she

explained that various beads and necklaces hailed from India and she was reluctant to go into details over the history of her objects. When questioned as to the importance of different objects she would often reply that they were not very old (Sacca; 2nd October, 1996). This led me to believe that one was not meant to look too closely at the display but rather take in the general richness of the mass of objects which were displayed as though one was in an Aladdin's cave. In a sense, her collection appears as a manifestation of James Clifford's earlier suggestion that evidence of culture becomes represented as an accumulation of objects.

Maha Sacca's enterprise can also be understood as part of her attempt to enter the elite class. By engaging in such a project, Maha Sacca is also trying to assert her membership of this elite, by affirming her commitment to the national cause, particularly in the context of her being from a nouveau riche family, not from the former notable families of Palestine. Thus, on the one hand, nationalist rhetoric does not distinguish between class differences and views all its people as equal citizens, on the other this does not exclude patriotism being heavily contoured by class interests and desires for social advancement. The elite women, however, do not see Maha Sacca as one of them and consider her projects as commercial enterprises, and to some extent 'inauthentic'.

The Internet Web Page and the Memories of the 'Imagined Community'

The modern Internet web page could not stand in greater contrast to the traditional folklore museum, yet both spaces have been taken up as arenas for representing the past of the Palestinians. There are literally hundreds of pages concerning the Palestinians available on the Internet as part of web sites initiated by individuals and institutions. The Internet has provided a public arena in which Palestinians can represent themselves with considerable freedom both to an international audience and to the Palestinian audience. This is noteworthy because within the international public

arena, the space of narration for Palestinian experiences, as Edward Said has noted, is always occupied by prior discourses and pre-conceptions which consequently leaves little room for a Palestinian perspective (Said;1986;66). The web page, then, is a space in which to contest the hegemony of the Israeli version of events in Palestine, which dominates public opinion in Europe and America. The image that is commonly held of the World Wide Web is that of it being accessible to all, however the facility is somewhat determined by economic resources. To use the Internet requires being able to have access to a computer, a modem link to the Internet and a good command of English, as this is the main language of communication.

In the context of the Diaspora, the Internet provides a forum for bringing together the community of Palestinians. There are chat and news groups especially for those concerned with Palestine; these locations serve to create new communities of Palestinians who are dispersed in different regions around the world, and it provides virtual locations for Palestinians who would otherwise be unable to meet with one another. The Internet also provides a way for Palestinians to 'tap into home' to keep up to date with events in Palestine, thus providing a way of reproducing the 'imagined community' of the nation. I cannot in the space of this chapter examine all the representations by Palestinians on the Internet. Thus, I have chosen to focus on two individual sites in order to explore how the pasts of places which the Palestinian communities no longer occupy, i.e. destroyed villages and the city of Jaffa, are represented. Although Jaffa is not a village, it provides one of the few examples of how a city rather than village is being re-presented.

The first web page is part of the Birzeit University site and was created by the Centre for Research and Documentation of Palestinian Society. The web pages provide historical accounts of a number of villages which were destroyed in the 1948 war. The descriptions are written in an academic style and are structured around accounts of the

villages under the following headings 'Before 1948', 'Occupation and Depopulation', 'Israeli Settlement' and 'The Village Today'.¹¹ The descriptions are compiled by drawing upon accounts of various historians and journalists. An attempt is made to elucidate upon the history of the villages as a way of emphasising the rootedness of the communities before their destruction by compiling information from Arab travellers, taxation records and so forth. From a visual perspective one of the most significant aspects of the pages, which are mainly dominated by text, is the opening page. The page has the outline of a map of Palestine and the following instruction: "to learn more about a specific village just click on its name or the ruin icon marking its former location". It is through the space of the ruin that the past is made accessible to us. The ease and speed with which one arrives at Palestine and the destroyed village is in contrast to the emotional journey and the implications accessing such sites evoke for Palestinians, for whom these villages were real places of lived community. This becomes apparent if we consider the experience of a refugee who has actually returned to his land as in the following example.

The use of the symbol of the ruin in this web page recalls the way in which ruins have come to function for Palestinians. Many Palestinians, old and young, in refugee camps and those living abroad, have when possible journeyed to the sites of their former villages. The experience differs for those who return to a place where they once lived, to that of those who have no memory of the village but are taken there as rite of passage into their identity as Palestinians. In addition, the experience differs for those who are from a third generation who hear the accounts of their parents which were passed down from their own parents, to that of those who have travelled from abroad to visit the site. The experience also differs for those who live in camps less the 25 kilometres from their original villages. Buildings and ruins play an important role in these visits. Abu Ibrahim, who now lives in Shufhat Refugee Camp, is originally from

¹¹ This follows the form of Walid Khalidi's book "All that Remains" in which he gives an account of the destroyed Palestinian villages.

the village of Al Malha between Jerusalem and Bethlehem. I was in his home one evening after he had returned from a visit to his former village together with an Israeli journalist who wanted to make a short documentary on the village. This was not unfamiliar to him as other documentaries had featured his account. He had been back before but each time it was an emotional experience. The usually cheerful man hardly spoke to anyone, but after a while he started to explain to me that he felt as though he had been jolted out of a different era and he didn't know what had happened to the world. Going back to the village was like stepping back in time to his childhood; he was a boy of eleven when he left al Malha. Although the village had changed considerably, once he had got his bearings by identifying certain sites he was able to identify the homes of his relatives which were now occupied by Israelis. The current occupants did not want to speak nor allow him to enter their properties. Eventually they were invited to enter one of the houses which was occupied by a Christian foundation. He described to me how he had identified the various details that had been altered in his aunt's house; the entrance, the windows, access routes etc, changes which the owners themselves acknowledged. Through this act he was re-presenting the house as he knew it, taking himself and his audience back in space and time with his description. Although I could empathise with his experience, I was still at a one removed from his feelings of pain and his account, which I could only experience as a representation, not as an event that was part of my life. Abu Ibrahim has taken his children to Al Malha to explain to them their history and what life in the village was like. The family has also adopted the village as its surname as a way of memorialising their historical place of origin. Whenever I have driven past Al Malha, part of whose land is now the site of the Knesset and a large shopping mall, with an al Malhi family member, they begin to describe to me that this used to be the site of their former village. They recall the prosperity of the village and how the land is now occupied by others, accounts they have internalised from their father, a representation that they re-present with their own inflections as part of their identity; inflections which are tempered by how the past and

present shade into one another to affect the representation of former and current temporality.

The above description can be seen as relevant to the next web site I will discuss. The page deliberately sets out to incorporate the different experiences and memories Palestinians have of their former sites of home, and how a generation who have grown up with those memories experience the encounter with those places. The Jaffa Virtual Museum brings together the museum and the web page. It is one of the few contemporary representations of a former Palestinian city, for as I have shown the village has been the dominant aspect of the landscape that is articulated in the national discourse. Palestinian cities have not had the same privileges and have yet to be transformed into national icons; indeed Jerusalem may be the only city that differs in this instance, as it has been actively re-presented as the capital of a future Palestinian nation state. Walid Khalidi in his encyclopaedic work 'All That Remains', which documents the 418 destroyed villages, notes that urban centres are not part of his study, as their structures have partially remained intact and have been noted by the outside world. Villages have, from his point of view, been forgotten; his work is thus a monumental attempt to redress this imbalance and in so doing is another example of the fetishisation of the village.

The Jaffa Virtual Museum re-constitutes Jaffa in virtual space, creating a parallel city which is constructed from a Palestinian perspective (Jaffa is now part of Israel and a suburb of Tel Aviv). The site is still under construction and is organised into the following sections: general information, stamps and coins, the collection, exhibitions, society in history, library and films. In addition there is a section on 'Why Jaffa?' 'Jaffa diaries', links and a newsletter. The project announces itself as a "collective enterprise", and throughout the pages invites comments and suggestions from the visitors to the

virtual museum. In its texts it acknowledges the difficulty of constructing a representation of the city. It states,

“In fact, visualizing various facets of Jaffa, as of any city, is a tricky exercise. It compels a constant questioning about one's knowledge, as well as a constant inquiry into what was there and how to visualise, let alone interpret it. The collection is therefore, at best, a modest attempt at visualization; an exercise in retracing historical and social lines whose interwoven complexion leaves many ambiguous points and shades. In such a case, your suggestions, comments and additions become, by definition, a complementary aspect of the development of this collection towards new horizons, new visions, and new representations of Jaffa, as it might be understood”.

The web page incorporates into its approach an understanding that the past is always re-presented. It does not attempt to be a single definitive representation of the city, but rather constitutes the city in fragments of personal narratives and experiences, photos, articles and books, which do not necessarily converge, but highlight the way in which places are constituted through representation. The Jaffa Virtual Museum highlights an important aspect of places that make up the Israeli landscape, namely that places constitute a whole set of other meanings for other communities whose identity and self-representation is drawn from re-presentations of those places. This space is expanded in the section 'Jaffa Diaries' which invites accounts and contemplations of people's memories and experiences of Jaffa. These accounts are submitted into the arena of the anonymous community of Internet users. The accounts are part of the fabric that constitutes a community of Jaffa as an interest group. Yet this also becomes a space for the sharing of memories and experiences of Jaffa by a community that is dispersed in many locations. It is a way of re-constituting the disparate community that acknowledges plurality through the inclusion of numerous narratives. The 'Jaffa Diaries' point to the way in which modern technologies are appropriated in order to construct the collective memories of the 'imagined community' of the nation.

The idea of collecting the memories of Palestinians is the premise for a new project entitled 'The Race Against Time', that has been initiated by Birzeit University which

hopes to document the memories of the oldest living generation of Palestinians who lived in Palestine before the creation of Israel. The preservation of their memories in a national archive is meant to serve as an inheritance to a future generation of Palestinians. These memories of a 'lost land'¹² may well become a resource for constructing national identity and facilitating ways of remembering for future generations that would have had no contact with those who lived in Palestine before 1948. Israel has attempted to transform and erase the physical evidence of the history of Palestinians, and in so doing it has denied Palestinians the use of material culture which could function as memory tools; for objects and places serve as a way of triggering memories and narratives of the past. In this respect any physical trace of a past way of life have become highly fetishised. The projects, in particular 'The Race Against Time', transform memories into artefacts as "particular statements need no longer be memorised but can lie around as artefacts and can be consulted as required" (Connerton;1989;76). The project can be seen as an attempt to fix the representation of the past in space and time by recording individual recollections which are normally transitory and transformed with each re-narration, for audience and context contour the way in which a narrative is repeated. Oral history projects can be seen in Connerton's words to "give voice to what would otherwise remain voiceless even if not traceless by re-constituting the life history of individuals" (Connerton;1989;18). This project and the Internet page are two examples of the way in which the passing down of memories is expanding from the face-to-face community of parents to children who narrate their memories orally, to inscriptual practices that are intended for the wider community of Palestinians. The current trend in Palestine of establishing archives, museums and projects to record the past serves to organise fragments of historical evidence into a legacy for the nation through the use of methods of modern technology.

¹² This refers to an article by Glenn Bowman entitled "Tales of a Lost Land" (New Formations no.5 1988) which explores the question of Palestinian identity.

Re-Articulations of the Past in Contemporary Palestinian Weddings

The transformations regarding the ways in which the past is preserved raises questions as to the ways in which social memory is conveyed in the Palestinian context. Paul Connerton begins his book, 'How Societies Remember', by highlighting our common assumption that memory is an individual faculty and is not something that is perceived as a collective practice. His book then sets out to examine how social memory is articulated (Connerton;1989;1). To recall, the aim of this chapter has been to explore how the Palestinian village is represented in the national discourse. It became evident through the course of this chapter that it was mainly a re-presentation of a village of the past that was being imagined in paintings, museums, heritage objects and web pages. These representations, for the most part, have been individual identity representations, even if they were organised by institutions. Therefore, how are memories represented collectively and how are they conveyed and sustained by communities? Connerton proposes that "images of the past and recollected knowledge are conveyed and sustained by (more or less) ritual performances" (Connerton;1989 ;38). Connerton's suggestion provides a way for understanding the rituals of the Palestinian wedding and how the village is evoked in these collective representational practices.

Marriage is a central aspect of Palestinian culture; a recent survey showed that 90% of people in Palestine marry and 15, 000 new couples take their vows every year. The statistics point to the importance of this institution and the family orientation of Palestinian society. Weddings are important spaces for the representation of religious, family, sexual and village/city, identity as they were in Palestine in the first half of this century. Many aspects of the wedding rituals have been transformed from that time to the present day. If we examine the marriage process for people who originate from villages, one discovers that the sequence of rituals bears a notable resemblance to the forms of the past, namely: the *tlubeh*, the purchasing of the *mahr*, the *khutbeh*. Then

before the wedding: the *henna* night and the bridegroom's *sahra*. On the wedding day: the procession to collect the bride from her home, the procession to the bridegroom's family house, the wedding party and the going out to the well after the wedding.

The content of these rituals has been transformed so as to be meaningful to people's lives today, while at the same time continuing to retain a tie with the past. Connerton suggests that "all rites are repetitive and repetition automatically implies continuity with the past" (Connerton;1989;45). Yet though there may be many rites that *imply* continuity with past, what Connerton notes is the importance of those rites that distinguish themselves by explicitly *claiming* such a relationship with the past. Such rites identify their links to the past in aspects of the performance of the rites, which announce their link to tradition. In the Palestinian context this can be understood as an expression of a political identity as the past is a contested territory between Israelis and Palestinians. As I noted above, there are many articulations of identity within wedding ceremonies, but what concerns us here are those performances that are marked out by the social actors as explicitly linked to the past and through their repetition become representations of the past.

Most Palestinians in Palestine have the choice to conduct their weddings in their family homes or in rented reception halls. The number of people that attend weddings means that a lot of people now chose the latter option, as family homes are too small to accommodate the number of visitors. Holding weddings in family homes has come to carry the association of having a traditional wedding. In the reception halls many of the rituals that are part of the wedding have been adapted to the change in location. For example weddings in reception halls are not required to provide guests with a cooked meal, while weddings in the family home must include this aspect. The procession of the bridegroom bringing the bride to his family home is transformed into a small procession outside the doors of the reception hall, as bride and bridegroom normally

arrive in cars rather than on foot or horseback. The music of the wedding is no longer created solely by families but instead involve a live bands or DJs. The music and the songs in the processions and in the rituals are a mixture of music that is influenced by fashions in Egypt and Syria. Styles of attire are also continually undergoing change, from the photographs in the Bethlehem Museum we can discern that the traditionally embroidered dress was being replaced by the white 'western' wedding dress in the 1920s and 1930s, which has now become a tradition in itself.

The whole wedding, it must be understood, is seen as a tradition comprising of a series of rituals but I want to concentrate on those aspects of it which are explicitly articulations that claim a continuity with the past. The henna party for the bride draws its significance from the festivities that surrounded preparing a bride for her wedding which takes its name from the tradition of covering her body with organic patterns of henna. The mother of the bridegroom still brings henna to the bride's party, but this is more a symbolic performance as it is no longer the fashion to henna oneself. The bringing of a sack of sugar or rice is also symbolic and repeated because it is seen as a tradition of the village. People explain its significance as having been intended to provide for the families who arrive to receive lunch. In addition the ritual surrounding a bride's departure from her father's home can also be seen to explicitly claim its link to the past. When the bride leaves her father's home she is covered with an '*abyaa*', a traditional man's cloak, the colour of the cloak indicates the affiliation to the *qays* or *yemini* tribes- the two main tribes which the Palestinians claim to descend from. This identity has lost its significance as a political identity but is rather part of the mythology of Palestinian identity. Shelagh Weir points out that bride is covered in order to protect her from the evil eye, as in transit from her father's house to her husband's house she is temporarily without status, for she has shed her old identity but has not yet arrived at her new one. Whether the superstition around the evil eye still exists is not as significant as the fact that people claim that this a necessary part of the ceremony that

must be performed. In addition in both weddings carried out in family homes and in rented reception halls it is part of a ritual for a woman to *zagriet* praises in the course of the wedding receptions. This is considered an important tradition and festivities are normally temporarily halted while an elderly woman sings praises to the bride and groom, the words of which are often filled with wit and humour. The distinction of this ritual is most apparent when lively pop music is halted in the middle of a wedding in a reception hall and the woman calls out her praises. Further evidence that the ritual performances of social memory have become traditions can be ascertained from the way in which they are perceived as common sense and a logical procession of events that don't need to be explained within the community who understand that they are traditional. This highlights the scripted performance aspect of collective representation in which each person in the community understands their role. Collective representations distinguish themselves from individual representations for the former depends upon a shared consensus of how the rituals are conducted and the meanings they are seen to embody. Yet a space begins to open up between the transformations in weddings and collective memory. For example, I asked the same interviewee Abu Ibrahim how weddings differed from when he got married. He spoke of the weddings in reception rooms as bearing little relation to the traditional Palestinian wedding, particularly in that the sense of community had been lost. These days one came and went to weddings like any person, often to be seated on a table with strangers. For him the wedding in the home was more closely tied to weddings in his time. The rituals had not entirely remained the same, there were variations in the songs sung and several hours had to be designated for lunch because of the increased number of people that had to be fed (whereas before everyone could eat together). For him, however, it was not so much the rituals that had changed, but the meanings that they embodied. He said, "Before people came to enjoy with me and helped from the heart; people really got tired, women would go back and forth carrying water from the well and everyone would help, today people come to look at you just". Abu Ibrahim speaks of how

everyone used to dance at weddings but how now many people merely sit and observe one another today. Display has become an important aesthetic of weddings. Seating arrangements and the interior design of reception rooms are orchestrated to facilitate the gaze many incorporate reflective surfaces and angled mirrors in their design, so people can see and be seen, but not always be seen looking. Perhaps, then, divergences in collective representational practices could potentially open up fissures in collective memory, for Connerton suggests that, "it is an implicit rule that participants in any social order must presuppose a shared memory" (Connerton;1989;3). This could point to a breaking down of the community if memories were to become incommensurable.

Remains of the Past; Spaces and Postures of Identity in the Salon

The discussion of Palestinian weddings has been an example of collective practices of representation. It is evident that social memory as performed in these rituals is not necessarily a unified terrain, but subject to transformations, particularly in relation to the values these rituals are seen to embody. In bringing this chapter to a close and as a way of developing the idea of transformations of collective practices of representation within traditional forms, I would like to examine the articulation of collective identity in the space of the salon and its predecessor the village guest house, which was explicitly utilised as the space in which the village represented itself.

The salon is the most public room within the private space of the domestic interior in the Middle Eastern home. The salon is not a room used daily by families but is a room specifically set aside for receiving guests and for the family's self-presentation. It is in the anticipation of the imagined guest that a pretext is created for the orchestration of this room. The salon comes into being in the space between the desirable image the family has of itself and their perceptions of their guests' expectations. The expectations held by a guest are formed within the cultural context that operates to

contour the style of the salon and the symbolic vocabulary of seating arrangements and objects that can be identified within it. The room, however, must be flexible enough to account for the variety of guests who will be received there, who come from both inside and outside of the local community.

The salon is not dissimilar to European and American parlours; a definition of the parlour by Michael Rowlands provides an insight into the character of these rooms:

“As a transitional space. Its purpose is syncretic in the sense that it absorbs and domesticates the outside for private consumption. As part of a strategy of emplacement, the parlour is a synthesis of inside and outside organised according to certain aesthetic categories that balance correctness defined by the arrangement of furniture and objects according to the expectation of visitors” (Rowlands;1994;157).

Considering the fact that under years of occupation there has been an absence of spaces for the official presentation of Palestinian culture, Palestinians have, in their search for alternative spaces, utilised everyday and private spaces for the expression of their national identity. One would therefore expect that the salons would be full of overt expressions of national political affiliation, but what one encounters in these spaces in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem is a noticeably more subtle and ambiguous display of multifarious identities and ideas. Maha Sacca's salon is one of the best of examples of how a salon is used for nationalist expression, however her salon, as featured in her postcards is by no means the norm. Before discussing examples of contemporary salons it is pertinent to consider the origins of this room, for it has its roots in the Palestinian village and the organisation of the peasant community. The evolution and transformation of the salon provides yet another example of how peasant culture has been appropriated and re-defined and in so doing has also defined ideas of community and collective representation.

We can trace the descent of the salon from the village guesthouse. The guesthouse

was the main site for negotiating and discussing communal affairs. It was situated next to the *sheikh's* compound and the mosque and opened out onto the main plaza. In larger villages the guesthouse was a separate building and large prosperous villages would on occasion have several guesthouses belonging to different *hamulas*. While in smaller hamlets, which did not have a designated building, the guesthouse would be merely a room in the *sheikh's* home. Guesthouses were distinguished by their size and scale, often having intricate carved stonework and large windows, features uncharacteristic of elsewhere in the village. The latter features of the guesthouse allowed those inside to observe the activities in the main plaza.

The guesthouse was a multi- purpose building and thus its function altered according to the time of day. For the most part, it operated as the administrative centre of the village where the elders of the community met to discuss the village affairs. Each member would arrive in the morning and deposit some coffee beans in a bag and then would be offered some hot coffee by the guesthouse's caretaker. Government announcements would be made in the guesthouse and newspapers read out loud. The space would also serve as a village law court. The management of the village depended upon the presence of all the village elders however when disputes arose clan leaders would boycott the communal space and retreat to their own guestrooms in their family compound. This course of action dis-empowered the leading *sheikh*, thus making it impossible for him to make representative decisions.

Throughout the day a stream of visitors would be received at the guesthouse. Although it was multifunctional, it was considered a sacred space; once inside the visitor was under the protection of the host and bestowed honour upon him through his presence (Gilsenan;1984;182). Within this context one's behaviour was circumscribed by a whole set of verbal and physical conventions. Gilsenan notes, "There is an immense range of nuance for the location of individuals, through posture, speech etiquette on a social

scale of influence, prestige, family links, age seniority and so forth” (Gilsenan;1984;184). The seating arrangement inside the guesthouse, for example, embodied the hierarchy of village elders; and as each newcomer entered the space, each would assess his relation to that individual and shift his seating position accordingly. The way in which a guest was received was also related to his status. The guesthouse functioned as a space of collective representation with adult every male contributing to its maintenance. The guesthouse was sparsely furnished but with the arrival of guests one of the young men would be sent to fetch mats and cushions, again the quality and number with which one was furnished confirmed the regard in which the visitor was held. These forms of decorum correspond to Connerton’s assertion that social memory, and by analogy a group’s identity, is expressed in bodily practices as well as ritual performances, (the latter which I discussed in relation to Palestinian weddings) (Connerton;1989;39). Similarly, families of the village competed for the honour of providing feasts for important guests. The guesthouse was the only space where outsiders were permitted and thus acted as a way of regulating the spaces which strangers could access within the community. By night the guesthouse had a different atmosphere; it became a space of relaxation and entertainment for men who returned from work on the land, where they would sit and exchange news and stories. During Ramadan every man who was fasting would bring his meal to the guesthouse and participate in communal prayer before breaking his fast. Important occasions such as weddings and funerals were also marked in the guesthouse and accompanied by a corresponding set of rituals.

The descriptions of the function and activities that took place in the village guesthouse show this space to be the place in which the village would represent itself. The modern-day salon can be seen as appropriating the existing space of communal authority. Individual families within a community asserted their power by having their own private salons and by hosting guests- a trend that was already emerging in the villages by the

1920's and 30's when *hamulas* began to establish their own communal spaces. The development of the salon in the form that it is known today emerged in parallel with transformations that the Palestinian family and community underwent during the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. The new prosperity that both rural and urban families acquired enabled them to break away from the extended family unit and its associated living quarters. Wealthy, urban families of Jerusalem moved outside the walls of the old city to create their own compounds, such as the Husseni and Nashashibi quarters which were established in Sheikh Jarrah. Meanwhile in the villages, wealthy peasants began to build two storey homes and included a guestroom on the second floor. The decline of the village guesthouse correlates to a weakening of the ties to the local authority of the community. In a sense, each individual patriarch established himself and his importance through having his own salon. One can therefore argue that the proliferation of salons marks the emptying out of this space in its role as a site of communal authority. With this dispersion there is no longer a centre of communal authority, but rather multiple sites of authority are created and are articulated in individual homes which points to the development towards smaller social units.

The function of the salon in Palestine also needs to be understood in the light of the affects of the Israeli occupation. Public spaces were viewed as unsafe and an area where one was under surveillance. There were very few spaces in which groups of people could meet together and such places would be under the watchful eye of the Israeli authorities or their informers. One of the few places where the community could gather was at places of worship. Coffee shops were another site where male members of the community gathered. However this was not a place owned collectively by the community and was considered to be more of a meeting place. In this context, with the absence of safe public spaces, the salons in individual homes provided a space for people to congregate. Yet due to the fact that the home in Palestinian culture is

perceived as a sacred space- one in which the honour of men and women of the family is maintained through the conduct of its members- the gatherings tended to be limited to family and close friends.

The emptying out of authority and the 'bodies' of the community from the salon means that it is left as a space for the representation of familial and religious identity and social status which are expressed through the aesthetics of the salon and the use of the salon. The salon space is opened up to entertain guests, to celebrate birthdays, births, to receive visitors who come to congratulate newly married couples. It is also used by the *hamulas* to discuss family affairs and for the reception of visitors who come to pay their respects on the occasion of the passing away of family members.

The interior decoration of salons is by no means uniform and differs particularly across class boundaries. Before looking at a selection of salons throughout the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem one can make the following observations. Due to the designated purpose of the room, i.e. to seat the largest possible number of people, the room tends to be arranged in order to facilitate this task. The salon is, in a sense, the male space within the home set aside for the entertainment of the guests of the patriarch; indeed rarely will the woman of the house open up the salon to entertain her guests alone. However, women will be present if the guests are from the extended family or friends of the family. It is worth noting that the seating and service principles of the guesthouse continue to operate in the salon. Respected persons and elders sit nearer the centre of the room while younger members of the family will be seated nearer the room's entrance and are responsible for serving refreshments to the people. If the guests are male then the young boys of the family will perform this function. However if the group is mixed the women of the family in particular the wives of the sons of the patriarch are given this responsibility. These practices of decorum reveal:

"The importance of posture for communal memory is evident. Power and rank

are commonly expressed through certain postures relating to others; from the way in which people group themselves and from the disposition of their bodies relative to the bodies of others, we can deduce the degree of authority which each is thought to enjoy or to which they lay claim" (Connerton;1989;73).

The salon is separated from the rest of the house normally by doors and it is positioned near the entrance of the house in order to maintain the division between the private and public face of the family. The positioning of the salon is intended to allow the women of the family the greatest possible freedom of movement to carry out their domestic tasks inside the home without being visible to the strangers. It is significant to note that although the salon is a male space it is women who organise the visual self-presentation of the family for both public and family consumption through the maintenance, decoration and style of the room. The style of the salon in comparison to that of the guesthouse is described by Michael Gilsenan in the following way:

"Everything scintillates, everything reflects. Everything is its surface, its appearance. The chairs are usually high of the ground (unlike the mats and low divans of the *maglis* [guesthouse]). All the wood is covered in gold paint or gilt. The seats and backs are in shining real or imitation silk...The tables are in polished marble as is the floor. All around there are knick knacks-pieces of china, ornate and coloured vases, decorative baubles of one kind or another ornamental hubble- bubble pipes, a riot of reflecting surfaces. Perched high on his chair the visitor catches the endless reflection of himself from all angles and a thousand glittering sources. The image is all" (Gilsenan;1984;184).

These effects work in conjunction with the idea of the separation of the public and private realms of the home. The reflective surfaces serve to obstruct the gaze of the outsider who cannot penetrate beyond the scintillating surfaces. In certain cases salons also present edited versions of family histories; exam certificates or sports achievements are hung on the walls. Photographs taken at important stages in family members' lives such as at weddings, graduations etc, will be on display and portraits of former family members may also be among the collections. Salons will also contain a piece of religious script in the form of a prayer, or have a Koran on display. As often as not the salon will also have a vitrine in which the means of hospitality- glasses, cups and saucers- are on show, these are rarely taken out of the case, and lie waiting for the

arrival, of that 'particular' guest, who is sufficiently important that it is fitting to serve them from the display case. However, because the salon is not used on a daily basis the objects, photographs and furniture give the impression that they have been suspended in time, giving these rooms a dated quality. The pristine qualities of the room in which all signs of human use are swiftly dusted away tends to give these rooms a melancholic atmosphere that seems to uncannily evoke the sense that these were formerly sites of communal authority.

As much as salons follow certain aesthetics, in every home they are infused with personal idiosyncrasies, this comes to light if we examine the following examples which are a selection of descriptions of salons. I visited the salons as part of my fieldwork in Palestine during the autumn of 1996 in which I visited forty Palestine homes in the West Bank, Gaza Strip, and Jerusalem.

In Dehisheh Refugee Camp the salon is filled with large settees which encircle three quarters of the room (fig. 56). A table in the middle is used to serve refreshments and there are several small side tables that are used for each guest. Opposite the visitors is a long table with photographs over it; the set-up recalls an altar. The portraits, in many ways, complete the circular seating arrangement of the room and serve to constitute the presence and authority of the elders of the family in their absence. The image of exile and Jerusalem is also displayed among these images as represented in the poster of the well-known painting by Sliman Mansour, 'The Camel of Hardships'. Alongside it hangs a religious prayer. Upon the altar are placed several china vases, which are likely to have been gifts, as they are a conventional present.

In Deir al Balah Refugee Camp in Gaza, the salon is distinguished by the presence of the vitrine case, while plastic chairs are unloaded upon the arrival of guests (fig. 57). The vitrine case contains plastic trays which are used for serving traditional meals

when all present eat from the same *sannaa*.¹³ The cabinet also holds glasses, and an *irgila*,¹⁴ fake flowers and a Mr. Chef box containing items for the preparation of food.

The salon of an upper class Nablus family conforms more closely to Michael Gilson's description of the salon, being full of reflective surfaces (fig. 58). The room is divided into two sections: a dining area and a seating area. The placement of every item in the room is carefully considered so as to give an overall impression of a luxurious room of Arab-Islamic culture. No objects or images relating to family history are on display; in fact little is revealed about them judging from the contents of the room. Oriental rugs hang on the wall, while the vitrine case is faceted with mirrors that serve to refract and multiply the image of the cups and glasses which appear to have never been used (fig. 59). These vitrine cases are often transformed into women's memory cases, since between the crockery women place photographs, trinkets, figurines and other knick-knacks (as in fig. 60 and 61) thereby personalising and feminising the formal space of the salon.

In one of the homes I visited in Jerusalem, the salon was dedicated to their martyred son who died in the Intifada. As fig. 62 shows, the wall niche is covered with portraits of him and one large portrait overwhelms the space in a way in which the dead dwarf the living. The space is transformed into a shrine for their son, and directs the activities of the salon towards the remembrance of the deceased.

Political identity is displayed in the space often through a photograph of a family member with President Yassir Arafat. While national identity may be displayed with Palestinian embroidery, maps, panels depicting the Palestinian wedding, old keys, old irons, coffee pots, storage jars, Bedouin rugs, Often these items are displayed low on

¹³ *Sannaa* is a large tray that is used for serving food on which people eat collectively from.

¹⁴ *Irgila* is a water pipe used for smoking tobacco.

the ground while the furniture in the room will be more Europeanised (fig. 63). Maha Sacca's home was the most extreme example of this whereby the salon overflows with objects from Palestinian culture (fig. 64). It is often middle and upper class families who favour the aesthetics of Palestinian heritage, which are conversely unlikely to be found in the homes in refugee camps.

As a way of bringing together the ideas that were explored in this chapter, and by way of conclusion, I would like to move from talking about one room in the home to the whole domestic environment. I will close by looking at Tal es Safa, a residential complex that opened in the last few days of the writing of this chapter.

A Vision of Home?

Tal es Safa's marketing brochure is designed as an old photo album the cover of which is meant to recall old leather bound albums (see fig. 65 which shows a page the catalogue). Tal es Safa is presented in the following way: "Welcome to Tal es Safa. Here, in an authentic 19th century ambiance, is a new model of community..." The new model of community is set in a residential complex built on twenty- two *dunums* of land near Ramallah. The brochure describes the location in these terms, "We found the perfect spot for this new model community...Here, gazelle still roam yet there is the lively intellectual, social, commercial and spiritual resources of Birzeit, Ramallah, and Jerusalem just a short drive away". The developers image themselves as having found a piece of untouched landscape in Palestine only inhabited by wildlife upon which to start a new community, yet at the same time this place is close to all the other things one may need from the outside world. The brochure goes on to explain,

"Perhaps you remember your grandparents' village- or their stories? How the village hugged its houses, terraces and orchards tight against the slopping hills? Memories of secret childhood pathways through twisting lanes along jasmine vined walls...How each house embraced a family around a hearth...we remembered and we envisioned a modern village to support a new generation's lifestyle".

They suggest that it is these memories which have helped them envision this new residential complex in the image of the village. Here at last the imagined community is realised and those who possess similar memories qualify to be part of the clientele. Well if not, it does not really matter, for they have remembered for us as all Palestinians have their roots in a mythological village filled with orchards and jasmine.

What precisely is the model community that is being offered? Tal es Safa claims that it is “More than a home, it’s a lifestyle”. It suggests this way of living is an informed choice from other ways of living and that this residential complex is unique as it is built with “memory and vision”. To live in Tal es Safa is not just to live in a new home, it is also a vision of return, for the album invites us by saying “Welcome to Tal es Safa...Welcome Home”. This environment is “clean, quite safe and green”; the implication must be then that other places in Palestine are ‘dirty, unsafe and barren’, and the village is “near respected schools” again implying that there are other not so respected schools in Palestine. The brochure explains all the modern amenities that are available including round the clock security for a village that is enclosed by a stone wall with access only through electronically operated gates.

The several thousand-dollar monthly rental charge disqualifies the majority of Palestinians who live in Palestine from being inhabitants of this ‘village’ which draws its name from an archaeological site near two destroyed villages near Safad, suggesting that it is a recreation of those villages. At most, ordinary Palestinians might find work in this ‘village’ as cleaners, maintenance or administrative staff. It can safely be said then that this re-creation of a village is specifically for the rich, particularly the rich Palestinians who may desire to return to live in Palestine. It is fantasies of return and the village that the marketing of this residential complex utilises. This community is secluded from the outside world by its electronically operated gates. While the community is one in which each separate family is imaged in the brochure as gathered

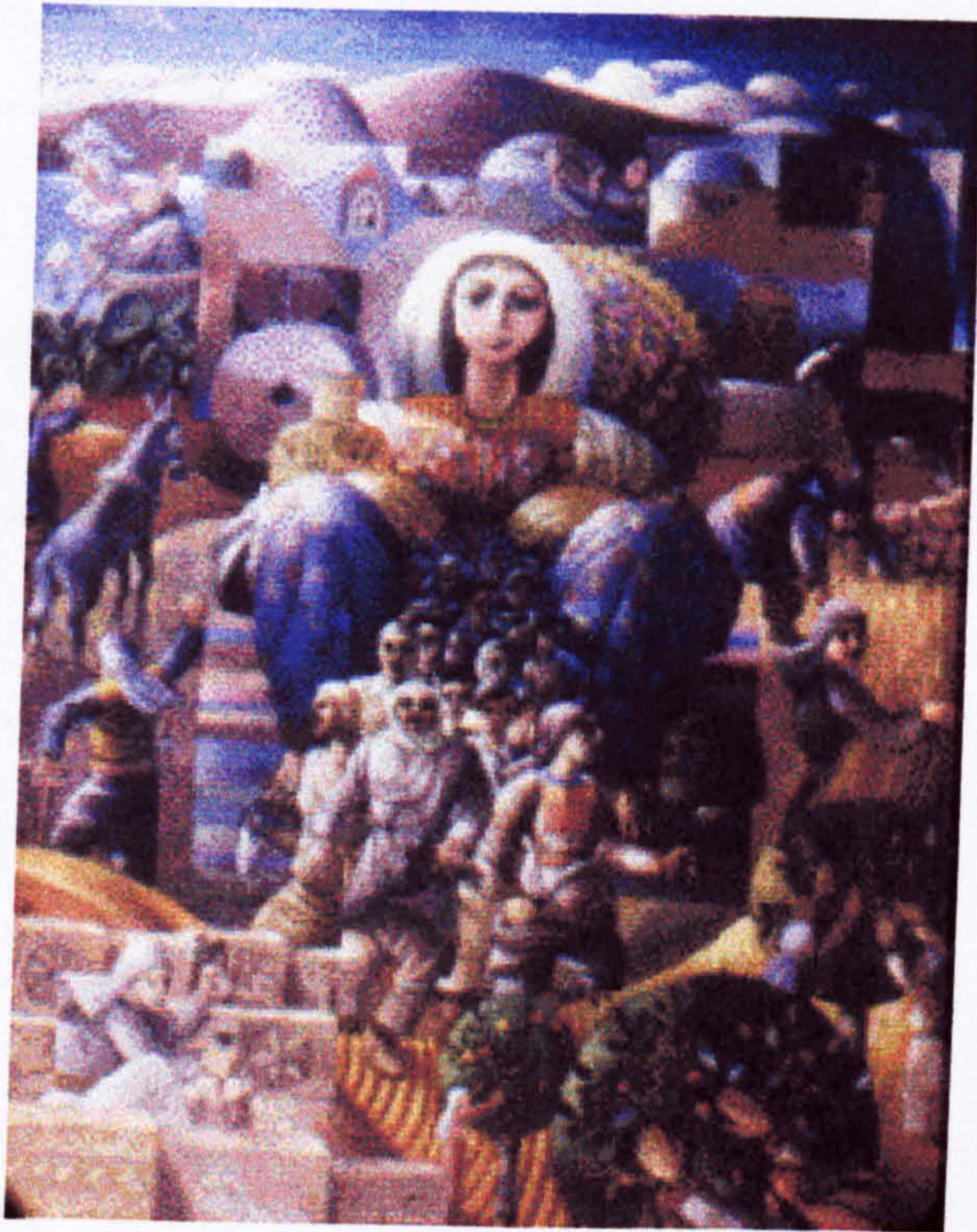
around its own fireplace. This community is not distinguished by its social relations but by its economic resources. In its design it projects on to the communities of the past the model of the contemporary privatised nuclear family.

'Safa' means purity. Purity of community should be regarded with caution, for it involves the drawing of boundaries between them and us, boundaries that are potentially threatening for a society. Tal es Safa perhaps confirms Glenn Bowman's observation that Palestinians in different locations and with divergent experiences have come to imagine Palestine differently and it is not necessary the case that they will recognise one another on arrival in the homeland (Bowman;1994;165). If this holds true, then Palestine becomes a site for the competing imaginings of different Palestinians, which is in fact what we are now currently witnessing in Palestine; however these groups are far from being on a level playing field.



Nabil Anani,
Palestinian Village,
Watercolours, 50 x 35cm, 1989.

Fig. 42



Sliman Mansour,
The Village Awakens,
Oil on canvas, 80 x 120cm, 1991.

Fig. 43



Khalil Rayan,
Landscape from Tamra,
Oil on canvas, 60 x 80cm, c.1983.

Fig. 44



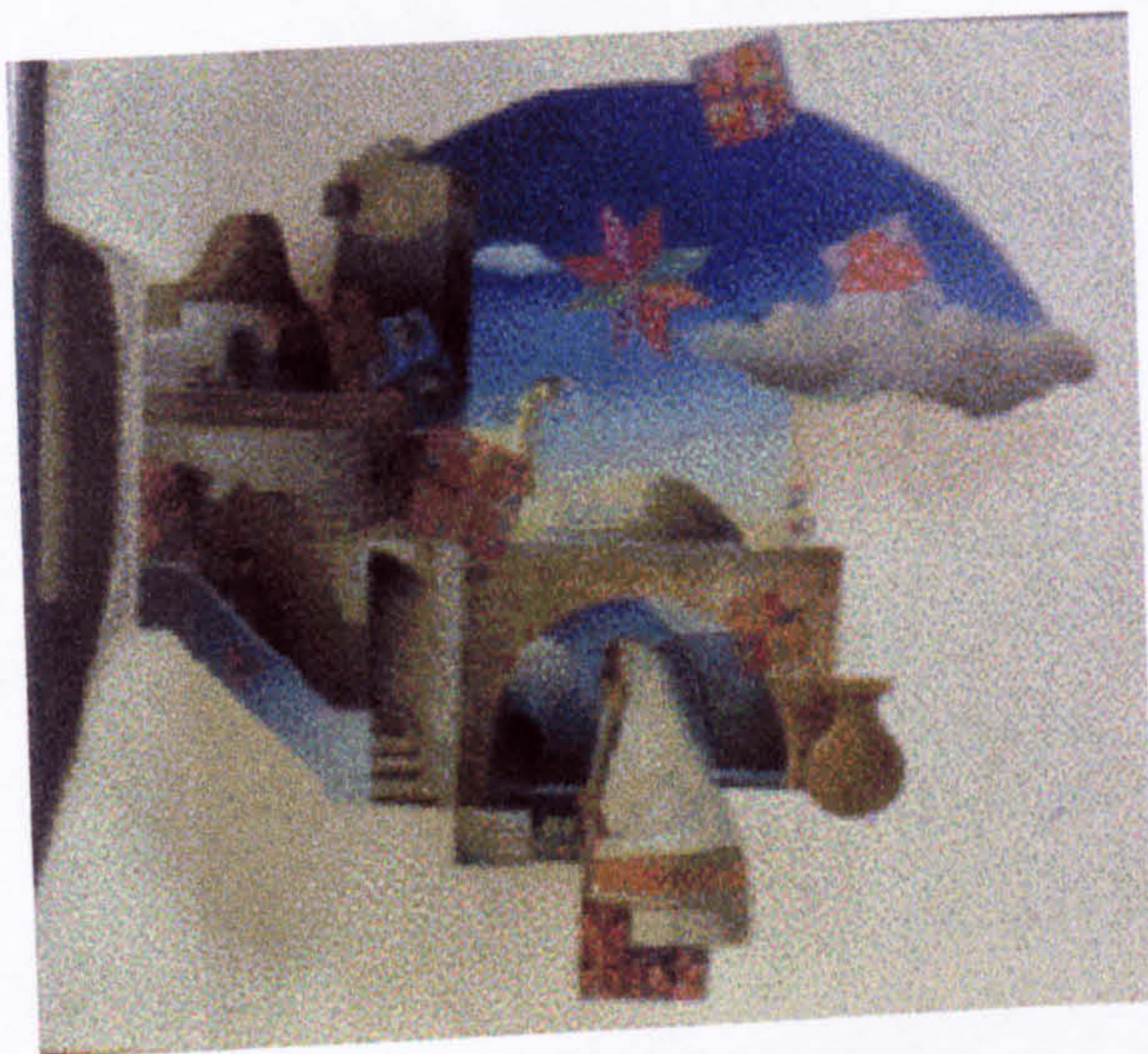
Ibrahim Hijazi
Untitled
Oil on canvas, 90 x 75cm, 1995.

Fig. 45



Nabil Anani,
Palestinian Village,
Watercolour, 40 x 60cm, 1981.

Fig. 46



Sliman Mansour,
Palestine Village,
Oil on wood, 130x130cm, 1986.

Fig. 47



Saed Hilmi,
A Face From My Country,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 100cm, 1996.

Fig. 48



George Anastas,
Patience,
Building block, 20 x 31 x 50 cm, 1985.

Fig. 49



Mohammad abu Sittah,
Man From Gaza,
Oil on canvas, 79 x 108cm, 1986.

Fig. 50



Sliman Mansour,
Untitled
Oil on canvas, 90x70cm, 1986.

Fig. 51



Sliman Mansour,
Taboun Bread,
Oil on wood, 41 x 50cm, 1980.

Fig. 52



Postcard Produced by Maha Sacca

Fig. 53



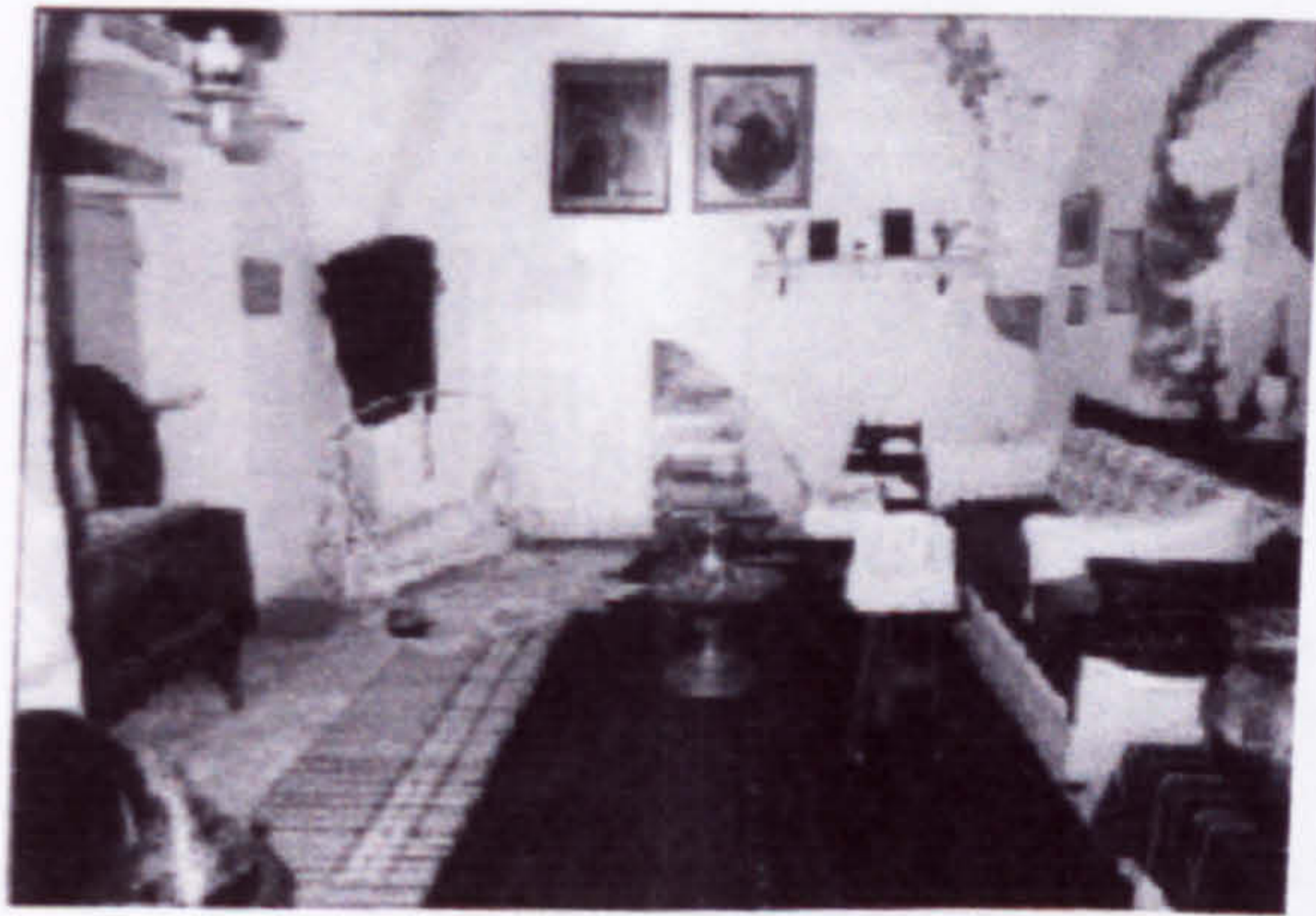
Postcard Produced by Maha Sacca

Fig. 54



Moorish Women in Their Quarters,
(From, "The Colonial Harem". By Malek
Alloula, University of Minnesota Press,
Minneapolis and London, 1986, p. 33).

Fig. 55



Central room in the Bethlehem Museum,
(from: Museum catalogue, Jerusalem, 1985, p16).

Fig. 56



Salon in Deheyshieh Refugee Camp, 1996.
(Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 57



Women in salon in Derbalyeh Refugee Camp, Gaza- note the vetrine case in the background of the photo, 1996. (Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 58



Salon in upper class home in Nablus, 1996.
(Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 59



Vitrine case in salon in upper class home in Nablus, 1996. (Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 60



Vitrine case in salon in Jerusalem, 1996.
(Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 61



Vitrine case in salon in a house in the old city of Jerusalem, 1996. (Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 60

Fig. 62



Salon in home of a martyr, in the old city of Jerusalem, 1996. (Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 63



Objects in a middle class Christian Palestinian home in Bethlehem, 1996. (Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 64



Maha Sacca's salon in Beit Jala, 1996.
(Photographed by Tina Sherwell).

Fig. 65



Image from the brochure of *Tel es Sufa* residential complex, 1999.

Fig. 65

Representing Palestine as Woman; Gender and the National Discourse.

“We render special tribute to the brave Palestinian woman, guardian of sustenance and life, keeper of our people’s perennial flame” (Proclamation of the Independent Palestinian State delivered by the PNC, Algiers, November 15th 1988, quoted in Beinun and Lockman;1989;399).

“Enough for me to die on her earth

To be buried in her

To melt and vanish into her soil

Then sprout forth as a flower

Played with by a child from my country

Enough for me to remain

In my country’s embrace

To be in her close as a handful of dust

A sprig of grass,

A flower”

(Fadwa Tuqan in Jayyusi;1992;314).

In the first chapter we saw the way in which landscape aesthetics evolved in Palestinian art and how the rise of Palestinian nationalism contoured the representation of the landscape. The second chapter focused on which features of the landscape Palestinians drew upon to create their national symbols. The same chapter examined how Palestinians imaged themselves as a people who had historic roots in the landscape through the use of the figure of the peasant. This chapter builds upon the ideas presented in the previous chapters and continues to explore the question of how Palestine is represented. However, this chapter differs from the others as it focuses

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(Fadwa Tuqan in Jayyusi;1992;314).

In the first chapter we saw the way in which landscape aesthetics evolved in Palestinian art and how the rise of Palestinian nationalism contoured the representation of the landscape. The second chapter focused on which features of the landscape Palestinians drew upon to create their national symbols. The same chapter examined how Palestinians imaged themselves as a people who had historic roots in the landscape through the use of the figure of the peasant. This chapter builds upon the ideas presented in the previous chapters and continues to explore the question of how Palestine is represented. However, this chapter differs from the others as it focuses

specifically on the issue of gender. I intend to demonstrate that Palestine is imaged as a woman. It is through the representation of Palestine as a woman that the identity of the homeland is constructed. The depiction of Palestine as a woman is particularly significant for how national subjects articulate their feelings of belonging and love for the homeland. Under the sign of 'woman' there exist many different figures, therefore it is important to distinguish which 'types' of women are used to inform the creation of a feminine homeland in the Palestinian national discourse. Palestine is most commonly represented through three female figures: 'the virgin', 'the beloved' and 'the mother'. Each one of these figures is used to image the different qualities of the homeland and the relationship between the land and its inhabitants. The mother, who becomes the motherland, invests the image of Palestine with maternal symbolism. Palestine as the Motherland is a space of nurturing, sustenance, and the relationship between homeland and subject is one of maternal love. The motherland is associated with idea of Mother Earth and Nature, and is used to create an image of the richness and (re) productivity of the land and a cyclical way of life. The mother is also seen as the space of cultural authenticity and the preserver of traditions. The metaphor of the virgin is used to develop the idea of the purity and sacredness of the homeland. The image of the virgin is twinned with the figure of the martyr and carries religious analogies. The martyr is imaged as sacrificing himself for the protection of the virgin homeland while his death metaphorically inseminates the land and both she and he are imaged as bride and bridegroom. The sacrifice of oneself for the nation is akin to a marital union, a metaphor which draws upon the importance of marriage in Palestinian society and the image of paradise in the local Islamic discourse. The metaphor of the beloved uses feelings of emotional and physical desire, as well as sexual love to express the love and desire for the homeland. The relationship between the subject and the homeland is thus personal and private. All these ideas are to be explored in this chapter. The representation of Palestine as 'mother', 'virgin' and 'beloved' are all constructed from a position of exile or when the homeland has been under threat. As was noted

previously, exile, as Glenn Bowman argues, is also experienced by those Palestinians who live in Palestine under occupation, thus such representations are created by Palestinians resident in Palestine (Bowman;1994;139). The gendering of Palestine is not only significant to the study of Palestine's national imagery, but also has implications for the ways in which agency is constituted in the national struggle. Agency is not neutral; rather agency should be seen as conceived and articulated along gender lines, which contour the way in which men and women perform their roles as national subjects. The issue of agency raises the question of how articulations of Palestinian femininity and masculinity are staged and contested by national subjects. Thus in this chapter I intend to explore how conceiving the homeland in feminine terms contours the ways in which the concept of belonging and how the struggle for national liberation are expressed and performed by Palestinian men and women.

In order to gain a greater understanding of how the gendering of Palestine operates as part of the national discourse, one needs to situate the issue of nationalism in a wider theoretical framework. Such a framework will take into consideration the basis of national formations, for it is not only the Palestinian homeland which is gendered; most nations are valorised in terms of motherlands or fatherlands. India, for example is depicted as Mother India, Britain as Britannia, France as Liberte and Germany as a fatherland. It would seem that the gendering of the nation points to a structural aspect of nationalism that contours the relationship of subjects to a national formation.

If we think of Palestinian nationalism as a third world anti-colonial struggle we open up ways for understanding the development of its national discourse and the gendering of the homeland. European nations did not arise from the same historical circumstances as nations in Africa, the Middle East and Asia. The latter came into being as part of a movement to overthrow the European colonisers who were exploiting native populations and the land's natural resources. The anti-colonial struggles can be seen

to have had a significant influence on the discourse of nationalism in the third world since each colonised community was attempting to define what distinguished it from its colonisers. These differences were often used for the articulation of national identities. Nonetheless, each third world nationalism has its own specificities, as Antony Smith suggests, “ Chameleon-like, nationalism takes its colour from its context. Capable of endless manipulations this eminently malleable nexus of beliefs, sentiments and symbols can be understood only in each specific instance” (Smith;1993;79). By drawing comparisons with the histories of other third world nationalisms, insights can be gained into the particular nationalism under study.

In his study entitled ‘Conceiving the Masculine Gender and Palestinian Nationalism’, Joseph Massad suggests that, “Although anti-colonial agency defines itself in opposition to European nationalism, it does not escape implication in the same narrative” (Massad;1995;468). Third world anti colonial struggles were using the form of the nation-state to overthrow the colonisers. However, because nationalism is conceptualised upon the differences between the nation’s people and ‘others’ who do not belong to the nation, it has the same structural characteristics of other nationalisms.

Meyda Yegenoglu elaborates upon these ideas in her writing, stating that:

“one of the characteristic features of nationalism is a basic split that divides it; while it aspires to become modern and achieve the valued qualities of Enlightenment, it at the same time asserts its autonomous identity by claiming an authentic, pure and uncontaminated origin. It therefore simultaneously accepts and refutes the epistemic and moral dominance of the West” (Yegenoglu;1998;123).

Her statement points to the existence of a structural ambivalence inherent in the foundations of a nation. I suggest that the symptoms of this ambivalence manifest themselves in the representations of women.

Both Massad and Yegenoglu draw on the seminal works of Partha Chatterjee, whose study of nationalism in the Indian subcontinent provides important insights into the

ways in which third world nationalists conceived of themselves vis a vis their colonisers. Chatterjee proposes that during the period of anti colonial struggle the 'East' (which in this case means India but is also applicable to the Middle East), needed to identify what distinguished it from the 'West', in order to build the foundations of its national identity (Chatterjee;1993;120). The task that was undertaken by the colonised should not be underestimated, for they had to overthrow two forms of domination, the physical and the psychological. Franz Fanon has written extensively on this issue highlighting, in particular, the psychological effects colonialism had upon the subject population.¹ In most cases the European colonisers viewed the 'natives' as inferior and uncivilised. The colonisers saw themselves as the representation of a civilised and an advanced community, (Young;1995;36). Thus the differences between themselves and the natives were constructed in hierarchical terms. The attitudes of the colonisers manifested themselves in a whole body of racist practices towards the natives. In some cases the natives were seen as earlier forms of civilised man. Those who held this opinion believed that it was theoretically possible for the natives to develop and reach the same stage which European man had evolved(Young;1995;33), while others believed that the natives constituted a separate race altogether (Todorov;1993;103). Throughout the Middle East and Asia, the general colonial policy was more pragmatic it was based on the development of a local elite. Educational institutions were established and played a key role in fostering European values among the population. The individuals who graduated from these schools and colleges were able to find employment within the colonial administrations. These elites aped the styles of the colonisers in an endeavour to be like the 'white man' and as a way of achieving power over their own communities. The success of the colonial strategies is evident today as the former colonisers benefited from their strategies in several ways. Firstly, they sowed the seeds of division within societies by using the

¹See for example his 'Black Skins White Masks' and his 'Wretched of the Earth' in which he elaborates upon the psychological subjugation of the native and the desires that colonialism fosters within the native.

classic principle of divide and rule. Secondly, they created a bourgeoisie class which was estranged from its roots and which looked to Europe as its model. With this bourgeois class the colonisers established a class of mediators and representatives of European interests. These strategies are pivotal to the stranglehold of neo-imperialism that new nations have found themselves in today.

Chatterjee suggests that anti-colonial struggles needed to articulate the essence of their identity for they feared if they did not the distinction between themselves and the 'West' would be lost. The nationalists acknowledged that the superiority of the West lay in "science, technology, rational forms of economic organisation and modern methods of statecraft- these [had] given the European countries the strength to subjugate the non-European people and to impose their dominance over the whole world" (Chatterjee;1993;120). The East, however, claimed its strength lay in the realm of the spiritual. The difference between the material and the spiritual was perceived as the distinction between the inner and outer realms. The inner space was the location of the nation's true identity. The distinctions between the inner and outer realms were represented by associating the material with the public world and the spiritual with the home. "The world is a treacherous terrain of the pursuits of material interests, where practical considerations reign supreme. It also is typically the domain of the male. The home in its essence must remain unaffected by the profane activities of the material world- and woman is its representation" (Chatterjee;1993;120). The difference between the outer and inner realm was articulated as a binary opposition, which was structured around a gender difference. In this equation, national identity was represented by the sphere of women, which nationalists set out to define.

"The world was where European power had challenged the non European people and, by virtue of its superior material culture, had subjugated them. But the nationalists asserted that it had failed to colonize the inner, essential identity of the East which lay in its distinctive superior, spiritual culture. Here

the East was undominated, sovereign and master of its own fate” (Chatterjee;121;1993).

Nationalist ideologies are fundamentally based upon a distinction between ‘them’ and ‘us’. What distinguished the ‘East’ in this discourse was the uncontaminated and protected sphere of the home. Chatterjee argues that this division provided the “ideological sieve” (Chatterjee;1993;117) through which judgements were made, and continue to be made regarding what is to be appropriated from the ‘West’ and what is not. The elements which are appropriated from the ‘West’ are those which will not contaminate the inner sanctuary of the home, and by analogy the nation’s identity. In this discourse the home must remain the space of tradition, while the outside world is permitted to change. Thus change and transformation for women always become a national debate as their roles and positions were seen as an integral part of the nation’s identity. The place women occupy as the bearers of a nation’s identity can be noted in the ways in which men and women in third world countries dress. Women are often found wearing traditional garments such as the sari or the *thob*, while men have adopted European styles of dress and wear shirts and ties or t-shirts and jeans. If home is considered the location of identity, and if this is the space with which women are associated, then consequently women become central to the construction and representation of a nation’s identity. Similarly, the way in which the home was conceived was important for how the home-land was imagined.

In the conflict between the colonisers and the colonised the women of the colonised were a space upon which the conflict was fought. European colonisers used the condition of ‘Eastern’ women as evidence of the backwardness of ‘Eastern’ societies. Lord Cromer, Governor of Egypt at the turn of the twentieth century argued that the lack of civilisation among the Egyptian people was evident in their practice of veiling and segregating their women (Ahmed;1992;153). As Leila Ahmed highlights, “The idea that ‘Other’ men, men in colonized societies or societies beyond the borders of the

civilised West, oppressed women was to be used, in the rhetoric of colonialism to render morally justifiable its project of undermining or eradicating the cultures of colonised peoples” (Ahmed;1992;151). The inaccessibility to the harem and ‘Eastern’ women, cloaked ‘Eastern’ women with a whole sense of mystery. The space of the harem which foreign men were unable to access, as entry was only permitted to male members of the family, became a space for the projection of fantasies. On the one hand, ‘Eastern’ women were pitied and seen as slaves to the masters of their household. Such ideas were expressed in literature and visual representations.² On the other hand, the harem was imagined as a “forbidden world of women, of sexuality caged and inaccessible” (Graham- Brown;1988;70). In the projected fantasies of the Europeans, the harem was imaged as a space of unrestrained sexuality, and as a place populated with subservient women. The harem, as Sarah Graham Brown notes, “was identified with complete male domination over women’s lives and the apparently untrammelled sexual pleasures of four wives and unlimited number of concubines. The strict control of women’s appearance and behaviour in public was assumed to be the corollary of unbridled licence within the harem” (Graham-Brown;1988;71). In the European imagination, the control of Arab women was believed to serve as a way to restrain their insatiable sexual appetite.

These negative representations of Arab women were countered in the national movements of the colonised through their valorised images of women. Thus, in defining their national identity, nationalists set about to reclaim the representation of their community’s women by ascribing them positive attributes. Thus the colonisers highly sexualised image of Arab women found its reply in images of purity; and the uncontaminated figure of the mother, the virgin and the beloved as in Palestinian nationalism. Accusations of the backwardness of the ‘East’ were met with programmes

²See for example the paintings of Orientalists, the most famous among which are the works of Jean-Auguste-Dominique Ingres and Jean Leon Gerome of the French School.

to advance women's education within the limits of what was seen as suitable in the national agenda for making of them good mothers and wives of the nation.

'Eastern' women became a focal point for the civilising missions of the 'West'. The desire to penetrate the harem and unveil the 'Eastern' women was the desire on the part of the coloniser to have complete domination over the 'East'. The bemoaning of the plight of the 'Eastern' woman can be understood to have been merely a means of gaining access to the area of 'eastern' life that eluded the colonisers. In Algeria for example,

"On May 13, 1958, a coup, by a group of colonial generals displaced the civilian governor of Algeria. The same day, they organised a rally in front of the governor's palace and featured the unveiling of a group of Algerian women. The staging of such a performance was meant to symbolize the conquest of the last but foremost obstacle in the total capitulation of Algerian culture"
(Yegenoglu;1998;142).

Thus the struggle for power was fought out on the space of the colonised woman's body. This strategy repeated itself in different places, including Palestine.

The significance given to women by the colonisers served to reinforce the idea among the colonised struggling for independence that their women embodied the nation's identity. Accounts of the war of 1948 suggest that the Palestinian community and Palestinian men, in particular, were forced to choose between protecting their two spaces of honour: their land and their women. In many instances, faced with this choice they decided to flee their villages in order to safeguard their women. Kitty Warnock notes that men were seen as responsible for, "protecting women from all dangers, but particularly from sexual impurity. The supremacy of this demand over other aspects of honour was demonstrated in 1948, when many Palestinian families who fled their homes did so primarily out of the fear that their women would be raped by Zionist soldiers" (Warnock;1990;23). The events surrounding the massacre of the population of Deir Yassin fuelled the flames of fear among Palestinians. According to

the reports by Red Cross officials at Deir Yassin women were sexually assaulted and young children butchered (Sayigh;1979;79). These events sent a clear message to the Palestinians that Arab codes of war where women and children were left unharmed were not valued (Sayigh;1979;79). Zionists had carefully studied the norms and values of the Arabs thus enabling them to locate the vulnerability of the Palestinians, thereby making it easy for them to terrorize them (Warnock;1990;23). As Rosemary Sayigh notes, "Men now had to choose: their country or their family. It was through such methods that a people with a thirty year tradition of resistance to British occupation and Zionist immigration were terrorized into flight" (Sayigh;1979;76).

With the loss of the land in 1948, Palestinian men lost a significant source of their honour. As a consequence the source of honour was transferred even more explicitly to women. One refugee woman who had been an activist in the 1936-39 rebellion observed,

"The Palestinian used to be much more advanced in his own country and women were more independent and freer... but after 1948 this changed: in the camps the Palestinian became ultra-strict, even fanatic about the honour of his women. Perhaps this was because he had lost everything that gave his life meaning and 'honour' was the only possession remaining to him (Antonius;1983;72).

For men, the loss of the land forced them to take up work in Israel in order to support their families. The experience of working in Israel served to re-enforce rather than dilute their sense of Palestinian identity, as one worker said, "because I am humiliated every single day by soldiers who investigate, search and question me at the road blocks I know that I am different, that I am 'the other' and that I am proud to be Palestinian" (Mayer;1994;69). At the same time however, the powerlessness and alienation experienced in the workplace meant that 'home' took on an additional significance as, Kitty Warnock highlights, "At home they [men] can maintain their self respect, succoured by an environment whose values are their own. Honour and power

might become crucial to men's sense of identity when they have so little else upon which to base dignity and status" (Warnock;1990;52). Thus home became one of the few spaces in which men could exercise control and because home was associated with women and the control of women, it took on an added significance after the loss of the land and during life under occupation. It is important to take into consideration that in Palestinian society prior to and after 1948 individuals did and do not solely represent themselves, rather it is the case that they carry the responsibility of representing their families. This sense of obligation means that a person is never completely free in his or her conduct. Within this system of mutual obligation, women constitute part of the representation of their men-folk. Male honour (*ard*) is partially derived from the moral and sexual conduct of the women of his family. The other sources of a man's honour comes from a man's conduct in the community and his ownership of land. The significance placed upon women is seen to justify men's freedom to monitor and safeguard their women. Women therefore are represented as mothers, sisters, wives and daughters. Female identity comes from their relationship with the men of their family. Both sides in the conflict recognise the importance afforded to women and thus, as I have described, women were constructed as a target throughout the conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians.

The attack on women has continued to be practiced as a tactic of war throughout the Israeli occupation and particularly during the intifada. In prison women's bodies were subject to numerous forms of abuse, ranging from sleep deprivation to torture. Women in jail have testified to sexual harassment and having been threatened with rape. For Palestinian women the fact they represent their family's honour increased the stress factor of such harassment. The sensitivity surrounding honour was often exploited by interrogators in an attempt to obtain confessions from women prisoners (Mayer;1994;79). Thus Palestinian women were used as medium through which to

attack Palestinian men and Palestinian society. The following account provides an example of what one woman was subjected to:

“My interrogation began. First the investigators tried to demoralise me by letting me hear the voice of my father shouting “Please my daughter they are killing me! For your brothers sake, help me”. In fact it wasn’t really him, it was an actor on a tape recording, but I’d never heard my father’s voice shouting and crying like that so I didn’t know that it wasn’t him. They sat me on a chair in a small dark room. One of them would come and grab my hair and shake my head, one would hold my mouth open, the other came and spat into it...Then they cursed me, called me a prostitute, said they would spread it all over the newspapers that they had found me pregnant, so my family would disown me, but that didn’t affect me...Then one day they told me to take my clothes off. This was the first thing I found myself unable to do. I was shaking. A big dark ugly man came in with a stick, and I knew he was going to rape me with it... [then] I could see that he wasn’t going to do anything... All eight interrogators came in, to fondle me, laugh at me, and touch my breasts” (Warnock;1990;150-151).

Hind’s abuse continued and one of her breasts was slashed by another interrogator. She resisted confessing and the authorities were only able to charge her with being a member of the PLO, an outlawed organisation at that time³.

We can discern that the spaces of women’s bodies are constructed in national discourses as the boundaries of the community and are seen as vulnerable to attack and thus necessitate their protection by men (Yuval-Davis;1989;9). In turn, women’s bodies and sexuality are conceived as the boundaries of male honour, spaces that men attempt to control. The conceptualising of women’s bodies in these ways are not specific to the Palestinian context for in numerous other conflicts women are seen as the boundary of the community and are attacked as a way of humiliating and conquering the other side in the struggle. ⁴

³For other accounts of women’s experiences in prison see ‘Making Women Talk’ by Teresa Thornhill.

⁴Ronit Lentin discusses in her introduction to ‘Gender and Catastrophe’ the way in which communities are attacked in conflicts through their women, through means of “slavery, sexual slavery, mass rape, mass sterilisation” (1997;2). Her book is a collection of essays which explore the gendering of conflicts and catastrophes.

The Martyr and the Virgin

This notion of honour and purity is relevant to the representation of the homeland as a woman. Social values such as those associated with male honour are mobilised for inspiring men to sacrifice themselves for the liberation of the nation and the homeland. In this discourse the martyr was imaged as dying while defending or for the love of the virgin homeland. However, his death was not represented as a sombre occasion, but as a wedding. The suggestion implied in this rhetoric was that young men of marriageable age were willing to sacrifice themselves for the birth of the new nation. Such popular imagery is evident in a painting by Fayez al Hassan entitled, The Martyr's Wedding (1992, oil on canvas) (fig. 67). In this image young men are carrying the martyr to his burial site/wedding. (In traditional Palestinian weddings it is often the case that the bridegroom will be carried on the shoulders of his peers as part of the procession to collect the bride). A giant female figure stands in the background with her fluttering white veil creating the contours of the land, which becomes almost a heavenly space. The composition of the piece and her position in particular suggest that she is the virgin bride that the martyr is sacrificing himself to. In literature this kind of imagery was also utilised as in the poem 'My Country on Partition Day,' by Abu Salma who wrote, "We've woven your wedding clothes with red thread dyed from our own blood", (Abu Salma in Jayyusi;1992;95). Ajaj Nuwiyhid, writing in the 1930's, also employed the image of the virgin bride as a way to describe the land and his commitment to its liberation, " We have asked to become engaged to a girl/ Her bride price is very expensive/ But she deserves it/ Here is our answer:/ We will fight for the sake of your eyes. Death is our aim and we have many men" (Nuwiyhid in Katz;1996;90). This type of imagery also infused political rhetoric, in a leaflet issued by Hamas during the intifada they wrote, "Every day the earth absorbs the blood of the righteous. Kneel in front of the graves and bow before the martyrs of grace. This is part of the price of

pride, honour, liberation and salvation. This is the dowry of those with lovely eyes a substitute for paradise” (Leaflet no.2 in Mishal and Aharoni;1994;206).

When funerals of martyrs were allowed to take place under occupation, the funeral and commemorations of a martyr’s death differed from those rites of a normal death.⁵ Martyrs were not washed but buried in the clothes in which they died. The family of the deceased normally announced the death of a martyr to the community and spent three days receiving guests who brought sweets, a custom associated with weddings not funerals. The songs sung at the martyrs’ funerals were traditional wedding songs which were transformed to praise the martyr. If we look at the portrait of the martyr hung in the salon that was discussed in the previous chapter, we can see that a red bow has been placed on to the photo in the place where his finger is as a representation of his wedding ring (fig. 63). What should be noted is that during the intifada Palestinians transformed the meanings of rituals and events. Thus death and grief over the loss of life were transformed into their opposite, a celebration of life and the renewal of the community as was traditionally celebrated at weddings. This strategy of transforming the meaning of events was noted by Julie Peetet; she argues that the beating and imprisonment of young Palestinians men during the intifada which would normally be considered humiliating, were seen by young men as a rite of passage into manhood and initiation into the national struggle (Peetet;1994;33).

Weddings were traditionally the main ritual in which the community gathered to celebrate itself around the figure of the woman. With the intifada this tradition was replaced by funerals which became the space of communal gatherings, as traditional weddings and celebrations were not held throughout the time of the intifada. Couples who did marry during the intifada did so in private, holding low-key celebrations. The

⁵ The Israeli Authorities did not allow public funerals to take place during the Intifada for fear that they would be accompanied by disturbances and would serve to fuel the perpetuation of the uprising.

difficult economic circumstances of the intifada also meant that the sums given as a dowries were lower (Darweish;1989;56). Artists like Mohammad abu Sittah developed new images of the intifada bride, and the homeland as a bride in his painting of The Intifada Bride (1989, oil on canvas) (fig. 68). In this image the bride's gown is embellished with the heads of masked youths, while her veil is a *kufiyeh* and her tiara a ring of stones. Perhaps she is supposed to signify the homeland that carries the young martyrs upon her body. Her simple dowry also points to the transformation of traditions; she is covered in the humble signs of the revolution rather than the traditional gold jewellery with which she would have been presented with as part of rituals of her wedding ceremony. These signs of the revolution suggest that her dowry is the promise of the nation and the security it will give her. This reading arises from the idea that a dowry was meant to provide a woman with economic security, thus in this image it is the revolution and 'the nation to be' that now will provide that security that a dowry of gold would have. Jawad al Malhi also explored the representation of the bride. The figure of the martyr in Palestinian society has become stereotyped as a young male, one of the few representations that challenges this stereotypes is Jawad al Malhi painting The Bride (1990, oil on canvas) (fig. 69). A giant female figure clothed in a black dress and a white headscarf knotted in the fashion in which elderly Palestinian women cover their heads, marches towards us holding a dead child in her arms. The young girl, and presumably from the title, a bride to be, is dead. The grief of this loss is represented on the mother's face through the dark sockets under her eyes and via her facial expression. The emotions of the mother figure are implied through her movement, which is suggested in the way all the details of her environment disappear into a haze. Her monumental figure is imaged striding toward us offering us and confronting us with the dead young girl. The bride in this image is not a metaphor for the land but is someone's daughter who has been martyred for the nation. The image is a rare representation by a male artist of the relationship between mother and

daughter, mother and virgin. In a sense, the image intervenes into the national stereotypes of the mother and the virgin, creating characters out of these figures.

The image of the martyr and the virgin's wedding reveals the importance given to heterosexual values within the national discourse. Conservative family values are reinforced with this imagery in which men and women occupy traditional roles. The imagery of the martyr and the virgin also carries religious connotations, since the importance of marriage is central to the representations. The image of paradise in the afterlife is thus one of marital union. Self-sacrifice for the nation is also domesticated in the discourse of male honour and the promise of a virgin bride. We can observe that all nations call upon their citizens to sacrifice themselves for the future of the nation. Thus, for those of us studying national discourses, the question becomes which forms are used to interpellate subjects and to image the sacrifice in a particular context. Both images of the martyr and the virgin are present in Palestinian culture, the martyr appears in Islamic discourse while the virgin is part of the female identity and male honour. Thus, as was noted in the previous chapter with the discussion of the peasantry, we witness how nationalism appropriates identity representations into its own discourse and in so doing also works to transform their meanings.

In the representations of martyrdom and the death of the martyr the spilling of his blood is represented as inseminating the earth and bringing forth the birth of the nation. Such imagery was present in the intifada leaflet issued by the PLO and the United National Command of the Uprising in communiqué no.3, in which they wrote,

“A thousand thousand salutations, endless honour and glory, exaltation and eternal life to you our people's martyrs, heroes of the uprising, who *saturated the soil of the beloved homeland* with rivers of your spilt blood, hoist the banner of freedom and independence, and with your pure shed blood pave the way to victory and the independent state under the leadership of the great and powerful PLO”. (Communiqué no.3 in Mishal and Aharoni;1994;60). (my emphasis).

If the blood of the martyr spilt in death inseminates the land then it can be argued that death is akin to the sexual act, in which blood replaces semen. Correspondingly the experience of self-sacrifice parallels the ecstasy of an orgasm. Such an interpretation can be read in the closing lines of the poem 'Death at Nights End', by Waleed Sayf, in which he writes:

“My love took on the aspect of my homeland....the longing for my love kindled
me
warned me against the coming death
sprinkled me with the spray of desire
and I became braver
When they maliciously turned my back
Khadra was rooting out of my face all the weeds of stale time...
And before their bullets whined
I was there, entering it, my own country
Across the contours of my kindled body
Uniting with it
Without a passport” (Sayf in Jayyusi;1992;278-279).

It is here that we can trace an elaboration upon the figure of the beloved, who I suggested at the beginning of this chapter was one of the three female figures that is used to represent the homeland. The figure of the beloved is a metaphor that allows erotic symbolism to be used to express love for the homeland. In contrast, the image of the virgin inspires imagery which carries virtuous and religious symbolism as represented in the sanctified image of marriage between the virgin land and the martyr. In this imagery both martyr and virgin are general types. The martyr is meant to be 'any' male nationalist who is willing to sacrifice himself for the nation. In a sense the imagery of the virgin and the martyr are sanitised of sexual desire and the sexual act becomes the duty of reproducing the family of the nation. The reproduction of the nation is an act of honour and becomes akin to a religious sacrifice and a form of worship. The beloved, however, as we saw in the extract from Waleed Sayf's poem, is a figure that is used to express personal emotions. Through the address to the beloved, more sexualised imagery is articulated. In the poem the beloved is given a

name and her character is elaborated upon throughout the text. The address to the beloved uses the genre of love poetry to express the desire for the homeland. Thus as I have suggested, the virgin and the martyr reveal the conservative undertones of national discourse and serve as a way to contain within a religious framework the sexual imagery that the metaphor of the beloved inspired, and within one which emphasises the traditional values of the Palestinian community. The beloved becomes a more complex character in the eyes of some poets writing to express the love for the homeland through this personification. The poet Mahmoud Darwish⁶, for example, elaborates upon his feelings towards his beloved in his poem 'Psalms'

_"Why don't you wash your hands of me / so that I may stop dying again and again? / Tell me just once/ our love is over, / so I may be capable of dying and departure./ Die, so that I may mourn you, or be my wife so that I may know / what betrayal looks like, just the once". (Darwish in Sulaiman;1984;158).

In Rashid Husain's play 'The Interrogation' the land is depicted as a woman that two men are fighting over:

Interrogator: In this poem you are clearly saying that my wife loves you.

The Poet: I am speaking of my land, I say I was there before you, and she will always think of me first. Be her husband –so what I loved her before you did and I have the first place in her heart....Even if you buy her perfume, purchase her the finest clothes...it is me she will wear them for....I'll even enter your bed on your wedding night and come between you...though you are her bridegroom she will embrace me, desiring me most" (Husain in Jayyusi;1992;175).

In this extract the beloved has actually married another but the author dismisses this relationship, claiming his relationship will disrupt the marriage bed.

The sexual union between a woman and a man is used to elaborate upon the feeling of 'oneness' with the land. The experience of the land becomes almost an out of body experience in which the martyr moves from his body to occupy the place of the 'other'.

⁶Mahmoud Darwish was born in the village of Berweh, east of Acre. He lived in Galilee for some time and was the editor of Al-Ittihad Newspaper. As a result of his political activities he was imprisoned and placed under house arrest, in 1971 he left Israel for Beirut and returned to the West Bank after the establishment of the Palestinian Authority. He is considered one of the foremost poets of the Palestinian resistance and has written numerous works among which include Victims of the Map, Memory and Forgetfulness and 17 Psalms (Jayyusi;1992;145).

The martyr's body is imaged as becoming one with the earth, an idea expressed by Mahmoud Darwish in his piece 'Poem of the Land' which commemorates those who died in demonstrations marking Land Day: "I name the soil I call it an extension of my soul. I name my hands I call them the pavement of wounds" (Darwish in Jayyusi;1992;146). While Rashid Husain also speaks of the land in similar terms, "I am the land do not deny me rain, I am all that remains of it. Plant my brows with trees, and turn my poetry into vineyards, and wheat and roses, that you may know and let the rain pour down" (Husain in Parmenter; 1994;82). In Fadwa Tuqan's poem cited at the beginning of the chapter she wrote of the martyr desire to "to melt and vanish into her soil then sprout forth as a flower" (Tuqan in Jayyusi;1992;314). From these examples it is evident that by becoming the land, the martyr takes on its regenerative qualities. By sacrificing himself to the earth the martyr negates the corporeality and temporality of his real body in exchange for eternity and the re-birth of his country. This negation, however, is not without pleasure, pleasure which as we have seen is represented as a sexual experience. In this negation what becomes the significant element of the martyr's body is his blood. The regenerative quality of the martyr's blood is often symbolised through the poppy, which in popular symbolism is imaged as budding from the droplets of the martyr's blood. The poppy also contains the four colours of the Palestinian flag; red, green, black and white, thus making it a double national symbol which emphasises that the martyr's death transforms the land into the national homeland. Such a reading can also be used to interpret Nabil Anani's painting Untitled (1986, oil on canvas) (fig. 70). In his landscape painting, what dominates the foreground is a tree. The tree takes the form of a woman as its centre contains a foetus while the branches of the tree trunk form the umbilical cord. It is the land that produces children rather than women, who are conspicuously absent from this image of reproduction. Thus the child is born from the land; land presumably watered with the blood of martyrs whose nationalism blossoms in the red, green and white leaves, recalling the colours of the Palestinian flag.

It is interesting to digress briefly to examine the visual images produced of martyrs, particularly during the intifada. In popular culture, images of martyrs were predominantly produced in the form of portraits- as paintings or photographs. For example, in 1988 in an exhibition held by the League of Palestinian Artists for martyrs the works on display comprised of portraits of martyrs, executed in a realist style. We can understand from this that the emphasis of the representations was upon creating lasting images, which bore a strong physical resemblance to the martyrs and could serve as tool for remembrance. In fact, the paintings of martyrs convey the idea that the martyrs were ordinary people; they could be anyone's brother, son, husband or father. In that sense they worked to interpellate those who were involved in the struggle as they could see themselves or a relative in the image. The majority of the representations of martyrs in Palestinian society however took the form of photographic portraits. Young men during the intifada would go to photograph themselves at studios that can be found throughout the West Bank and Gaza Strip. Thus young men created their own self-portraits for the possibility of their own martyrdom. The backdrops of these images were often photographic representations of autumnal or spring landscapes, while the poses of the martyrs were not the traditional smile for the camera but often showed the martyr in deep thought, staring into the distance.

Christian Metz elaborates on the relationship between death and the photograph. He suggests that photographs have an indexical quality as they are prints of real objects- "prints left on a special surface by a combination of light and chemical action" (Metz;1990;156). In this way photographs of martyrs are traces of them before their death. He goes on to suggest that because of the photograph's ability to capture a moment in space and time it has an intrinsic relationship to death, "The snap shot, like death, is an instantaneous abduction of the object out of the world into another, into another kind of time" (Metz;1990;158). In that sense, what he characterises as figuring

death- namely immobility and silence are represented in the medium of photography, for he as explains, "Film gives back a semblance of life to the dead...photography on the contrary, by virtue of the objective suggestions of its signifier (stillness, again) maintains the memory of the dead as being dead" (Metz;1990;158). Metz's analysis of the photograph suggests why photography is a popular medium for representing martyrs in Palestine. In Palestine after a martyr's death hand made A4 size posters appeared pasted on walls. It is noteworthy that the metaphoric insemination of the land with the martyr's blood spreads the martyr throughout the landscape, thus the martyr becomes omnipresent, as his image is endlessly reproduced in the landscape and inscribed upon its surfaces. The image of the martyr in these posters focused upon his identity thus, these portraits functioned as means of identification. These images were in marked contrast to the images of the *shebab* in the intifada who covered their faces in hoods, *kufiyeh's* or the Palestinian flag. The young men concealed their individual identities primarily for security reasons, but it is how they conceal their faces that is significant. By using the flag, or the *kufiyeh* or even as they held up the image of Yassir Arafat over their faces (the latter for the international photographers) they negate their identity and suggest that they represent the will of the nation and the PLO. Therefore their individual identities can seem to be re-instated in their deaths as martyrs.

The different figurative representations of the martyr in the national discourse in which the martyr is represented as inseminating and uniting with the earth, which I suggested elided the role of the woman in the reproduction and regeneration of the nation, are not divorced from the logistics of identity. Joseph Massad has examined the legal constitution of Palestinian identity in Article 4 and 5 of the Palestinian National Charter.

"Article 4 of The Palestinian National Charter defines Palestinian identity as 'a genuine, inherent internal trait and is transmitted from fathers to sons. Article 5 states that 'Palestinians are those Arab citizens who used to reside in Palestine until 1947, and everyone who is born of an Arab father after this date- whether

inside Palestine or outside it- is a Palestinian". (Massad quoting the Palestinian Nation Charter;1995;472).

He brings to light the fact that Palestinian identity is only transmitted through the male bloodline, after what is imaged as the rape of Palestine in 1947. This contamination of the metaphorical Mother disqualifies infants born from real Palestinian mothers from being considered Palestinian and in so doing serves to erase the place of women in the reproduction of the nation. Massad explains that Palestinian identity is defined according to the historical period of before and after the loss of Palestine. Massad goes on to observe that,

_"The spatial –temporal prerequisite for 'Palestinianess', and its metaphorical stress on maternity, becomes directly linked after the 'rape' to the issue of reproducing the nation. In nationalist discourse this is to be carried out through physiological and metaphorical paternity. It is being born to a Palestinian father that now functions as the prerequisite for Palestinianess, a father, it is important to note, whose very Palestinianess is his residence in the motherland before the 'rape'" (Massad;1995;472).

Massad claims that prior to 1947 the 'land' produced Palestinians, but after that date fathers take up the role in which "territory was replaced by paternity" (Massad;1995;472). Thus this representation suggests that there exists in the national discourse a male fantasy of eliding the role of women in the birth of the future nation. The martyr who dies for the national cause, as we saw, finally becomes one with the land in a gesture that replaces the virgin. In so doing he takes on the regenerative/reproductive qualities of the earth/virgin as expressed by Rashid Husain's who wrote of the need to be watered by the rains in order for plants to bloom. While we find in Massad's analysis that it is through the male bloodline that Palestinian identity is transmitted and reproduced. Perhaps, the desire is not only to elide the female figure, but also to become both male and female and to incorporate the 'other' into the self, and in so doing to fill the space of lack. The 'lack' is described in the writings of Jacques Lacan as being one of the fundamental aspects of the human subject. Incorporating the other also enables the subject to control that which inspires his desire, and in the context of Arab men to incorporate that element of honour which

always resists total control, being outside of the self. As Juliet Mitchell writes of desire, “it necessitates the wish to *be* the other one, or not to be different from the other one” (Mitchell;1974;396).

What have been present in our discussion are ideas of purity and contamination. The colonised attempted to protect their women from control by the colonisers in order to preserve them as an uncontaminated space and as a space over which the colonised exercised power. In the conflict, women were attacked directly because they were represented as the sacred space of men and of the community. In the discourse of martyrdom the young men sacrificed themselves for the promise of the virgin homeland and the purified nation is reborn through him. In the national charter, the contamination of the female land through occupation transfers paternity to Palestinian men whose purity, Massad highlights, is a result of their presence in the Motherland before the rape. The experience of occupation designates Palestinian women to be no longer virgins hence identity flows through the blood of men. Thus, in the reproduction of the community the significance of the shedding of hymen blood is replaced by the shedding of the blood of the martyr. Traditionally, the shedding of hymen blood was a very important aspect of wedding rituals for it was proof of the woman’s virginity and the honour of her family. It also secured the reproduction of family bloodlines. Shelagh Weir elaborates on the significance of the event:

“Great emphasis was placed on the defloration of the bride as the central and most important act of the wedding rituals, the event transformed a girl into a woman, and sealed and legitimised the new marriage....it was important that the sexual act produced blood as visible proof that it had taken place and that the bride had been a virgin...while the groom went to the coffee house to announce his success to the men, the bride's mother and close female relatives...gathered at the groom’s house to inspect the blood stained dress” (Weir;1989;264).

As Weir records, the event was celebrated by women who often sung the following verse: “this is not the blood of a bedbug/nor the blood of a flea/but the blood of a virgin/

whose reputation lifts up our heads” (Weir;1989;264). In fig. 71 taken from ‘The Palestinian Uprising Album’ we see the importance attributed to martyrs’ blood, in this case a martyr’s blood-stained pillow is held up for the camera to document; similarly, in fig. 72 women are gathered round the blood-stained site where a martyr fell. Noteworthy, is that throughout the intifada, the leaflets of both the United National Command of the Uprising and Hamas continually made reference to the pure blood of martyrs that had been shed. Similarly, during the intifada, it was believed that where a martyr fell the earth beneath him became liberated. Perhaps the liberation of these small areas of land was also understood as a purification.

The notion of purity of blood and the fear of contamination runs throughout the national discourse, for example we need only recall the targeting of women in the conflict and the whole preceding discussion around the virgin and the martyr. The issue of blood and contamination is raised in the following examples: in his poem *Filastin wal-Isti’mar al Jadid* (Palestine and the New Colonization) of 1910, Muhammad Is’af al Nashashibi writes “O young woman of our homeland! Shed blood instead of tears if you want to cry./ Sisters of exaltedness! Palestine is lost; nothing but blood is left now./ You will suffer and weep with blood, when weeping tears becomes of no avail” (Sulaiman;1984;9). The poem is specifically addressed to the women of the community. Is his call for them to shed blood a call to self- sacrifice? Does he envisage it as best for women to sacrifice themselves rather than lose their honour to the enemy and become contaminated? Have women already become contaminated by the enemy so that now they must shed their blood to purify themselves and the community? Is it meant that the loss of the metaphoric female homeland leaves women no longer worthy, no longer of pure blood? All these suggestions can be read into the lines of this poem, which highlights that such imagery was being produced in the early stages of a Palestinian nationalist discourse. In another poem from 1912, Sulayman al-Taji al Furuqi writes, “Palestine! Your children have been unfaithful to you. Living in you

has become blameworthy. I wonder have heaven and earth become sterile? If not why do they not give birth to great men?" (Sulayman al-Taji al Furuqi in Sulaiman;1984;11). Again the suggestion is of contamination with the insinuation that the children of the motherland have 'slept with the enemy' bringing weakness and sterility to the homeland. Years later, writing in the 1970's, the exiled Iraqi poet Muzaffar al Nawaab wrote of the 'rape' of Palestine in graphic terms:

„Jerusalem is the bride of your Arabness!! / So why did you usher all the fornicators of the night into her room, / And stand eavesdropping from behind the door to the screams of her torn virginity.../ Go ahead and leave her all bloodied in the sun without a midwife to tend to her / She'll tear at her braids, and she'll vomit the pregnancy out onto you...Be sterile oh land of Palestine,/ For this is a frightening pregnancy! Be barren oh mothers of martyrs, from this time on, / For this pregnancy by the enemy is ugly, deforming and frightening" (al Nawaab in Bardenstein;1997;171-172).

We see here again the images of contamination and defilement in this instance it is men's co-operation with the enemy that has brought shame upon the women while the pregnancy from the 'other' is imaged as abnormal, unnatural- a deformity. Carol Bardenstein highlights that there is an interesting image of female agency in this text, "The bride, Palestine, has disrupted the sequence of consummation, pregnancy and motherhood by aborting her own motherhood" (Bardenstein;1997;171). The fact that 'Palestine' has been left unprotected and has chosen to remain barren, Bardenstein suggests, functions to shame and interpellate men into active resistance (Bardenstein;1997;172). The goading of men also appears in a Hamas leaflet from the intifada in which men's masculinity is ridiculed by drawing analogies between their lack of virility and the success of the enemy. "Have the rulers paralysed your movements and stripped you of your power, making you so impotent that even the usurpers are no longer frightened of you" (Communiqué no.1 in Mishal and Aharoni;1994;202). Male impotence also appears in a sequence in the film 'Wedding in Galilee', by Michel Khleifi (1987), the significance of which is discussed by Bardenstein. The film is set in a village in Galilee. The Israeli Authorities have placed the village under curfew. In order

for the wedding ceremony to proceed the bridegroom's father agrees to allow the Israeli soldiers to attend the wedding. The abnormality of the situation seems to render the bridegroom impotent:

"An additional unnatural insertion replaces the one anticipated: in a rather graphic scene, the melancholic Palestinian bride undertakes the act of insertion herself, tearing her hymen with her own fingers to provide the necessary drops of blood thereby covering up her groom's impotence. With normal life disrupted idealised Palestinian unions become joyless and humiliating rituals" (Bardenstein;1997;172).

The kind of representations that have been discussed which present the contamination, abnormality and incompleteness of everyday life work to enhance the metaphoric imagery of the national discourse. Consummation of marriages are only achieved through self sacrifice in martyrdom, sexual fulfilment in the return to the land with death, 'normality' that is marriage and heterosexual relationships only arise with the purification of the homeland and the birth of the nation. Thus, the implication is that it is only through participation in and sacrifice for the national cause that 'normal life' will return.

The representations of martyrdom, the beloved and the virgin are images in which the liberation of Palestine is represented as the result of male agency and in which women are designated with passive roles. Thus from the preceding discussion we can discern that, as Cynthia Enole argues, "becoming a nationalist requires a man to resist the foreigners' use and abuse of his women" (Enole;1989;44). In this contest, women's voices are seldom heard as women become the object of the discourse, and are not active in setting the agendas of national liberation struggles. Women's positions are described by Gayatri Spivak in the following way, "Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness but into a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the 'third world woman' caught between tradition and modernization" (Spivak;1988;306).

The position women occupy in national discourses leads us to question whose interests are represented in movements for national liberation. From our examination of the representation of women in these discourses it becomes apparent that “nationalism has sprung from masculinized memory, masculinized humiliation and masculinized hope” (Enole;1989;44). Benedict Anderson’s seminal study of nationalism, “Imagined Communities” reveals a similar bias. He says, “The nation is always conceived as a deep horizontal comradeship. Ultimately it is this fraternity that makes it possible, over the past two centuries for so many millions of people, not so much to kill, as willing to die for such limited imaginings” (Anderson;1991;7). The comradeship and fraternity that Anderson speaks of carries implicit gender divisions, for his suggestion is that nations are based on a horizontal relationship of comradeship between men. Thus the figurative representation of the homeland as woman works to unite men and interpellate them into the national struggle. At the same time, this discursive operation which valorises the female homeland serves to elide real women, prescribing them with passive roles in the struggle to liberate the homeland.

In the preceding discussion I suggested that one could discern within the national discourse male fantasies that ascribe a passive role and supplant women with the martyr, particularly in relation to their reproductive capabilities. However, it is not the case that one set of images replace another, i.e. that the martyr replaces representations of Palestine as the virgin, the beloved and the mother, rather we must understand that all these images co-exist, although they may appear to contradict one another. Representations in nationalist discourses are not uniform but contain ambivalences, if they didn’t our work of understanding representations in national discourses would be much easier. Thus, the desire to elide women comes to exist in the same context as their valorisation. We can discern these ambivalences not only because representations are created by a diversity of social actors with different

fantasies and understanding of the national discourse, but also because 'woman' should be understood as the 'other' and hence her form becomes a space for different imagery.

The Palestinian Peasant Woman

In the previous discussion of the martyr and the virgin, the ideas of purity and contamination were recurrent, references to which manifested themselves in numerous representations. At this point, I would like to recall the earlier citation of Partha Chatterjee's work. To summarise the argument once again: the 'East' defined its essential identity as existing in the space of the home and as being embodied by women. We also saw how this construction made women vulnerable to attack. However, the idea of contamination was not just the fear of the physical attack on women through their unveiling or despoiling by the enemy, it was also a fear of a *cultural* contamination. Thus in the national discourse, women, their domestic activities and the home environment were constructed as the repository of the nation's cultural identity. Women were designated therefore, with the responsibility of preserving and reproducing the nation's authentic culture. We need to remember that during this period of change, men's control of women was under threat from the colonisers particularly by the changes brought about by adopting modernity. Therefore as a way of coping with these transformations, nationalisms were moulded to maintain patriarchal power. Thus traditional roles which kept women in subservient positions vis-a-vis men were dressed up within the national discourse as part of the nation's essential identity (which was under threat), so that to oppose them would render women anti-nationalists. In so doing, the national discourse translated the traditional roles of women into a national and cultural trait and an element of a woman's national duty. Women were prescribed the position of being the "privileged bearers of cultural authenticity" (Kandiyoti;1991;431). Julie Peetel describes this assignment in the

following way: "Authenticity is the burden of those sectors of society and the cultural artefacts specific to them. These sectors may be distant from contact with other cultures and under represented in the power structure" (Peetet;1993;52). This definition is applicable to the Palestinians for it is objects from the domestic sphere, as we saw in the previous chapter, which are appropriated and displayed as signs of cultural identity. Similarly the marginalisation of women within the public sphere and their seclusion in the world of the home, beyond the economical and political centres of decision making, minimised women's contact with other cultures. Thus although figuratively women are positioned as central to the image of the nation and central to its cultural identity this does not correspond to them being given a similar place in the fashioning of the national discourse (Kandiyoti;1991;430).

This designation of women as the reproducers and bearers of cultural authenticity has repercussions for all women, and questions women's equality within nationalism. Third world women have had a difficult path to carve out in advancing their rights without being seen as anti-nationalist or as indoctrinated with western feminist values. As Kathy Glavanis-Grantham notes, "Within Palestinian society, feminism is equated with sexual libertarianism which is thought to characterise women's social behaviour in the West and therefore to be antithetical to the family orientated and gender hierarchical Palestinian society" (Glavanis-Grantham;1996;176). The woman's question in the Middle East and in the Palestinian context is a large area of debate which I will not go into here, however I will return to examine how women interpret the roles allotted to them within the national discourse. Although all women are affected by being seen as the bearers of cultural authenticity, in visual representations it is the Palestinian peasant woman who is predominantly depicted in this role, and it is to the representation of this woman that I now turn my attention. The Palestinian peasant woman, as we will see, is represented as signifying cultural authenticity through her dress, her activities and the location in which she is imaged.

The depiction of the peasant woman has spanned four decades of Palestinian art from the 1950's to the 1990's. What distinguishes the peasant woman in these images is her dress. The creation of the Palestinian peasant woman's dress was traditionally the activity of young women in the village who learned to embroider at an early age. The dress, as we saw in the last chapter, has been selected as a sign of Palestinian cultural identity because it is seen as a representation of place. The dresses whose patterns are unique to each village, have, with the loss of the land of Palestine come to function as both a symbol of each village and the nation. The traditional dress is the key element that distinguishes women as the bearers of cultural authenticity. In Nabil Anani's painting Ornaments (c.1985, gouache) (fig. 73) the peasant woman in traditional dress is inactive and immobile, recalling a statue in a museum. Reading the painting against the grain, that is not to consider it a picturesque image of Palestinian traditions, one can see that the absence of any representation of the woman's arms or legs creates an image of a woman without agency. The decorative quality of the image is supposed to detract us from this reading, but becomes apparent if one examines the representation of the female form. The role of bearer of cultural authenticity is visibly inscribed upon the woman's body as the panel of embroidery does not follow the contours of her body but sits as a rigid plate upon her chest. The woman becomes like any one of the objects- the 'Ornaments'. The peasant woman in this piece is thus treated as a decorative object and a cultural artefact. This positioning of the peasant woman in the painting raises an important question regarding the spaces in which peasant women are represented.

The painting The Village Awakens by Sliman Mansour (fig. 43) discussed in the previous chapter, with regards to its significance as a national allegory, figures the peasant woman as an architectural element of the landscape. The combination of woman and architecture in this painting works to inscribe the peasant woman as a fixed

and stable element of the landscape. Her giant body sits within the built environment. Similarly in a painting by Fathy Ghaban Untitled (1992, oil on canvas) (fig. 74) the peasant woman's body is part of the landscape. In this representation, the peasant woman is a giant figure and her body consists of the different aspects of the landscape for example, the geometric embroidery of her chest panel becomes the closely packed houses of the refugee camp. In this particular work it is the peasant woman again, identifiable through her dress, who signifies the landscape of the refugee camp rather than the village. A few elements of the village remain however, namely the tumbled down houses and the hens. In fact the peasant woman, whose body is half refugee camp and half remains of the village, is striding towards the space of the village in a gesture of return. In Fathy Ghaban's painting the peasant woman merges into the landscape. The idea of the peasant woman being a presence in the landscape recalls the description of the peasant woman in Emile Habibi's novel 'The Pessoptimist' (1985). In one of the scenes the Israeli Military Governor comes across a peasant woman and her son attempting to return to their village of Berwah. The Governor forbids them from returning and threatens to kill the peasant woman and her child if she does. The woman and child turn in the opposite direction and walk away never looking back in the direction of their village. The protagonist Saeed who witnesses the scene, as he has been forced to accompany the Israeli Military Governor observes the following: "For the further the woman and child went from where we were... the taller they grew. By the time they merged with their own shadows in the sinking sun they had become bigger than the plain of Acre itself...The Governor stood there awaiting their final disappearance...Finally he asked in amazement, "Will they ever disappear?" (Habibi;1985;16). In this passage the shadow of the woman's body envelopes the land, gathering it all into the form of her body. In a painting by Saed Hilmi, Palestine, (1997, oil on velvet) (fig. 75), 'Palestine', is represented as a giant ghostly peasant woman who carries a lantern and wanders in the landscape like a night watchman. As guardian of the landscape the peasant woman recalls the reference to the Palestinian woman at

the opening of the chapter who is heralded as “the guardian of sustenance and life, keeper of our people’s perennial flame”. What we can discern in a number of these paintings, is that the peasant woman is often represented as a lone figure in the landscape. The peasant woman is also depicted in this way in paintings by Fathy Ghaban and Sliman Mansour. In Ghaban’s painting Untitled (oil on canvas, c. 1990 (fig. 76) the woman looks out towards the sea with a distant expression upon her face, while in Mansour’s painting Harvest (1975, oil on canvas) (fig. 77) it is as though the woman looks through us and beyond us. In one of the few articles written on the representation of women in Palestinian Art, Vera Tamari and Penny Johnson, comment on the phenomena of the lone female figure, suggest that ‘a remote gaze portrays and produces a sense of loss and melancholy’ (Tamari & Johnson;1995;167). Perhaps then, these peasant women are used to express the sense of loss and estrangement from the land experienced by the nation through their melancholic dispositions. The idea of using the peasant woman as a figure through which to express the mood and emotions of the nation was in evidence in the events that commemorated the *Nakba* in Palestine in 1998. At the opening of the Birzeit Summer Festival, The El Funun Dance Troupe staged a dance that re-created the events of 1948. As part of the dance, a single female figure in a dress inspired by the traditional Palestinian costume occupied centre stage and was doubled over upon herself. She swirled her body from side to side. She alone embodied the trauma of the events and expressed the collective experience. The use of a young woman however, was not the typical choice used in representations of the *Nakba* in that year. A more popular image was a photograph taken from the UNWRA catalogue, which was used on numerous posters and on the *Nakba* web page (fig. 78). The woman in the image was an elderly refugee woman whose face was contorted in grief. What is significant is that women are designated to express the grief of the nation, as we saw in Muhammad Is’af al Nashashibi’s poem in which he called upon women to “shed blood instead of tears if you want to cry” (Nashashibi in Sulaiman;1984;9).

The lone peasant woman in the landscape however, is not always used to express melancholy, nor are the women in the landscape always depicted as standing staring into the distance; for there are also many representations in which the peasant woman is represented as engaged in work upon the land, collecting water, collecting fruit or carrying out traditional domestic activities in the environment surrounding her home as in the following paintings: Abed Zayed's Palestinian Landscape, (1998, gouache) (fig. 79), and Abdel Muttaleb Abbyan's Untitled (1990, oil on canvas) (fig. 25). Thani Skeik's From the Land (1994, oil on canvas) (fig. 80) and Sliman Mansour's Salma (1978, oil on canvas) (fig. 81). It is noteworthy that these are often as not timeless landscapes with no apparent features of modernity, Abed Zayed's landscape, for example, resembles a landscape from a fairytale. Kitty Warnock highlights that during the intifada working the land was "central to the disengagement movement practically and emotionally...and it remains a potent symbol of identity" (Warnock;1990;115). Similarly the "feminisation of agricultural production" (Swedenberg;1991;23) in the West Bank, as so many men were absent working in Israel, served to strengthen the association between women and the land. There are also numerous paintings depicting traditional domestic work such as preparing food, baking bread and embroidering, a few examples are Janet Farah's painting Untitled (1992, oil on canvas) (fig. 82), Mohammad abu Sittah's, Untitled (1987, oil on canvas) (fig. 83), Tahini Skeik's Woman Embroidering (1989, oil on canvas,) (fig. 84) and Woman Making Threads (1991, oil on canvas) (fig. 85). These are picturesque images that depict women as the preservers of cultural authenticity as they undertake tasks that are time consuming and from another time, namely the past. The patience exhibited by the women in executing these activities means that we can also read the paintings as images of perseverance; for in fact the peasant woman, as bearer of cultural authenticity, was also used to signify the steadfastness of the nation. Thus the activities in which the peasant woman is represented as engaged in come to signify the political strategy of *sumud*. As Kitty

Warnock highlights, “*Sumud* integrated women into the national movement as easily as men, as it demands exactly the virtues contained in the traditional ideal of women’s character- patience, endurance, silent strength, self sacrifice and duty” (Warnock;1990;140). Hence the peasant woman is imaged as the pillar of strength and as possessing these qualities. In Fathy Ghaban’s painting Handmill (1991, oil on canvas) (fig.86) the woman in traditional dress is engaged in grinding wheat, the elderly peasant man sits in a huddled position under a tree and a young boy lies weeping beside him. The two male figures are consumed by their emotions while it is the woman who displays endurance and persistence. In another version of the painting (fig. 87) the peasant woman is preparing food in her small courtyard surrounded by a corrugated metal fence, while one of her children clings to her and the other sits crying. It is noteworthy that women are for the most part imaged on the threshold of the home or in the landscape as in a ceramic piece by Vera Tamari. Untitled (c.1983, ceramics) (fig. 88). Women are rarely depicted in spaces other than the home, the natural environment or floating in an abstract space as in Tahini Skeik’s paintings, (fig. 84 and 85) and Mansour’s painting of the village in which a fragment of the village floats in a dream space (fig. 47). These images represent woman as occupying a distinct sphere in contrast, one must imagine, to the public space of the modern world, frequented by men. Thus these images serve to freeze women in time, placing them outside the space of progress. The notion of the resilient quality of the Palestinian peasant woman was also taken up in literature. In a short story by Rasmi abu Ali the mother is described stealing back to the village to harvest olives and to collect their clothes. The father in the narrative fears for her safety but it is she not he who continues to return to their former village (Abu Ali in Elmessiri;1996;54-57). The steadfastness of the peasant woman is evoked in a painting by Abul Rahman al Muzayen, May Day (1979, poster) (fig. 89) In this image the peasant woman is represented as a monumental figure who carries the community on her shoulders and in the palms of her hands. The community all carry tools on their shoulders with some raising them with an air of

readiness for work. In fact, the painting is a poster celebrating International Workers Day in 1979 (May 1st). The body of the peasant woman is deeply embedded in the ground. Her dress fans into the earth like the roots of a tree while her pose creates the shape of its branches. These visual elements work to create the idea of the organic relationship between the woman and the land, suggesting a natural continuum between the two. Thus she is both the steadfast peasant woman and the woman who is the homeland. This image, however reveals that the assignment to women as the bearers and preservers of tradition and the figures of steadfastness confines women in a static image. Although the woman is represented as holding up the community the way she is represented is as a statuesque inactive figure. The one woman she carries is seated carrying a jug upon her head unlike the men who all sport active poses. The detailed representation of the patterns of her dress makes of the woman a decorative object, and a beautiful element of nature (here I refer to her tree like form). The almond shape of her eyes and her stylised facial features are a reference to the representations of Canaanite goddesses and are meant to suggest the similarity between the two. (Bartelt et al;1996;56) Thus by moulding the features of the peasant woman to recall a Canaanite goddess, and by positioning her body in the earth, both the community's historical and natural ties to the land are imaged.

From the images that have been discussed it is evident that the figure of the peasant woman is used to represent the different women of the national discourse. Thus, in the representations of the peasant woman the subject position of women in the national discourse is imaged along with their preferred role and character. The peasant woman then is the virgin the martyr dies for in Fayeze al Hassan's image (fig. 67). The peasant woman, is the beloved waiting by the shores who the lover cannot reach in Fathy Ghaban's painting (fig.76). Predominantly, however, the peasant woman is the mother figure who we see undertaking traditional activities. The peasant woman is imaged as the caretaker of children as in Fathy Ghaban's paintings (fig. 86 and 87) and also in a

painting by Salah al Atrash, Untitled (1987, oil on canvas) (fig. 90). A popular maternal image in Palestinian art is that of Mother and Child in which the mother is depicted with a babe in her arms. More often than not the baby is a male child as in Nabil Anani's Motherhood (1979, oil on canvas) (fig. 91). In this image the landscape has for the most part disappeared and is represented by a simple vine. The monumental mother figure cradles a child in her arms. The colour of her clothing combined with that of the vine make up the colours of the Palestinian flag. The woman in this image signifies a mother but also the symbolic figure of the Motherland. Sliman Mansour creates a similar image of the maternal relationship in his painting Mothers' Day (1987, oil on canvas) (fig. 92) in which the deep love between mother and child is expressed. Again the infant is a male child and the mother is a peasant woman. In this serene image the mother's body encircles the child, almost forming a sphere around the infant, perhaps in reference to the world of the womb and the world of the mother. This idea of the world of the mother and child is suggested by the way the female form in this image is moulded to form a globe and is painted in shades of blue. Furthermore the landscape around the two is an abstract surface which gives us a feeling that the two are floating in a celestial space. What Mansour creates is a deeply comforting image.

Motherhood and the Reproduction of the Nation

In the national discourse, women were not only proscribed the role of being reproducers of the nation's authentic culture, they were also imaged as reproducers of the nation's subjects as can be discern from the images of mothers and children and the imagery of women engaged in domestic activities. These types of representations established the idea that the nation was one large family. The nation, then, is imaged as a family all originating from the same metaphoric mother: the motherland. This is a familial discourse in which images of blood ties create a sense of the community's unity and their feeling of belonging and which images the motherland in the form of the

hamula. If we look again at Sliman Mansour's painting The Village Awakens (fig. 43), which was discussed in the previous chapter in relation to it being a national allegory, we notice that the giant peasant woman body is represented as merging with the architecture. She is motionless, while her legs are spread apart and from her body the nation marches forth. This painting clearly represents the women's role as that of reproducing the nation. Similarly, in Saed Hilmi's painting Palestine (fig. 75) the village is represented as the space of her stomach and lower body. In this painting the space of reproduction in the woman's body is replaced by an image of a village. This analogy serves to bind an idea of individual identity to that of the larger community. The security of home in the village is depicted as the security of the womb. Jawad al Malhi's painting The Beginning and the End (1988, oil on canvas) which spans 2.4 metres (fig. 93) is a more emotive in its treatment of the subject of the birth of the nation. It portrays a woman in childbirth screaming in pain. The woman lies on a simple iron bed with her gaze directly confronting us while another member of the community is brought in on a stretcher. The narrative of this painting differs from Mansour's monumental allegory as here the woman does not give birth effortlessly to the nation, but is in agony. The passage to the birth of the nation is not depicted as effortless, but rather is one that exists as part of the struggle of the life and death of the nation's subjects. Thus, in a sense, the woman's pain in childbirth comes to stand for the larger 'struggle' from which the nation is born. In these paintings women are continually used as an analogy for the nation.

In many nationalist discourses, women are seen primarily in terms of their reproductive capabilities. Women are attributed the responsibility of reproducing the nation which thereby makes of women's sexuality and fertility a patriotic and explicitly political issue. Women, as Nira Yuval-Davis, notes are assigned the work of reproducing the boundaries of the community and are used when nations engage in demographic wars. (Yuval-Davis;1989;9). The spaces of women's bodies become the site upon which the

nation is defined and upon which the battle with the enemy is fought. Julie Peetet who has carried out extensive field work on women in refugee camps in Lebanon notes that, as a consequence of a continual violent conflict with Israel, "high birth rates increasingly constitute a weapon in the long term war of demography" (Peetet;1993;59). Golda Meir, Prime Minister of Israel during the 1970's expressed her fear over the numbers of Palestinian children being born. She feared a situation in which "she would have to wake up every morning wondering how many Arab babies had been born in the night" (Davis;1989;92). The growth of the Palestinian population constitutes a threat to the State of Israel. In order to confront this problem, Jewish women were encouraged to have more children. Former Prime Minister Ben Gurion is quoted as saying, "increasing the Jewish birth rate is a vital need for the existence of Israel, and a Jewish woman who does not bring at least four children into the world is defrauding the Jewish mission" (Sharoni;1994;129). Thus women on both sides of the conflict are seen as pivotal in reproducing the nation. In his recent analysis of the Palestinian 1997 census Youseff Courbage highlights that under estimation of the number of Palestinians has meant that Israeli demographic projections carry inaccuracies which came to light with the comparison of Israeli figures and those compiled from the Palestinian Census carried out in 1997. The results showed that there were 21% more Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza (484,000) than recorded in the Israeli statistics that estimated that the population numbered 2,322,500 persons rather than 2,869,145 (these figures also include Jerusalem) (Courbage;1999;23). Analysing the fertility rates of the Palestinians and of the different sectors of Israeli society he argues that Palestinians including the Arabs inside Israel will, in his projections, make up between 55 to 57% of the population in Israel/Palestine by the year 2025, suggesting that they will be winning in the war of demography (Courbage;1999;29). He also highlights that among the Jewish communities it is the religious Jews who tend towards higher fertility rates. He forecasts that "the number of religious Jews could almost triple in twenty five years, while the rest of the Jewish

electorate, less religious, would increase only by 40%. The political structure which saw the supremacy of Labor, then Likud, could be shaken by this religious shock wave” (Courbage;1999;35).

Although nationalism politicises women’s fertility, women should not be considered passive subjects. Rather, it is the case that they are interpellated by the call to reproduce the nation. Women who Julie Peetet interviewed in the refugee camps in Beirut, for example, saw raising children as a contribution to the national struggle: “Umm Muhammad, a survivor of Tal al Za’ter, mother of several martyrs and friend of the Resistance said, ‘We Palestinian women have a *batin ‘askari*. [literally; military womb; figuratively we give birth to fighters” (Peetet;1991;185). Producing children takes on new meaning for women, and is understood as a national act (Peetet;1991;184). However, it can be argued that their interpellation to reproduce the nation is circumscribed by the importance given to child bearing within Palestinian society. Child bearing formerly afforded women a status within the family, whereas now it gives women a status in the wider community and vis a vis other women of the nation. Palestinians have one of the highest fertility rates in the world, the average number of children per household stands at 6.24 and this has not declined significantly over the last thirty years (Giacaman;1997;5). Yet these statistics should not be understood solely in terms of national imperatives. Bearing children is an important aspect of the definition of female identity in Palestinian culture (Peetet;1991;184). The birth of a woman’s first child marks a woman’s full transition into womanhood. The birth of a male child gives a woman an important status within her own family and the family of her husband’s parents. By producing children a woman guarantees the continuity of the family and safeguards her own future in old age, as her children are expected to be her caretakers. The importance of a male child is evident in the names given to parents by the community, for example, a mother will be called after the name of her first son: Umm Ibrahim, (mother of Ibrahim) and a man will be called Abu Ibrahim (father of

Ibrahim). This custom of naming by which so many women and men are known reveals how important child production is to a woman's identity and the significance that is attributed to producing male children for both the mother and father. The norm of having large families also has its roots in the fact that Palestinians came from a peasant society. For the peasantry, large families provided a valuable source of manpower for working the land and for protecting the *hamula*. The maintenance and reproduction of the family is important to Palestinians as it has become a source of security in a political situation in which there is no protection for the individual in the form of a nation-state. As a consequence of this absence, the institution of the family has become a cornerstone of Palestinian society. Therefore what is of interest to my inquiry is how these pre-existing social values are re-vitalised and given new importance in a national discourse.

By entering the national struggle as reproducers of the nation, women's bodies became a target for the enemy. Women's position as child bearers made them particularly vulnerable to attack, for during conflicts, they were singled out because of the significance their reproductive capabilities carried for both sides. The bodies of Palestinian women have come under numerous forms of assault during the years of Israeli military occupation and particularly during the intifada. The Israeli occupation attacked the Palestinians by targeting the corporeality of their bodies. During the intifada women's bodies came under assault during demonstrations and curfews as did men's bodies. However women were singled out because of their importance as reproducers of the nation. During the intifada tear gas would be fired into confined spaces such as nurseries where pregnant women were present. Teargas is known to induce miscarriages in women (Young;1994;186). Pregnant women prisoners were also subjected to humiliating treatment, being handcuffed when they went into labour (Young;1994;185). In prison, women's bodies were subject to numerous forms of abuse, ranging from sleep deprivation to torture. Women also sustained numerous

attacks on their bodies in the form of bruising and broken bones. In many cases women's injuries were acquired while they endeavoured to shield children and young men from arrest by the IDF soldiers and often such events were witnessed on news reports of the uprising.

The reproduction of the nation was represented as the primary way in which women could contribute to the nationalist struggle, thus the ongoing conflict with Israel served to transform the definition of motherhood in Palestinian society. Women were no longer merely responsible for producing children, but were also delegated with formation of their character. Women were given the responsibility of cultivating in children a love for the homeland. This love for Palestine was imparted through stories and songs about the past and through explanations about the political situation. Palestinian children were therefore politicised at a very early age (Mayer;1994;78). Mothers were seen as important in preserving the society's memory and of passing it down to the younger generation in the form of stories and folktales. Women's general position as site of cultural authenticity (as discussed earlier) served to give young children a strong sense of identity in their formative years.

As a consequence of these transformations, women began to interpret their domestic work in new terms. Work inside the home was comparable to the resistance work and steadfastness of men in the public realm, and thus came to be seen as form of national public service. Julie Peetet observes, "Changes in the meaning of domesticity are most apparent in women's lexicon. For women who describe their daily chores as a form of 'struggle' (*nida*) and themselves as 'strugglers' (*munadilin*) just to survive and maintain the family in the face of attacks that penetrate domestic space is perceived as a form of participation in the national struggle" (Peetet;1991;183). Peetet was speaking of the situation in the camps in Lebanon, but the meaning of women's domestic work and their role in the family also underwent a significant transformation in

the West Bank, Gaza Strip and Jerusalem during the early stage of the intifada. The intifada constituted an attempt by the Palestinians to overthrow the Israeli occupation through forms of mass resistance and protest. The intifada programme included the organisation of demonstrations and a regular programme of strikes, the boycotting of the occupation's administrative machinery through the non-payment of taxes and an embargo on Israeli products (Hunter;1991;80,Peretz;1990:55-57). Women participated in all aspects of this programme which contributed towards stripping Israel of the financial benefits of the occupation (Warnock;1990;115). As part of their retaliation, Israel adopted harsh measures to crush the intifada, which included prolonged curfews, raids on people's homes and the demolition of the homes of people who were suspected of being involved in the uprising. As Tamer Mayer highlights "because they spend more time in the home than men do, women witness the demolitions and [are] left with the task of restoring some kind of order to their household and family" (Mayer;1994;77). In this climate the interior- the space of home- which had been seen as safe haven and the site of identity and honour was now regularly violated. Raids would often take place at night disrupting intimacy between men and women, and waking children and family members (Mayer;1994;77). This and other factors served to make the boundaries between home and the public space more fluid, as Mayer suggests, "the occupation's attack on the private sphere is responsible in important ways for sharpening Palestinian women's national feelings and for crossing the line between private and public spheres" (Mayer;1994;63).

Sustaining the family, women's traditional role, was now undertaken in difficult circumstances. Women's roles were a major contributing factor in the prolongation of the uprising (Abdo;1991;25, Hiltermann;1991;207, Warnock;1990;115, Giacaman & Johnson; 1989;161). Women smuggled food and provisions into communities that were under curfew. Part of the ideology of the intifada was to create an alternative Palestinian economy based on Palestinian enterprise which would be able to support

the community. Women contributed to this through home industries organised by the women's committees in which women produced local food products (Hunter;1991;135, Warnock;1990;115). Women's role of visiting the sick and elderly of the family now extended to the wider community and women visited the families of martyrs and those imprisoned. As a consequence of these activities, women became more visible in public spaces. Women went to visit prisoners and petitioned for their release and visited the sick in hospital and the families of martyrs. Women were seen in the streets participating in demonstrations, protecting youths from arrest and handing them stones (Abdo;1991;25). Women also confronted soldiers who came to search their homes when the men of the family were absent as a consequence of imprisonment, injury, or fear of arrest (Mayer;1994;77). Many of these activities led to the injury of women and their own imprisonment. Whereas within traditional social structures women would have been shaming themselves by interacting with unknown Palestinian men and Israeli soldiers, the intrusion of the conflict into the private sphere temporarily suspended these norms.

In this period of intense conflict, when hundreds of Palestinians were being injured and imprisoned, women responded by extending their supportive roles to the wider community. Women used their skills and resources for the whole community as numerous families had members who were injured or imprisoned. Women took up the role of 'Mother of the Nation'- 'Mother of All its Sons', as is evident in the following account found in Rita Giacaman's and Penny Johnson's article "Palestinian Women; Building Barricades and Breaking Barriers":

"In Ramallah, Akram the son of Jamilla, a youthful middle class woman and a US citizen, struggled in vain to free her son from soldiers who were kicking him with their boots and pounding him with their rifle butts. Then, one elderly woman in a peasant dress got hold of Akram and smothered him in a huge embrace while soldiers tried to beat him back. 'He's my son!' she cries 'don't you touch him!'

'Liar' said a soldier, barely out of his teens, 'how can you be his mother?'

‘They are all my children, not like you motherless lot!’ (Giacaman & Johanson;1989;161).

Women were interpellated into positions of the ‘Mother of the Nation’ precisely because of the IDF’s discriminatory practices. Anyone was attacked regardless of political, regional, economic or religious identity, for the fact that one was a Palestinian subsumed all other consideration and made one a target.

The women of the intifada have been spoken of as a general category however the above quote indicates which women took up the role of ‘Mother of the Nation’. It was predominantly mature women from villages and refugee camps who confronted soldiers and took many of their ‘blows’ upon their bodies, as Hunter suggests the intifada began as a ‘revolt of the poor’ (Hunter;1991;62). These women were not afraid to use their bodies. Nahla Abdo describes the mother of the nation as typically being,

“The middle aged woman, usually in her traditionally embroidered dress, who is often in the demonstrations. She has invented effective tactics for saving children in danger of being arrested or beaten by Israeli soldiers. By expanding her role to encompass all other children, she has dissolved herself into the wider nation” (Abdo;1991;25).

In photographs of the intifada and news coverage the role of these women was also evident. Significantly, as Nahla Abdo writes, it is women from these sectors of society who took up the call to reproduce the nation and produce the cadre of fighters. (Abdo;1991;28) rather than middle and upper class women who tended to have smaller families and whose members did not frequently participate in street confrontations. In addition, it is mainly those women who have passed their childbearing years who were active in the streets. These women commanded considerable respect in Palestinian society, which is based on an acknowledgement of the sacrifices they have born and the children they have reared. These heroic women featured strongly in intifada legends which were circulated during the uprising. Women were depicted as the heroines of these narratives protecting young men from assault and arrest. Examining the narratives one finds that the stories normalised actions which occurred in this time

of crisis, which would otherwise have been considered inappropriate behaviour. For example, one of the tales tells of how a woman gives shelter to a young man fleeing from soldiers. She advises him to put on a pair of pyjamas and get into bed beside her daughter who was sleeping. When the soldiers came to search the house suspecting that a youth had entered they found only the mother, her daughter and her 'husband' asleep. After the soldiers had left the young man thanked the woman and left. "Two days later the young man came back and told the woman, "You trusted me with your daughter, and I lived up to your trust, and now I have come to ask for your daughter's hand to be my wife" (Kanaana;1995;156-157). Women were resourceful in protecting young men and boys in numerous ways, ranging from hiding them in their clothing, to opening up their homes for refuge. One Intifada activist told me how when soldiers came to search his home he took his mother's place in her bed which was warm from where she had been sleeping, in order to pretend that he had been in all night. Women, can therefore be seen to have used their bodies and the role ascribed to them in the national discourse in numerous ways during the uprising.

The artistic imagery produced in the intifada did not, in general, represent the actions of women on the ground. Their confrontations with soldiers and their creative forms of resistance were hard to contain in the previous styles of representing women. Tamari and Johnson noted from an interview with Sliman Mansour, that for him, "the female figure could not portray the new reality of the intifada, a remark which suggests that the female figure is suitable for a dream or fantasy" (Tamari & Johnson;1995;171). In the field of art, if one takes an overview of work produced during the intifada, one finds that the figure of the Palestinian woman is not a prominent motif, unlike preceding years when the representation of women abounded in the visual field. Nonetheless several paintings featured women at the forefront of the struggle hurling stones or raising the flag as in the work, Intifada by Shafeeq Radwan (1996, ink) (fig.94), or protecting children from arrest as in Hashem Klub's From the Intifada (1988, oil on canvas)

(fig.95). Or as in Jawad al Malhi's Day of Peace (fig.33, they are assisting members of the community. In a manner of speaking, these paintings documented the involvement of women in the intifada. Radwan's drawing, for example, features a young woman in action. Although young women were part of the uprising this did not correspond to the place they were afforded in the representation of the intifada. Vera Tamari took a different approach for example, in her ceramics, presenting women in their demolished home holding portrait of their martyr (Untitled, c.1990 ceramics (fig.96). These representations were based more on the images of women that Palestinians were witnessing rather than on idealised image.

The UNC Communiqués

The communiqués produced by the United National Command during the years of the intifada were important in sustaining the uprising and in organising the forms of resistance the community employed to challenge the occupation. The leaflets were addressed to the community with their appeals occasionally being directed to specific groups. These leaflets worked in tandem with the neighbourhood committees which co-ordinated the welfare and forms of protest of particular neighbourhoods. The communiqués can be understood as a national text which were interpreted and implemented by the neighbourhood committees. As we saw with poster art in the second chapter, Benedict Anderson's stress on the importance of print culture for uniting the nation comes into play once again. Andrew Rigby found this expressed in his study of the intifada; on the subjects of the leaflets he quotes a young Palestinian as saying, "They are like the Koran to the people, to the youths. When they arrive in the villages they are studied, discussed...they are our constitution" (Rigby;1991;25). As a national text the leaflets can be analysed to see how women were represented in the national discourse.

The address to women in these national scripts, which provided a calendar of events for protests and resistance activities, was not distinctive. The leaflets predominantly called on the “Sons of Palestine”, “Brothers”, “Cubs” and “Soldiers of Justice”. Women were seen as part of society and addressed when the leaflets spoke of “the mass of our glorious people”. Women were more commonly addressed as sisters, wives, daughters or mothers, their status being defined by their relationship to men. Communiqué No. 10 says “O masses of the PLO, great glory and esteem to the [Palestinian] woman for her devotion and generosity to her people, as well as to the mothers, fathers, girls and children- the flowers and lion cubs, and all the selfless generation” (Mishal & Aharoni;1994;71). Women are imaged as providers and the caretakers of the men in the conflict, while girls are depicted as flowers and boys as lion cubs. Young women, however, were involved in demonstrations in the first years of the intifada, although as I suggested it is the figure of the middle-aged mother in traditional dress who was most involved in the intifada. In 1998 when Palestinians commemorated fifty years of the *Nakba* in Jerusalem it was a young schoolgirl who fearlessly ran past the soldiers and their trucks waving a huge Palestinian flag while the other young boys and girls followed her⁷.

I would like to express a word of caution and also raise questions regarding the issue of gender analysis. Applying a feminist perspective to the intifada has its inevitable problems. Women saw themselves as active participants in the intifada, which was a war like situation. In a life-threatening atmosphere, women responded and resisted in ways which they saw as appropriate and in ways in which they thought they could be most effective whether that was creating food products, hurling stones, or hiding those fleeing from arrest. These responses were evidently contoured by women’s gendered identity. How a woman from a refugee camp responded to a situation was informed by

⁷ I witnessed this scene outside The National Palace Hotel and on the corner of Zahra Street when I went to attend the march in remembrance of the *Nakba* in Jerusalem.

her experiences and her identity in the same way that the response of a middle class woman was conditioned. The participants of the intifada saw themselves struggling as a community: as a unit in which the roles assigned to men and women answered to the needs of the community. It is clear that these responses were divided along the lines of gender and were based upon the roles men and women had previously occupied in society. Thus the intifada cannot be said to have totally revolutionised women's positions. There is no underestimating of their contribution to the uprising, as Joost Hiltermann explains:

“The position of women in the West Bank and Gaza Strip did advance due to their participation in the national movement by sheer virtue of the role they played in their communities. It may have changed their consciousness and their identity of themselves as women, and their participation may have given them legitimacy as social actors rather than as homemakers and the preservers of culture. One could see in the streets during the uprising, who was making the decisions, and who was co-ordinating the resistance behind the barrage of rocks. Women played an increasingly important role, especially since many men were imprisoned. But the point should not be overstated. Women have not been liberated from existing constraints; it is simply that the constraints at a time of national crisis were temporarily suspended” (Hiltermann;1991;215).

Many women however did not see themselves as discriminated against or unequal vis-à-vis men. We in academia see these women as subjugated but the women do not see or speak of themselves in that way. To dismiss their response as merely false consciousness positions us in the academy as the all-knowing subject and does not enrich our scholarship. I do not have any answers but the values and identities of Middle Eastern women pose a challenge to the ways in which we apply questions of gender to our subjects of study.

I would like to bring to a close the discussion of motherhood by looking at a final representation- the Mother of the Martyr. The decades of struggle for the liberation of

Palestine have cost many lives, and in order to normalise the loss of members of the community who died for the liberation of Palestine were attributed the status of martyrs. Martyrdom transformed the death of loved ones from a source of trauma and grief into a source of pride. Martyrdom was considered a sacrifice for the birth of the nation. Mothers were glorified for sacrificing their sons, foregoing their own future protection by investing in the larger anonymous caretaker of the nation. The figure of the mother of the martyr is twinned with the mother of the nation. Having lost her son the mother takes up 'mothering' responsibilities in the community. Julie Peetet highlights that this functioned in "affirming the enmeshment of her sacrifice in the larger sociopolitical matrix" (Peetet;1993;57). Mayer comments upon these women observing that, "Many of these mothers who used to be apolitical have become politicised with the death of a child...[one mother said] before the death of my daughter I could only think of my work...now I want to continue what she and other *shaheeds* (martyrs) started ...I want to hold onto this land even harder...it is the blood of the *shaheeds* that paves my national path" (Mayer;1994;78). The mothers' patriotism was heralded in an intifada communiqué that announced the independent State of Palestine: "Let the mother of the martyr rejoice she has lifted her voice twice: first on the day of her son's death and again on the day of the declaration of the state" (Mishal & Aharoni;1994;140). Mothers of martyrs commanded respect within the community as explained in this quote:

"The stature accorded the mother of the martyr is a communal expression of the solidarity attendant on the national conflict. Delegations of activist women visit her on religious and national holidays, giving gifts of sweets. During national celebrations, marked by rallies and large public gatherings she is usually seated in the front near the leaders, a position of honour that indicates respect for her new status as one who had made a substantial contribution to the national endeavour" (Peetet;1993;56).

By sacrificing her son to the cause the mother forgoes her personal relationship with her son and in so doing her position as mother is also elided which is recuperated by becoming the 'mother of the nation'. The different representations of the mother figure

which I have discussed are contained in the story of 'Umm Saed' by Ghassan Kanafani.⁸ She is the embodiment of steadfastness and endurance, coping with poverty and the hardship of life in the camps. Her son Saed leaves to join the *feyedeen*. She is proud of him but also fears for his safety. In particular, she is concerned that there is no one to provide him with food and protection. In the story, she expresses her wish to go and look after all the young men of the camp but is unable to because of her responsibility to her younger children. However the person who she discusses this with responds by saying, "There is no need to visit him there. Let him manage alone. A man who joins the *feyedeen* doesn't need his mother anymore " (Kanafani;1983;79). Umm Saed encompasses several of the images of women that have been discussed: the peasant woman, the preserver of traditions who lives in the refugee camp, the mother of a fighter, and after the departure of her son she desires to be the mother of all.

The Motherland

From the representations that have been discussed and from the practices of Palestinian women in the figures of the mother of the nation and the mother of the martyr we can begin to discern what qualities are attributed to Palestine by imaging her as the Motherland. To digress, if one returns to the derivation of the word 'Palestine' in the Arabic language we find that it is already attributed with a female identity. In conjunction with this the word for community derives from the word for mother which is 'Umm'. The community is the *Umma*- those who come from the same mother. This is reiterated in the paintings of Mansour and Hilmi (The Village Awakens fig. 43 and Palestine fig. 75). Both community and Palestine in the Arabic language are female, thus it is not totally arbitrary that the Palestinian nation is conceived of as a female. Language may well be a basis for the gendering of the homeland, however a female

⁸Ghassan Kanafani was born in Acre in 1936 and his family fled Palestine in the war of 1948. He was known in the West as the spokesman for the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine but is remembered in the Arab world as a novelist. His works are continually being re-interpreted in film and theatre productions. He was killed in July 1972 by an explosion when his car was booby-trapped.

identity in language is not a sufficient explanation for the diversity of images that have been created of the female homeland. What interests us here is how this female identity is elaborated in the national discourse as a way of creating an image of the homeland.

If we recall the peasant women in the paintings were mainly engaged in traditional activities such as preparing food, harvesting the produce of the land or they were imaged with children in their domestic environment. While the actual women of the intifada were occupied with activities which maintained the emotional and physical sustenance of the community and the protection of its members. These roles and activities suggest that the motherland is a place of “protection, warmth, and emotional security” (Hage;1995;473). The Motherland is primarily a gratifying place, a place for consumption, a place whose subjects are children or subjects performing motherly activities (Hage;1995;474). The motherland is then a utopia of bodily comfort filled with images of women preparing food, clothing and protecting their children. Thus, the motherland is imaged as meeting the subject’s emotional and physical needs. Hage suggests that the qualities of feeling at home derive from being able to have a sense of familiarity and security. Security is “understood by accessing base concepts of fixedness and being inside and enclosing space or a container” (Chilton &Ilyin:1993;9), a definition which Hage suggests bears a relationship to the description of the nation by Cohen who speaks of it as “a space of absolute unity and solidarity associated with feelings of fusion and oceanic gratification” (Cohen;1993;14 in Hage; 1996; 468). These descriptions of the homeland relate to the representation of the homeland as the motherland. The ‘fixedness’ and ‘stability’ recall the image of the peasant woman as a monumental figure and as a static figure as in Anani’s painting Ornaments (fig.73). Elsewhere the images of women engaged in traditional activities and located within particular time frames outside of modernity also correlates to this idea of fixedness. In turn the ideas of a container and the ideas of ‘unity’ and ‘oceanic gratification’ can be

read as a description of Mansour's painting Mothers' Day (fig. 92). The image of Palestine as the motherland also serves as a vehicle for elaborating upon the love for the homeland as eulogised in the following poem by Mahmoud Darwish:

Give Birth to Me Again That I May Know

Give birth to me again...Give birth to me again that I may know in which land I will die, in which land I will come to life again.

Greetings to you as you light the morning fire, greetings to you, greetings to you.

Isn't it time for me to give you some presents, to return to you?

Is your hair still longer than our years, longer than the trees of clouds stretching the sky to you so they can live?

Give Birth to me again so I can drink the country's milk from you and remain a little boy in your arms, remain a little boy forever.

I have seen many things, mother I have seen. Give birth to me again so you can hold me in your hands.

When you feel love for me do you still sing and cry about nothing?

Mother I have lost my hands

On the waist of a woman that is a mirage. I embrace sand, I embrace a shadow. Can I come back to you/myself

Your mother has a mother, the fig tree in the garden has clouds.

Don't leave me alone, a fugitive. I want your hands

To carry my heart. I long for the bread of your voice, mother!

I long for everything. I long for myself....I long for you

(Darwish;1984;21).

Throughout the poem the relationship with the homeland is spoken of in terms of a relationship with a mother. The desire to return to the homeland is described as the desire to return to the primal site of birth and to the first relationship between mother and child. Exile is expressed in terms of the severance of the infant from the mother. Darwish says, "Give birth to me again so I can drink the country's milk from you". There is an important distinction here, it is not the mother's milk he desires here but the '*country's milk*' which he will acquire *from* his mother. The mother then becomes the

vessel through which the homeland nurtures him. Thus it is the relationship with his homeland that he desires which he acquires through his mother. The imagery of the poem is filled with expressions of a desire to return to innocence, "I have seen many things, mother I have seen. Give birth to me again so you can hold me in your hand". The desire of the author is to negate his experiences and return to place before knowledge. Knowledge, in this case, is the experience of exile. Thus innocence is imaged as a time and place before exile, by implication Palestine of pre-1948. The return to the homeland is imaged as the return to the maternal world and the safety and security of the mother. The use of this analogy serves to naturalise the relationship between the individual and the country as the relationship is described as a biological bond. Cohen describes such a relationship in the following terms:

" The infant's earliest feelings of symbiotic love and identification with the lost object are articulated directly into the nationalist sentiment. The link with the native soil is likened to an umbilical cord and attachment to the homeland is captured in the figure of the baby at the mother's breast" (Cohen;1993;15 in Hage;1996;474).

Mahmoud Darwish's description is not unique. Fadwa Tuqan also describes the return to the homeland using similar metaphors. Fadwa Tuqan⁹ is the sister of the famous national poet Ibrahim Tuqan and is considered an important Palestinian female writer. Fadwa Tuqan's poem *Nida' al- Ard* (The Call of the Land) written in 1954 are the recollections of a refugee of his land from which he has been separated. His desire to return to the land overwhelms him one night and he decides to return even if it means risking his life. The way the land is described uses the metaphor of the motherland as the following extract shows:

"He recalled a land which had raised him and fed him generously from her breast since his infancy". Then Tuqan continues, "He feel passionately on his land, smelling the soil, kissing the trees and grasping the precious pebbles. Like an infant, he pressed his cheek and mouth to the soil, shedding there the pain he had borne for years. He listened to her heart whispering tender reproof

⁹Fadwa Tuqan was born in Nablus in 1917. She has written numerous poetry collections and is considered one of Palestine's prominent national poets. She also wrote her autobiography "A Mountainous Journey" in 1984.

You have come back?

I have, here is my hand.

Here I will remain, here I will die, so prepare my grave.

(Tuqan in Sulaiman;1984;124-125)

The return to the homeland is imaged as a reunion with the Mother. However the consequence of this reunion is death. This is not unlike the image of the martyr who only unites with his virgin bride in death. Thus both unity with the woman and unity with the homeland are realised in death. What is apparent in the above extract and in the poem "Enough for Me" by Fadwa Tuqan quoted at the beginning of this chapter is that Tuqan does not articulate a female subject position in her nationalistic texts. It is hard to distinguish her writing from that of other male nationalist poets. Her relationship to the homeland is described in terms of the masculine to a feminine homeland. Her writing implies that in order for a woman to express her *love* and patriotism for the Motherland she must adopt a masculine subject position. What becomes apparent in Fadwa Tuqan's writing is that the national discourse does not provide women with a subject position that derives from women's experiences in order that women might express their desire to return to the homeland using the maternal metaphor. This reading of Fadwa Tuqan's work can be substantiated if one examines extracts from her autobiography. Fadwa Tuqan is from a prominent Nablus family and was required to lead a secluded life in accordance with social norms of the upper class. Her talent for writing was apparent in her youth. Her father pressured her to write nationalistic poetry so that she would follow in the footsteps of her famous brother Ibrahim. However, for her, this role was in contradiction to her life of seclusion, since the world of political discussion was inaccessible to her. She wrote:

"Where was I to find an intellectual atmosphere in which I could write political poetry? From the newspaper my father brought home at lunch everyday? The newspaper is important but it doesn't have the power to inspire poetry in the depths of one's soul. I was enslaved isolated in my seclusion from the outside world, and my seclusion was imposed as a duty- I had no choice in the matter" (Tuqan in Badran & Cooke;1990;28).

Fadwa Tuqan also had an insecure relationship with her mother. Fadwa Malti-Douglas in her analysis of Tuqan's biography describes the way in which Fadwa saw herself as non-existent in her mother's eyes, "The narrator mentions that the mother always told her children anecdotes and entertaining stories about their childhood at which they would laugh. Fadwa invariably awaited her turn, which never came. And when she would ask her mother to tell her stories about her she got nothing in response" (Malti-Douglas;1991;167). It was from her father that she endeavoured to seek approval by attempting to write the nationalistic poems he desired. Nonetheless, it was only after his death and the war in Palestine of 1948 that she was able to write nationalistic poetry. She said, "In 1948, during the Palestine war, my father died. With the loss of Palestine my writing problems also ended. I began to write the nationalist poetry my father had always wished me to write" (Tuqan in Badran & Cooke;1990;30). Thus it was after the loss of Palestine and the death of her father that she began to write nationalistic poetry which expressed love for the nation from a masculine position.

In Palestinian art there have been interventions into this nationalist imagery which have attempted to articulate the mother(land)/ daughter relationship, for example with a video work by Mona Hatoum entitled Measures of Distance (1988, video) (fig. 97) In this piece we have a rare representation of a mother /daughter relationship. Mona Hatoum however lives outside of Palestine, in Europe, and much of her work has not been seen in Palestine apart from on one main occasion when she held an exhibition at the avant-garde Gallery Annadiel in the Old City of Jerusalem. There she exhibited her work with household utensils and a contemporary map of Palestine reproduced in Nablus soap cubes (as was discussed in chapter two). One can therefore assume that the proportion of Palestinians in Palestine who are familiar with her work is unfortunately minimal.

Before her Measures of Distance, she created an installation for a Toronto exhibition entitled “Nationalisms: Women and the State”. Hatoum participated in the show with a piece in which she used a projected image from a newspaper clipping of a Palestinian woman confronting an Israeli soldier. At the centre of the projection she placed a small lighted shelf with portraits, which was meant to have a shrine like quality, while the floor was scattered with stones each with a number and date (A Thousand Bullets for A Stone, 1988 installation), (fig. 98) (Brett;1997;53). Hatoum, expressing her opinion of the piece, said, “overall I felt really unconvinced by it because the intifada was such a strong expression of dissent or protest and had manifested itself in so many different ways...For me that was really the beginning of the end of working in an overtly political way” (Archer;1997;13). Guy Brett highlights that, “her immediate reaction was to re-interpret the whole matter of ties and separation in terms of the personal” (Brett;1997;53), an approach which she took with her video ‘Measures of Distance’.

Measures of Distance consists of letters written to Hatoum by her mother which were sent to her in London from Beirut, photographs of her mother in the shower and a taped conversation between mother and daughter discussing their feelings around issues of sexuality. The letters in Arabic work as a veil or screen between the audience and her mother in the shower. Another dimension of distance is created for an audience who doesn't understand Arabic as the conversation takes place in Arabic. The Arabic dialogue is also overlaid with extracts from the letters which are read in English in a subdued voice. The video consists of many layers, many of which we are excluded from through the difference of language and the narratives of a relationship which we are not part of. The mother daughter conversation is an intimate one revealing the special relationship between the two women. The mother in this piece is not a stereotype as in the nationalist imagery but somebody's actual mother. Nor is this mother mute and positioned to act as a screen on which desires are projected, rather this mother is a subject with her own desires both as a woman and as a mother. When

first watching the video one is not given a full profile of the mother's figure what we encounter are vague close-ups of areas of the body such as the breast and the stomach which seem both familiar and unfamiliar. The sequence which is created with the layering of slides has a rocking gesture. It carries us up to the surface of the body and away again in a way that is both disorienting and uncannily familiar. This movement seems to express a desire on behalf of the daughter to be close to the body is echoed verbally by the mother in her letters. Desire then is expressed on both sides. The piece is significant in that it explores female desire for the maternal but not through the use of masculine frames of references. Rather, the piece seems to be informed by the idea that "men establish their identity, their sense of self in opposition to the mother, while daughters establish their sense of self through a continuing identity with the mother" (Feder-Kittay;1997;269). Hatoum's piece expresses the experience of distance from the terrain of the maternal body; a distance and severance which has been brought about by the loss of the symbolic motherland which has forced mother and daughter to live in different parts of the world. The screen fades to black, while the daughter continues to read from the letters which give an account of the bombing of the main post office in Beirut informing us of a break in communication between mother and daughter (Betterton;1996;190).

Another piece which can be read as an intervention into the utopic images of the motherland produced in the mainstream nationalist discourse is the assemblage entitled Womb (1997, assemblage) (fig.99) created by the artist Khalil Rabah. In this work the organ of the woman's body takes the shape of an every day object- a suitcase. The womb, a space that virtually defies representation, is in this piece signified with a banal object. The suitcase is empty, albeit for a chair that lies awkwardly inside preventing the case from closing. The commonly held notion of the womb as a place of warmth and security is disrupted through its representation as an interior that looks uninviting and barren. The surface of the case has an uncanny

resemblance to skin evoked by the patchwork of plasters that cover the surface. The image however is one of dead skin, not of a live functioning vessel. A suitcase forms a skin to carry important belongings. In the past the hides of animals were used for carrying belongings. Yet in the space of the womb/case, the space of nurturing, and the space of belonging/belongings is represented as a void. There is nothing with which to assemble an identity, no tell tale signs of personal idiosyncrasies or national signifiers. The absence of such items 'unpacks' the relationship between belonging and belongings and the way in which material culture is used to construct identity and an identification with place. Edward Said notes how he always has an over-packed suitcase (Said;1986;60) and how items from the homeland take on a heightened significance in exile. He says "photographs, dresses, objects severed from their original locale...much reproduced, enlarged, thematized and embroidered and passed around, they are strands in a web of affiliation we Palestinians use to tie ourselves to our identity and to each other" (Said;1986;14). Rabah's assemblage can be seen to challenge the dominant masculine fantasy of the motherland and the fantasy of the return to the motherland popularised in national imagery, for the work questions such utopic imaginings by expressing feelings of dystopia and disillusionment.

Rabah has also challenged the masculine language of the national discourse with his piece *Kufiyeh* (image not available). In this work he deconstructs the traditional headgear worn by men to express political allegiance to the *Fateh* group, a form of clothing that was appropriated from the peasantry. The *kufiyeh* has long been used as a symbol of political resistance. It was used in the 1936 Arab Rebellion by the peasantry and then by the PLO *fedayeen* during the 1970's and by the *shebab* of the intifada in the 1990's. The *kufiyeh* has come to be one of the most easily recognised symbols of Palestinian identity and a sign of patriotism and masculinity. In his piece Rabah has removed all the black threads from the scarf thereby dividing the scarf into black and white masses. This act serves to remove the scarf's organising grid,

transforming it almost into a veil which is a female article of clothing in the Middle East. By deconstructing this symbol Rabah calls into question the fact that political activism has become a criteria for masculine identity among the Palestinians which is commonly announced by sporting a *kufiyeh*.

The image of the motherland has gone in and out of fashion from the turn of the century to the intifada which is evident from the examples cited in this chapter. However the intifada marked the beginning of the end of figuring the homeland through the figure of the woman, who in Rabah's piece finally became a dystopian representation. However this disappearance of the female figure has not been replaced by the image of the Fatherland. The Fatherland is defined by Ghassan Hage as being populated by subjects who embody the will of the nation and are abstracted from their bodies and so are willing to sacrifice themselves for the nation (Hage;1995;478). In a sense, this description recalls the images of young men who were willing to sacrifice themselves for the nation who covered their faces with flags, *kufiyehs* and the image of Yassir Arafat who we saw in the discussion of the martyr. Yet this seems to have been a passing phase. What has taken the place of the motherland is the image of President Arafat. Since the arrival of the Palestinian Authority the image of the motherland has albeit disappeared from visual culture. President Arafat is imaged as the father of the nation and is frequently depicted with children. The image of the motherland functioned in a period when the idea of returning to the Palestinian homeland and achieving an independent state was a political ambition. With the signing of the Oslo Accords the first steps towards achieving a Palestinian State were inaugurated. Palestinian Independence was no longer seen as a dream but something for which there was now a blueprint in the form of a detailed agreement which was to be implemented in stages. Palestine went from being a space of imagining filled with the dreams of freedom and return to a place in which the logistics of nation building within the patchwork of autonomous areas had to be worked out. The image of the motherland therefore may

no longer be an appropriate image for inspiring the people. In fact, feminine figures have begun to disappear from Palestinian art. Sliman Mansour explained this phenomenon,

“In the old times our concern was to make Palestinian art to give it an identity, but even with the new work is not the same as the past, it is freer and artists have moved towards abstraction. Figures disappear in the work because before there was the idea behind the figure, the figure was a prisoner, was someone picking olives, but now the figure is not doing anything, now the figure is lost. The figure is needed in painting, it is important, but now the figure is not doing anything. It still occupies the imagination of the of artist- it is there in the background, that’s why you find it blurred in the work of artist as it is not clear to them how to represent it”.¹⁰

With the loss of the national impetus, Palestinian art has come to a crossroads where the viability of previous symbols of national identity and the homeland are being tested as to whether they can serve as signs of the future Palestinian state. (This which recalls my earlier discussion of the significance of the flag in the previous chapter). As I have argued the figure of the woman as the beloved, the virgin and the mother is no longer a prominent feature of Palestinian art. However, as a result of the loss of the national impetus Palestinian art is moving in a number of different directions. The field of Palestinian art was never a unified field, and in this thesis I have tended to discuss the dominant popular trends in the articulations of a national identity and representations of the homeland. However, the different concerns that were present ‘below the surface’, if you will, are now apparent. In a sense that is why you still have some painters creating images of the rural landscape and imaging the peasant woman right up through the mid 1990’s, into the period of the peace talks as we notice with dates of some of the paintings discussed in this chapter. For example, in images of peasant woman were still being produced in the late 1990’s by Fathy Ghaban and others. The move to abstraction is dominant however, but incorporates references to the peasant woman whose fragmented body is often represented with a piece of

¹⁰Interview with Sliman Mansour, 14th February 2000.

embroidery that is collaged into or inscribed upon the art work's surface. It is to recent developments in Palestinian art and to the representation of Palestine under the *Sulta* (The Palestinian National Authority) that I now turn my attention by way of conclusion to this thesis.



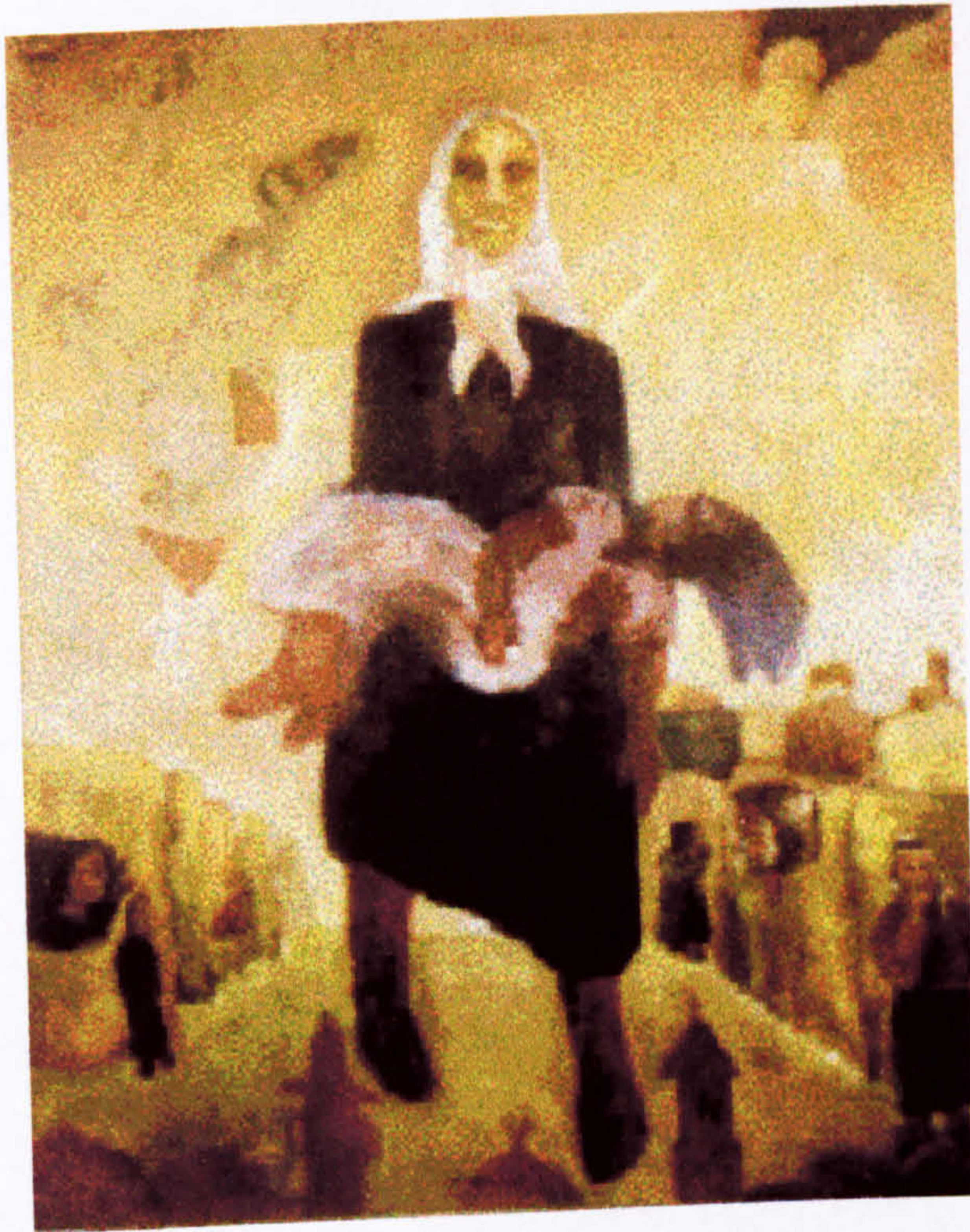
Fayeze al Hassan,
The Martyr's Wedding,
Oil on canvas, 54 x 70cm, 1992 .

Fig. 67



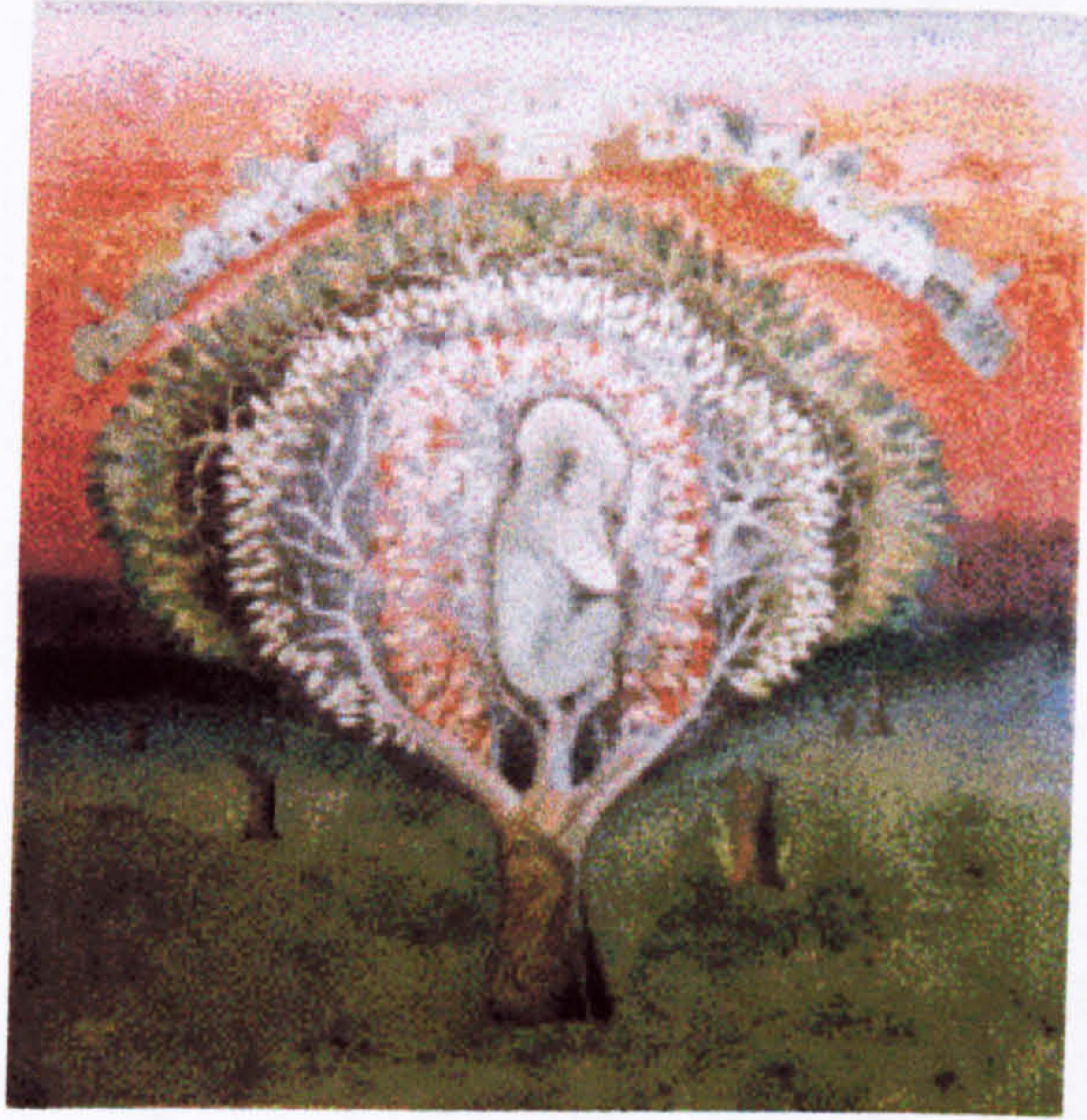
Mohammad abu Sittah,
The Intifada Bride,
Oil on canvas, 55 x74cm, 1989.

Fig. 68



Jawad al Malhi,
The Bride,
Oil on canvas, 140 x 180cm, 1990.

Fig. 69



Nabil Anani,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 90 x 100cm, 1986

Fig. 70



Pillow of the martyr Ibrahim Hssein Awad.
(From " A Cry-in in the Face of the World; The
Palestinian Uprising Album" Middle East Printing
Company. Amman, Jordan p. 295)

Fig. 71



Woman around place where a martyr
fell.

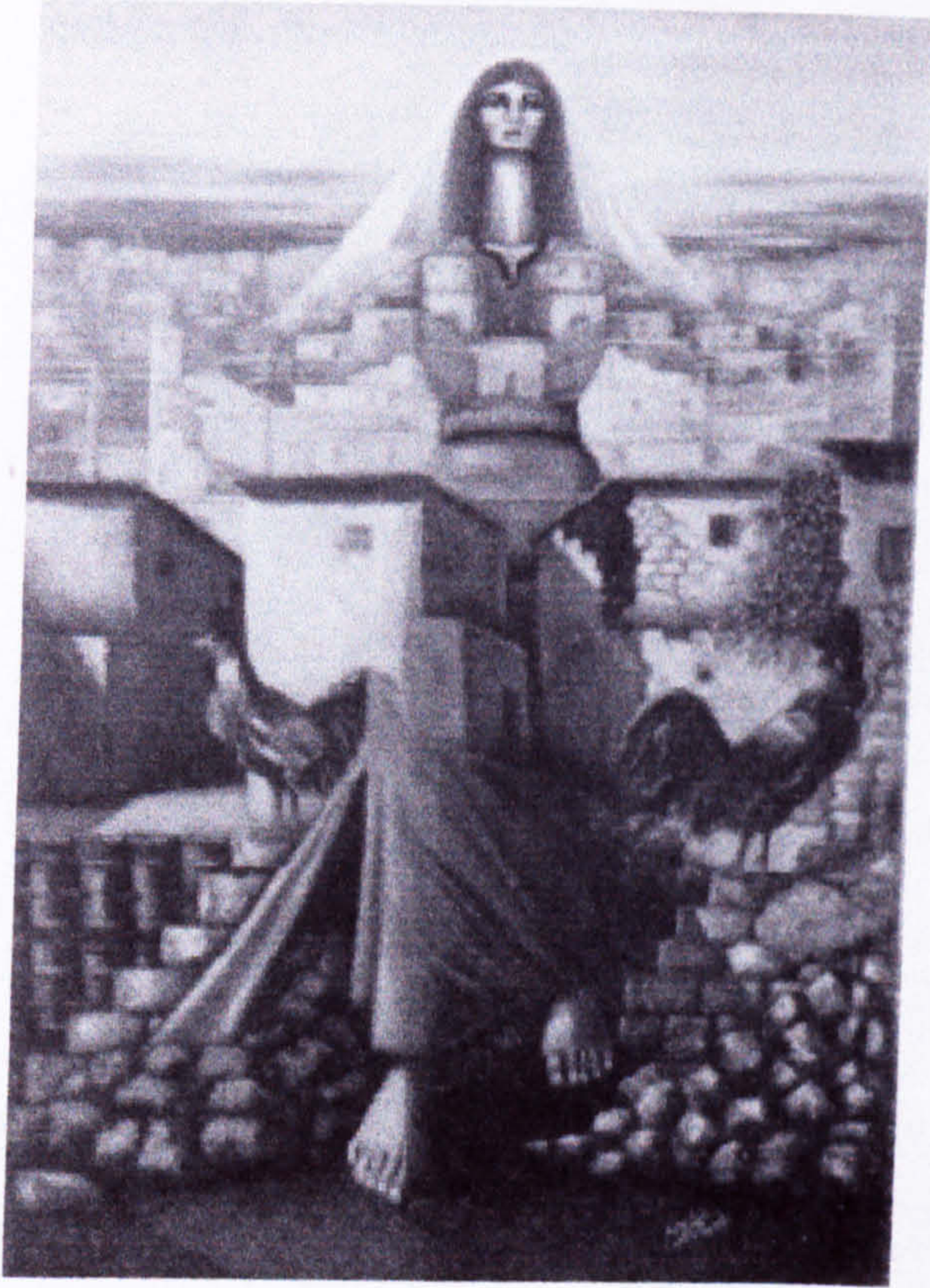
(From " A Cry-in in the Face of the
World; The Palestinian Uprising Album"
Middle East Printing Company. Amman,
Jordan p. 283)

Fig. 72



Nabil Anani,
Ornaments,
Mixed media, 60 x 80cm, c.1985.

Fig. 73



Fathy Ghaban,
Untitled ,
Oil on canvas, 60 x 90cm, 1992.

Fig. 74



Saed Hilmi,
Palestine,
Oil on velvet, 87 x 112cm, 1997.

Fig. 75



Fathy Ghaban,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 120x 80cm, c.1990.

Fig. 76



Sliman Mansour,
The Harvest,
Oil on canvas, 80 x 100cm, 1975.

Fig. 77

Nakba Poster

Fig. 78



Abed Zayed,
Palestinian Landscape,
Gouache, 120 x 93cm, 1998.

Fig. 79



Tahani Skeik,
From the Land,
Oil on canvas, 75 x 95cm, 1994.

Fig. 80



Sliman Mansour,
Salma,
Oil on canvas, 90 x 130cm, 1978.

Fig. 81



Janet Farah,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 120 x 150 cm, 1992.

Fig. 82



Mohammad abu Sittah,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 120 x 80cm, 1987.

Fig. 83



Tahani Skeik,
Woman Embroidering,
Oil on canvas, 68 x 83cm, 1989.

Fig. 84



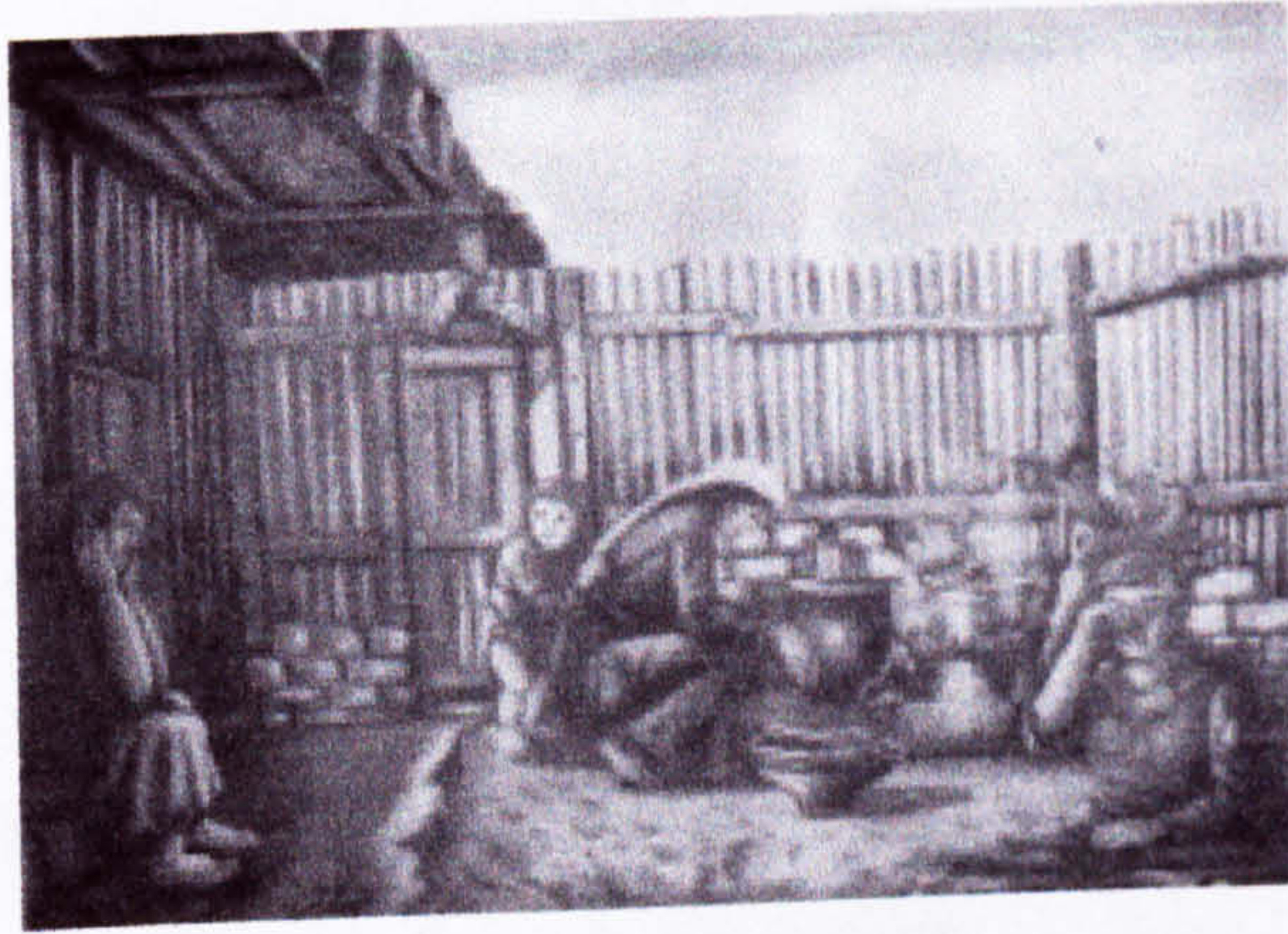
Tahani Skeik,
Making Threads,
Oil on canvas, 68 x 97cm, 1991.

Fig. 85



Fathy Ghaban,
Handmill,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 50cm, 1991.

Fig. 86



Fathy Ghaban,
Untitled,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 50cm, 1987.

Fig. 87



Vera Tamari,
Untitled,
Ceramics, 35 x 22cm, c.1983.

Fig. 88



Abd El Rahman al Muzzayin, Poster, 1979. (From: Both Sides of Peace; Israeli and Palestinian Political Poster Art by Dana Bartlet et al. University of Washington, Seattle, 1996, p. 56).

Fig. 89



Salah al Atrash,
Untitled,
Oil on Canvas, 50 x 70cm, 1987.

Fig. 90



Nabil Anani,
Motherhood,
Oil on canvas, 100 x 120cm, 1979.

Fig. 91



Sliman Mansour,
Mother's Day,
Oil on canvas, 1987.

Fig. 92



Jawad al Malhi,
The Beginning and the End,
Oil on canvas, 240 x 120cm, 1988.

Fig. 93



Fig. 94

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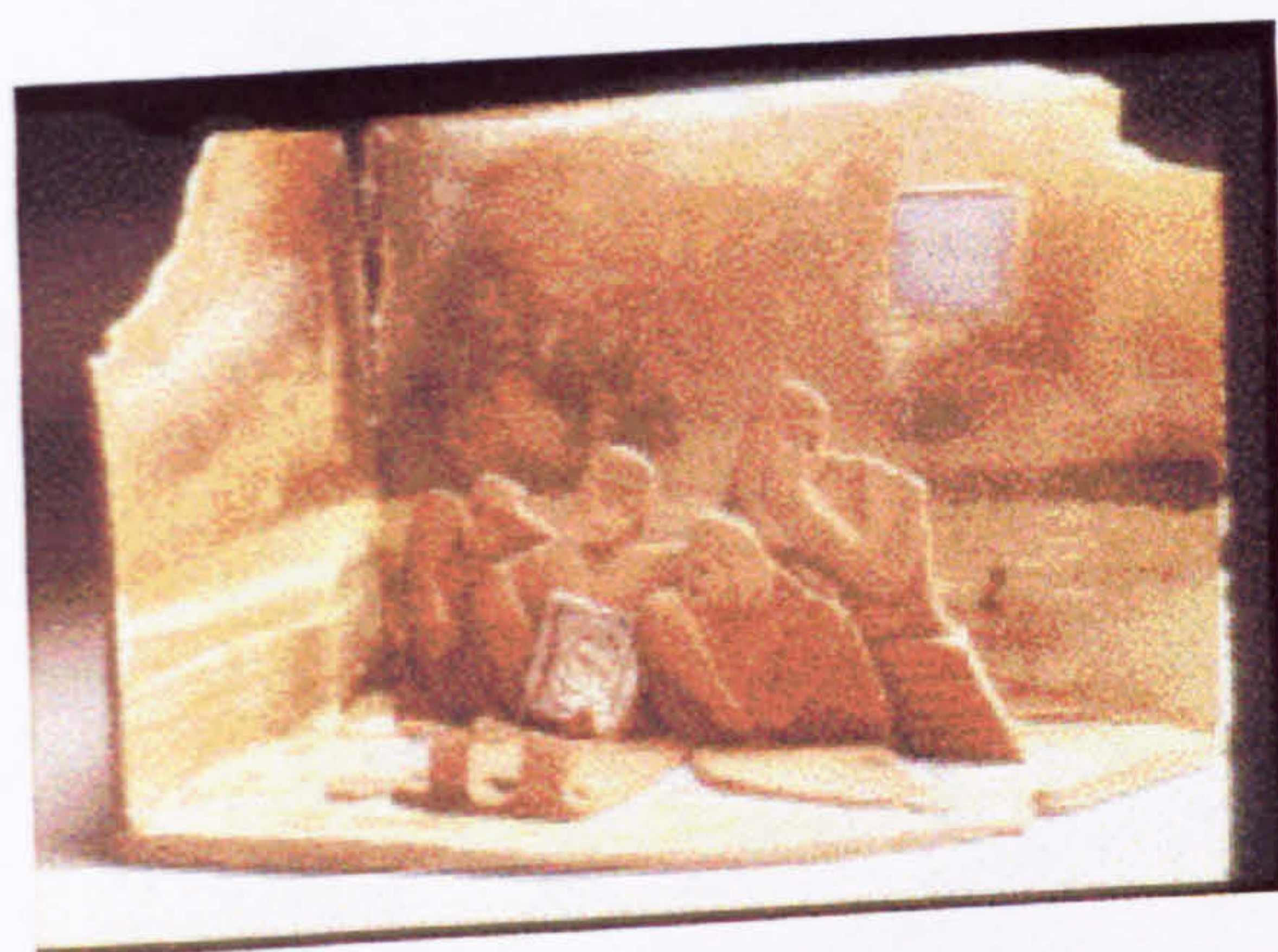
Shafeeq Radwan,
The Intifada,
Chinese ink, 30 x 40cm , 1996.

Fig. 94



Hashem Klub,
From the Intifada,
Oil on canvas, 100 X 70cm, 1988.

Fig. 95



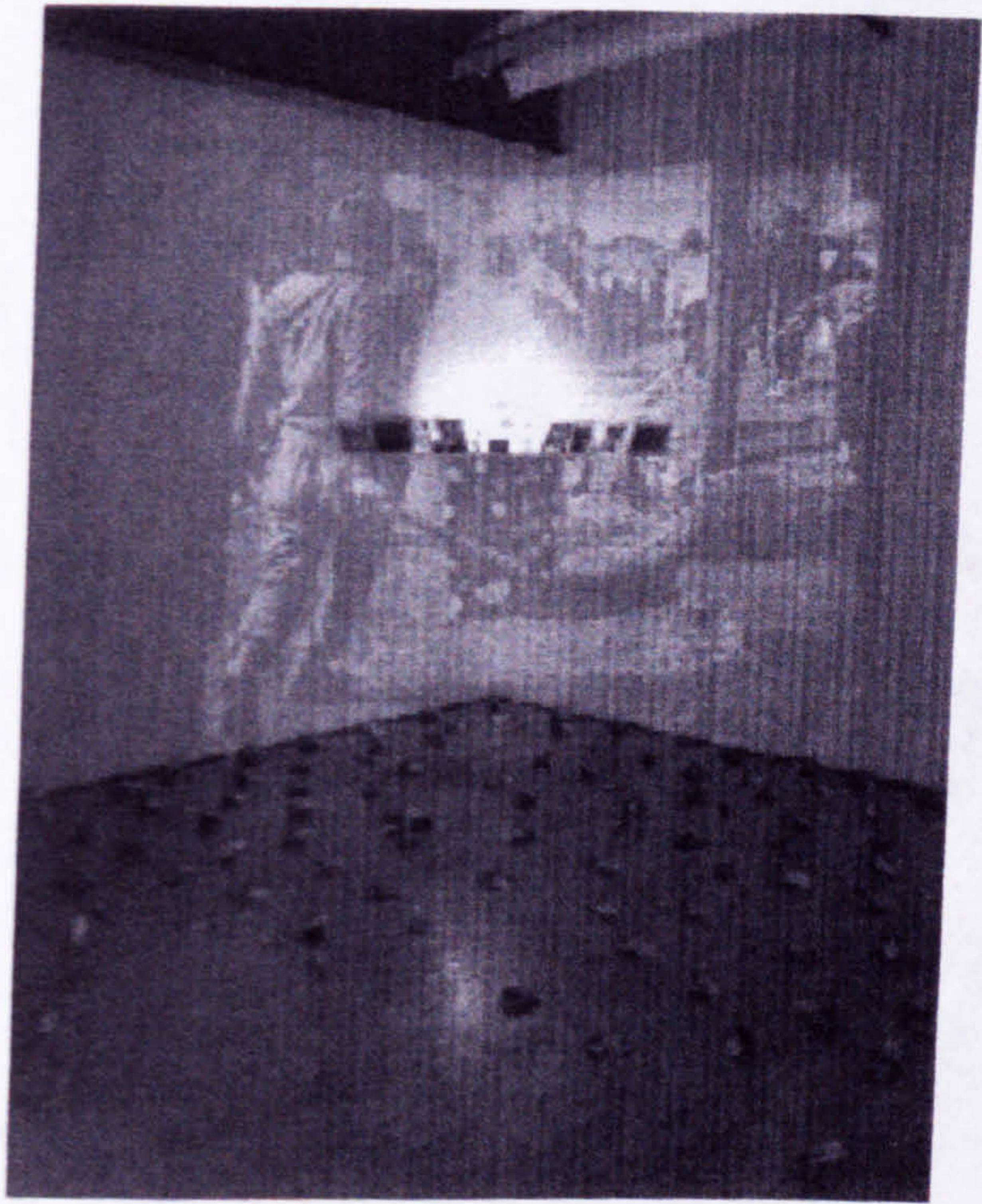
Vera Tamari,
Untitled, Ceramics,
30 x 20 x 12cm, c.1990.

Fig. 96



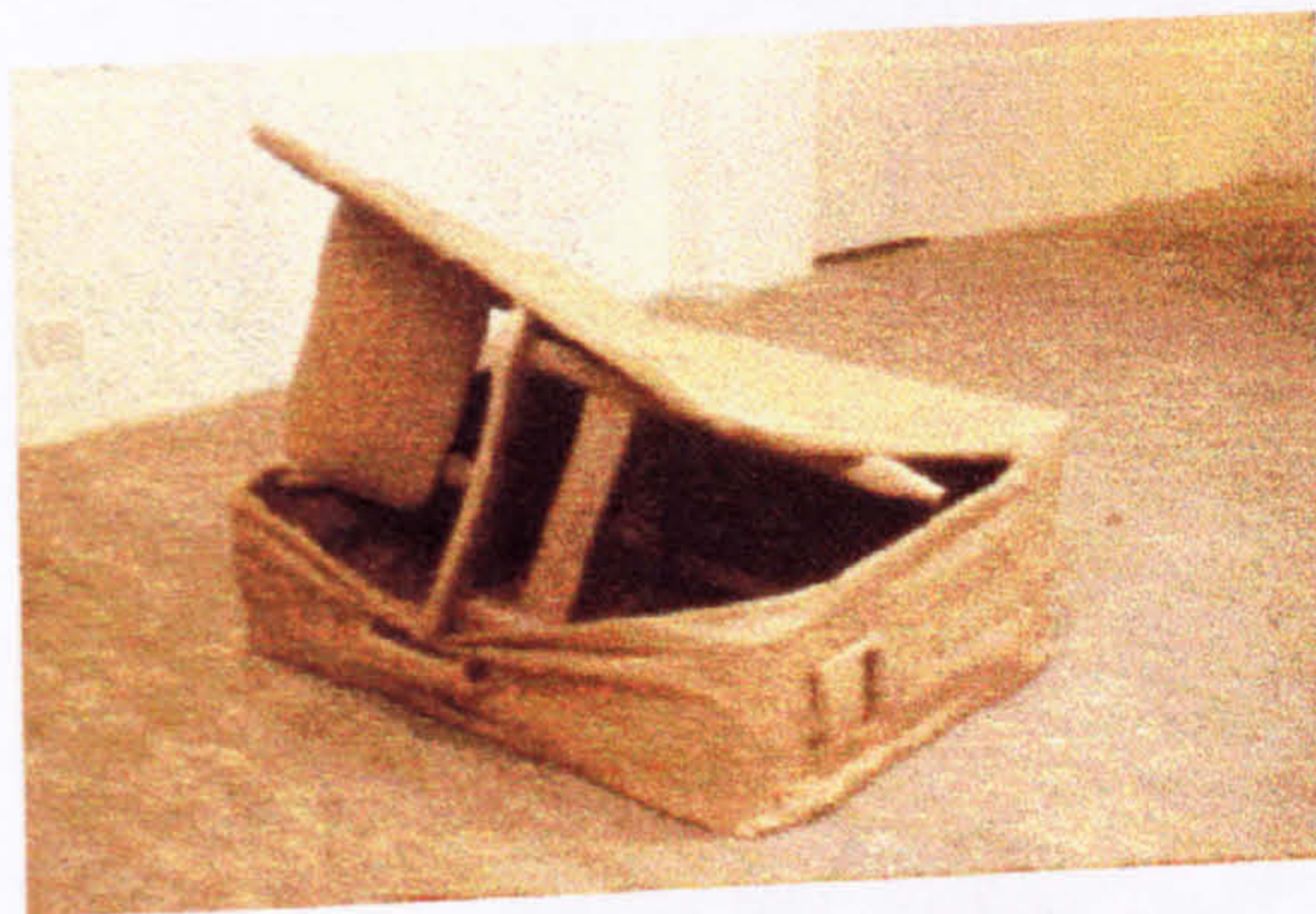
Mona Hatoum,
Measures of Distance,
Video still, 1988. (From, "Mona
Hatoum", by Michael Archer et al.
Phaidon Press, London, 1997, p. 54).

Fig. 97



Mona Hatoum,
A Thousand Bullets for a Stone,
Installation, 1988,
(From, "Mona Hatoum", by Michael Archer et al.
Phaidon Press, London, 1997, p 13)

Fig. 98



Khalil Rabah,
Womb,
Suitcase, chair and band aids,
80x 80x 120cm, 1997.

Fig. 99

Art After Nationalism; The Representation of the Palestinian Homeland and National

Identity Under the *Sulta*

This thesis has set out to explore the representation of Palestine by Palestinians. The intention of my study was to examine how Palestinians created representations of their homeland in a context in which representations of Palestine have been made by others, for Palestine appears in the religious imagery and rhetoric of Christianity, Judaism and Islam. It is also central to Zionist ideology and to its product the State of Israel. For many years, Palestinians were represented in a negative light because of their revolutionary strategies and their opposition to the State of Israel. In more recent years, the question of Palestine has been imaged as the main obstacle to peace in the Middle East. The resolution of the conflict between Palestine and Israel is central to the United States of America's plan for peace in the region; hence the high profile that Palestine and the Palestinians are afforded in the news media. All this points towards the proliferation of representations of Palestine by those who have vested interests in it. In this over-determined field my intention was to see how those who were from Palestine imaged the place that was the site of fantasy and political interest for so many.

My thesis began with the premise that all national identities are constructed. The first chapter outlined the difference between essentialist and constructivist theories of identity formation, the latter forming the theoretical underpinning of the thesis. A central idea of constructivists is that national subjects actively create, foster and maintain their national identity through individual and collective practices and via visual representations, all of which constitute a national discourse. From this starting point the different chapters explored how founding concepts of a nation - a homeland, common origins and a shared past - were represented, articulated and sustained in the Palestinian national discourse. Particular attention was given to the examination of

which visual elements, representation practices and traditions made up the national visual language. As fundamentally a territorial nationalism, the representation of land is central to the Palestinian national discourse. Thus the thesis in its different chapters explored the ways belonging and attachment to the land were articulated in various forms in Palestinian culture such as art, postcards, narratives, political leaflets, wedding rituals, food, interiors and so forth. The thesis therefore was very much an exploration of the popular vocabulary of Palestinian nationalism.

Several key factors distinguish the Palestinian national discourse from other nationalisms. Firstly, Palestine no longer exists on any world map. This means that today there is no continuous geographical bounded territory known as Palestine, thus it is a *lost homeland*. The former inhabitants of this land that now comprises Israel, the Occupied Territories, and more recently several autonomous Palestinian enclaves, have been struggling for recognition of their existence as a people and the right to establish a nation state with defined borders. In turn, it must be remembered that as a consequence of the establishment of the State of Israel the Palestinian population itself is not located upon one geographical terrain. Rather they are dispersed throughout the world, with thousands living to this day in refugee camps in the Occupied Territories and neighbouring Arab countries. In light of these facts, I have argued in this thesis that a central aspect to the study of representations of Palestine is that *it is a place that has been lost and is reconstituted in the representational practices of Palestinians*. These representational practices have become a cornerstone in the formation of a Palestinian identity.

The thesis focused specifically on the representations of the Palestinian homeland created by those who still reside in what was Palestine. These representations that constitute the national discourse were created in the absence of a Palestinian state apparatus, since the PLO, the official political representatives of the Palestinians,

resided outside of the territories occupied by Israel. Therefore Palestinians took it upon themselves to create representations of their homeland in a context in which there were no official institutions through which to do so, and in which overt expressions of Palestinian identity were outlawed by the Israeli authorities. This aspect makes the representations by Palestinians of particular interest for those of us studying nationalism, for it draws our attention to the fact that nationalism is not necessarily an object in itself to be studied, but rather is constituted through the representations and agency of individuals. In this particular context there is an absence of a state apparatus that might function to create images of the homeland, through the media, education system, museums and national events, for example. Thus, individual Palestinians have created a shared national culture with its visual language informed by their collective experiences and desires. In turn, they have created consensus and hegemony within national visual culture as evident in the dominant and recurring signs of Palestinian nationalism, which congeal around the landscape, the peasantry, the Palestinian village, and the feminisation of the homeland.

The second chapter began by discussing definitions of the term 'landscape' as a way of informing our understanding of how the land of Palestine was represented in the Palestinian national discourse. By focusing on the concepts the term 'landscape' held, one emphasised the way in which land was transformed by ideological processes to convey particular sets of ideas. Drawing on the work of W.J. T. Mitchell, landscape was understood to function as a medium of exchange between the members of a community who employed various aspects of the land to express their relationship and perception of it. Thus, for example, I examined the Palestinian peasantry's practice of creating amulets from elements in the landscape, which were used by the peasantry as protection against the evil *jinn*s and spirits, which they believed resided in the landscape. Years later nationalist painters created picturesque images of life on the land depicting a utopia that represented collective fantasies about the landscape of the

past. What these two representational practices had in common was that they expressed fantasies of power. Representations of the landscape, then, were intimately linked to the desire to have control over the landscape, which manifested itself in representation practices. The land, therefore, in both the imaginations of the peasantry and of painters was an element they desired to control but could not mould into the image of their desire. This is an important aspect of the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis, for Israel through its state apparatus has been able in many ways to create the idealised Jewish homeland. This has taken place through major transformations in the landscape in the form of building projects, road networks, the creation of parks, resorts, national reserves, memorials, archaeological work and the simultaneous erasure of a former Palestinian presence and ghettoisation of current Palestinian populations. Palestinians' inability to prevent or influence these transformations informs the representations of the homeland and in particular the idealised image of the landscape of the past and the ambition to overthrow the occupation. In this context, then, the acts of 'suicide bombers' or 'martyrs' can be understood as endeavours to overcome the impotence of being unable to have power over the landscape. The acts are desperate articulations of agency in which individuals attempt to penetrate the landscape of the other, a forbidden space which was once the homeland of their grandparents.¹

Following the discussion of the significance of landscape, the second chapter then proceeded to explore the transformations in the images of the landscape and the perception of the landscape among Palestinians in the years before and after 1948 and the subsequent loss of Palestine. The intention was to explore changes in the representation of the land by a community whose social structure was grounded upon life on the land. The landscape had functioned as a form of exchange between those

¹The acts of 'suicide bombers' not only represent a tragic loss of life for the citizens of Israel, but also perhaps more significantly spotlight the fissures in the nation and the falsity of the claim that the state safeguards its population. Increased measures of security, checkpoints, closures, curfews and so forth, serve to provide a false sense of security but inevitably cannot detract from the irony that in any nation there is the impossibility of complete safety.

people who lived on the land via their sayings, architecture, wedding rituals and so forth. How then was the landscape represented after 1948 and after the life of the communities had been transformed? The particular representations that were the focus of my discussion were paintings, for the nationalistic art movement developed in the 1950's in the years after the war of 1948. The chapter discussed the emergence of the art movement and examined the development of the genre of landscape art and set up the parameters of this genre that had not previously been the focus of study within research on Palestinian art. I argued that the representation of the landscape by Palestinian artists visualised the historical roots and the bond to the land that were conceived in the national discourse as a cornerstone of Palestinian identity. The different sub- genres of Palestinian landscape art, (the representation of exile, the utopian picturesque images of life on the land, the trend for using natural materials), could all be understood as different representations of the Palestinians' relationship to the land and the lost homeland. The different genres, themes and symbols within Palestinian landscape art display a fetishisation of the landscape. In the paintings of exile the images impart a sense of total loss, of exile as a no-place, of a deep nostalgia and longing for the space of the homeland. The glorification of village life, with utopian images of peasant productivity and comforting images of home and hearth epitomised in the maternal image of the motherland that exists outside the trajectory of time, are part of the symptoms of a fetishism of a lost homeland. In turn, the move away from narrative imagery and stereotypes of the peasant and motherland, which had become national icons, towards the use of natural materials, is part of the same discourse. What distinguishes Palestinian artists' use of natural materials is that they function as an index of the place of the homeland. In a sense, then, ordinary and mundane substances such as mud, earth, wood, cacti and natural dyes are elevated to an almost sacred status because they come from the site of the homeland, connote the materiality of place and constitute a fragment of a totality that has been lost.² For some

²This fetishisation of the materiality of the landscape does not only exist among artists, refugees, for example, who

artists the use of natural material marked the development of an 'indigenous visual language' which was not associated with European modes of representation such as oil painting. The impetus to evolve such forms of art can be read as a desire to return to a state of innocence akin to the utopia of the past imaged in the national discourse. This gesture also points towards a form of primitivism that is part and parcel of the glorification of the peasantry as many of the materials and techniques were drawn from peasant crafts. While some artists continued to work within this ideology, others have returned to working in oil and mixed media believing in interventions that could be produced with traditional European materials.

In chapter three I explored in greater depth the representation of the village and the Palestinian peasant, which I suggested was one of the genres in Palestinian landscape art. I examined the way in which the village and the peasant were imaged through a variety of representational practices, from paintings to heritage goods to web pages to museum displays. My intention was to demonstrate that the images of the village and the peasant had become part of the representational practices and popular vernacular in Palestinian society. In the course of the chapter it became apparent that the re-presentation of the village and the peasant in the national discourse played to fantasies about the past and the life of the peasantry. The utopian images of the village that were re-presented provided a way of creating order out of the fragmented experiences of exile by suggesting that Palestinians shared common origins. The symbol of the peasant and the village provided Palestinians with a form for articulating the idea of their shared heritage and of rooting the Palestinians in the landscape of the homeland. It served as a way of tying the people to places in the homeland even if they were members of a generation that had never known those places. For example, refugees speak of themselves as coming from villages which they have never

have not been able to return to visit their land since their exodus frequently ask those who do reach their village for a handful of earth.

experienced as lived places, but which they know solely through the recollections and descriptions of their elders. The chapter argued that representations of the village of the past not only constructed a historical image of Palestine, but could also be read as a vision of a future Palestine. Thus, representations of Palestine embodied images of the past and future in which the present was elided and in which the future was imaged as a return to an imaginary past. As part of the symbolic vocabulary of the village, the peasant was taken up as a national signifier and used to denote the character and culture of the nation. Thus the material culture, such as the embroidery, peasant dances and food of the peasantry, was transformed through processes of reproduction into national symbols. These representations and their usage were part of the production of fantasies about the peasantry of the past that bore little relation to the peasantry of the present and significantly constituted the re-invention and preservation of traditions in the national discourse by Palestinians. Through examining different examples it became evident that representations of the village and the peasantry were used for displaying national identity and as a way of signifying membership of the national community. The numerous forms in which representations of the village and the peasantry were created (including their use in the marketing of luxury residential projects) pointed to the malleability of the signifier which has remained a popular sign of national identity and of the nation's past. The rapid transformation of the landscape through building projects, coupled with the absence of the Palestinian leadership's control of the rural hinterland suggests that the demand for nostalgic re-presentations of village life and the peasantry is likely to continue well into the future.

The fourth chapter examined the ways in which the lost homeland of Palestine was represented as a woman through the figures of the mother, the virgin and the beloved. The use of these different metaphors informed the representations of the homeland and the expression of national belonging. The depiction of Palestine as a woman was not confined to the realm of images but was also related to the significance attributed to

women in the national discourse. As with other third world nationalisms, the space of women's bodies, and in particular their sexuality, became implicit in the definition of the nation's identity as the nation attempted to contour itself vis a vis its colonisers and occupiers. Women were ascribed the role of being the bearers of the nation's cultural authenticity and were seen as the embodiment of unchanging traditions. As vessels of the nation's essentialist identity, women's duties in the national struggle were represented as those of reproducing the nation. Thus, the representations of women in the national discourse worked to shape male and female agency in the national struggle in which women were depicted as fulfilling their national duties by undertaking traditional domestic and mothering activities. Masculinity in the national discourse was constructed in relation to the representation of women and the homeland as a woman as is evident in the discourse of martyrdom in which death was represented as sacrificing oneself for the metaphoric female homeland. Hence, the gendering of Palestine not only created images of the characteristics of the homeland and ways of expressing belonging to it, it also contributed to shaping the performance of male and female agency within the national struggle.

From the discussion in the preceding chapters it is evident that Palestinian nationalism and representations of Palestinian national identity share similarities with other nationalisms. This can be observed in the importance attributed to the peasantry, the landscape and the gendering of the homeland in the national discourse. The peasantry are a cornerstone of many nationalisms throughout Europe and Eastern Europe often celebrated in traditional clothing, folklore, food and dances. Likewise, certain landscapes are seen to represent the homeland and the nation. For example, John Constable's paintings have come to be symbolic of the English countryside, while particular landscapes are preserved and cultivated by National Heritage, all of which create important images in the popular imagination of the landscape of the homeland. Thus many nationalisms select parts of the landscape to be representative of the

homeland. Similarly, many nations are identified through male or female figures. This would seem to suggest that there are certain structural components that underlie modern day nationalisms and that are utilised to foster a sense of belonging to the homeland and membership of the nation. Such imagery serves to provide members of the imagined community with ways of imaging where the people of the nation originate, (uniting them underneath their outwardly differences). It also serves to represent their collective experiences of the past by creating grand narratives of the imagined community of the nation which are often commemorated in public ceremonies. National discourses also function to represent the landscapes the nation inhabits which are often idealised landscapes (as the nation lives neither in Constable paintings nor imaginary Palestinian villages). Implicit in these representations is that these are the landscapes of the nation that the nation works to safeguard and thus reference its boundaries. Three main elements, the peasantry, the landscape and the figurative representation of the homeland, appear to be central in national discourses for tying the people of the nation to the land and its bounded territories, as is the case with Palestinian nationalism and as we have seen in this thesis. The recurrence of these forms in different nationalisms over time would imply that these are some of the most effective ways of cultivating belonging to a designated terrain in populations and of inspiring in them the will to sacrifice themselves for the defence of these spaces.

If it is a precedent that many nationalisms function along the same ideological lines, then what has the case study of Palestinian nationalism contributed to the understanding of the workings of nationalism? In the first instance, there has been an absence of research informed by a constructivist approach on Palestinian nationalism and representations of national identity. This can be understood to be partly due to the fact that Palestinians are engaged in a struggle for recognition of their identity. Many texts, rather than examining the working of Palestinian or Israeli nationalism, focus on validating the claims of each people, for the demystification of national discourses

becomes interpreted from an overtly political perspective and is perceived as anti-nationalist. In addition, as I suggested at the beginning of this thesis, there have been very few studies that specifically examine the visual imagery of Palestinian nationalism, as research has predominantly focused on the historical, political, social and economic transformations of Palestinian society. However, I would argue that this is not the only contribution of my thesis. While I have suggested that Palestinian nationalism shares its forms of representation with other nationalisms, Palestinian nationalism itself differs significantly as the whole discourse is informed by the desire for the lost object: the homeland. A case study of Palestinian nationalism therefore provides specific insights into the articulations of national identity in the context in which the homeland is a lost object of desire. Unlike many other nationalisms and national identities that have been studied, Palestinian identity and a Palestinian homeland are still being contested and fought over. This makes Palestinian identity very different from British identity, for example, as British citizens are not engaged in a continual struggle for recognition of their identity. In fact, one can say that it is likely that many days pass when a British subject does not think about his/her national identity as for the majority of time it is a stable element that is taken for granted. Palestinians, on the other hand, even in the most peaceful of times are regularly confronted with the significance of their identity and the inequalities it carries in the most simple of cases such as when waiting at checkpoints. The antagonism Palestinians experience as a consequence of their identity serves to politicise the identity and fosters the need to counter the experience of inequality. Such encounters are experienced as abrupt negation of the self, which sets off a catalyst in individuals and calls on them to respond to discrimination through forms of self and communal affirmation.

Thus, Palestinian imagery or representation practices have not grown out of the stability of a nation, but emerge from the desire for a nation state. A desire that is compounded by the fact that the favoured landscape is not simply a 'vacant' space of

longing, (it is disputable if such terrains have ever existed in the history of nationalisms), but that it once was a space in *recent history* in which Palestinians lived but is now inhabited by another people. This is a pivotal distinguishing feature of Palestinian nationalism, for the homes of the older generation of Palestinians still exist and are lived in by the Israeli population, while hundreds of refugees in the camps reside not more than several hours from their original villages upon which the state of Israel was built. Hence, aspects of the landscape have become deeply fetishised and symbolic of the Palestinian' nation's loss which has become a uniting feature of identity. In this context every particular experience of exodus is absorbed into an overarching narrative of loss. A key to an old village house is transformed into a sign of the loss of the nation and the desire to return to the site of home is mobilised in the political discourse into the burning conviction to reclaim the land for a homeland for all. Thus, although Palestinians reside on land that was Palestine, it is not perceived as the homeland for as Bowman argues, homeland is a site that is free from antagonisms (Bowman;1994;139). This leads in a sense to what one might categorise as schizophrenic situation. For while Palestinians reside on land that was Palestine and believe in the strategy of being steadfast in the places they inhabit in order not to incur further losses of land, the land is not the desired Palestine imaged in national rhetoric. Thus, the place remains in a constant dialectic of 'this is Palestine, but not Palestine'.

The loss of the land in turn has become a determining feature of the life of Palestinians. Refugees, for example, to the present day live in overcrowded camps, once thought to be temporary residences, and these places have now grown into virtual towns. Distinguishably, it is refugees who have been politically active in the national movement and in resistance in the territories and the Middle East. Noteworthy also is that traditions and rituals that might well have lost significance over time have been maintained and preserved because of the association they have with an identity that is tied to the land. This is evident in wedding rituals, family structures, local social law,

food, traditional dress and so forth, which were discussed in the fourth chapter. Hence the preservation and re-invention of traditions becomes a way of holding on to the land in its absence and of constituting one's identity as Palestinian. People go to great length and expense to maintain these traditions which inevitably have undergone transformation with the realities of a modernity that has brought advanced communication, increased population and family numbers, styles of commodities and consumption. An appropriate example can be taken from Palestinian weddings. The procession to collect the bride from her father's house used to be undertaken on horse, foot and donkey accompanied by joyful singing and dancing. Today families will organise for all the family members, (families have significantly grown in size due to high reproduction rates), to go to the bride's house. A procession of cars and buses are used (which takes considerable organisation) to go and collect the bride. One of the traditions was for the bridegroom to return with his bride upon a white horse. Thus, it is not surprising to see a man in a tuxedo riding a white horse with hundreds of men singing traditional songs and dancing behind him in the middle of a cluster of concrete structures and shelters that make up a refugee camp. In many ways, therefore, it is as though these traditions are suspended in space and made to work in other spaces despite the difficulties. The traditions continue to be re-enacted as they are seen as central to who Palestinians are. Major changes in traditions encounter disapproval and objection from the elders of the community for "they are not the way things should be done". The respect elders in families command owes in many ways to the maintenance of traditions, as family structure is the binding infrastructure of the Palestinian community.

It would seem, therefore, that while I suggested Palestinian nationalism shares with other nationalisms the symbolic representation of the peasantry, the landscape and the gendering of the homeland, in the Palestinian context these perform specific functions. For they are articulations that constitute a resistance strategy in the light of the loss of

the homeland and its subsequent occupation and transformation by Israel. If one looks at the gendering of the homeland for example, many nations are figured as mother or father-lands. Gender in the Palestinian national discourse is determined by the qualities the homeland is represented as embodying. Thus, a nurturing and comforting motherland is cultivated in the context of the alienation and humiliation of the life of refugees and a population under occupation. At the same time the caring female homeland is deployed to position male agency as bringing forth the liberated homeland. Likewise the peasantries are part of many national discourses and are used to celebrate life upon the landscape of the homeland. In the Palestinian context they are the cornerstones of articulating the rootedness of a people to the landscape and of a 'natural' and timeless bond to the landscape. The use of the image of the peasantry also carries a political agenda, for it is intended to interpellate the lower middle class, working class and refugees, many of whom are of village origin. By depicting Palestinian identity as a peasant identity, the national struggle interpellates these populations who make up the cadre of the resistance and the cannon fodder of 'freedom fighters' and 'martyrs'. Simultaneously, a peasant identity invites the middle and upper classes to adopt a patronising position in relation to their national identity. This is in evidence in the upper classes' sponsorship of heritage ventures, their establishment of charities for the preservation and re-creation of traditional crafts and their purchase of artefacts from peasant material culture which they display or wear as markers of quintessential 'Palestinianess'. The emphasis upon Palestine as a nation of peasants has come at the expense of recognising the importance of cities and city culture that existed in Palestine in the 1920's and 30's for example, in places such as Jerusalem, Haifa and Jaffa, all cities that boasted hotels, cafes, cinemas, libraries, literary clubs, boutiques and numerous educational establishments.³ It may well be the

³For detailed discussion of the cultural life of Jerusalem for example see Rochelle Davis' "The Growth of the Western Communities" in *Jerusalem 1948; The Arab Neighbourhoods and their Fate in the War*. Ed. Selim Tamari, Institute of Jerusalem Studies. 1999. Pp32-74.

case that the nature of the cultural exchange and cosmopolitanism of Palestinian cities does not lend itself to images of an essentialist national identity.

From this thesis we have understood that visual culture in the Palestinian national discourse, in which belonging, the re-invention of traditions and re-presentation of the past and the landscape of Palestine are central, is underpinned by fetishism for the lost homeland. As a consequence, certain elements have become symbolic of the homeland.

These conclusions and observations are brought to light by the changes that are underway in Palestinian visual culture since the establishment of the PNA. As we saw in the conclusion to each chapter, developments were manifest in these national signifiers. The image of the motherland, for example, was in decline and disappeared almost completely with the arrival of President Arafat, suggesting that the image of the leader and the female homeland were not compatible. For a female homeland had been used to articulate the loss and fantasy of Palestine, and now this could not be reconciled with the new realities of self rule on fragments of Palestinian land. Similarly, the peasantry became increasingly commodified and worn as a sign of identity and used to unite a now diverse population which comprised Palestinians who had lived in exile alongside those who had lived under years of occupation and who had contributed greatly to the intifada.

In the visual arts, pictorial representation of a lost golden age has declined as artists moved towards greater abstraction accompanied by an exploration of the use of natural materials. Palestinian art continues to be pre-occupied with the complexities of articulations of identity and place as the abandonment of traditional European mediums and the search for an 'indigenous material and language' suggest. If one examines contemporary Palestinian art it becomes apparent that the national visual language

itself has and continues to fragment. It is these transformations that were highlighted at the end of the chapters, which I intend to explore in more detail as a way of concluding the thesis and pointing to further areas of research. In particular, I will examine the visual representations created by Palestinians from the mid-1990's, an era which marked the end of the intifada and the beginning of the peace process, accompanied by the establishment of the Palestinian National Authority. The changes highlighted above point to the evolution of the representation of the homeland in national discourse and provide important contrasts to the imagery that was produced under Israeli occupation. It will be remembered that the representations discussed in this thesis were created in the absence of an official authority to represent Palestinians and in a context in which Palestinian identity was not a recognised identity. Therefore, now that there is an official political body to represent Palestinians residing in Palestine and the Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in a peace process, how is the homeland and national identity being depicted in the visual arts that for many years championed a nationalist agenda? Where and how is the new Palestinian Authority imaging its vision of Palestine? In order to answer these questions it is necessary to understand the main political transformations that have taken place in Palestinian society over this period in order to contextualise this transitional phase, for they mark a significant period of change in Palestinian society. These changes arose with the secession of the intifada and the entry of the Palestinians into a peace process with Israel, which established the Tunis PLO as the ruling power in the areas of the West Bank and Gaza Strip that had been granted autonomy.

Political Transformations: The Ethos of the Intifada

The intifada uprising, which broke out in 1987 and swept through the Occupied Territories, took both Israel and the PLO (the Palestinian leadership in exile) by surprise. The political philosophy of the population of the Occupied Territories had been the resistance strategy of *sumud*. This strategy was favoured by the leadership in

exile, for it meant that the power of negotiating a resolution to the conflict was designated as their responsibility (Swedenberg;1990;27). With the intifada the Palestinians of the Occupied Territories took up active resistance, and in so doing shifted the centre of gravity of political activity from the 'outside' to the 'inside' (Khalidi;1997;200). The ethos of the intifada was upon mass demonstrations, the boycott of Israeli merchandise and disengagement from the administrative machinery of the occupation. In order to achieve these aims, Palestinians set up local alternatives in the form of food production units and local courts to ensure that law and order in the community was sustained. These tasks were undertaken by neighbourhood committees whose responsibilities were to safeguard the community, distribute food, healthcare and alternative education during the prolonged curfews which were imposed upon the Palestinians by Israel as a form of collective punishment (Robinson;1997;96). These committees, as Glenn Robinson notes, arose out of the needs of the community during the intifada and became central to the institutionalisation of the uprising and its ideology in its early years (Robinson;1997;95).

What these committees revealed was,

“How far authority had in fact devolved in Palestinian society during the intifada. Decisions formerly taken on a municipal or national levels were often made during the intifada by self appointed neighbourhood groups...Both the old notable elite and the Palestinian Liberation Organisation in Tunis were often incapable of controlling or even significantly influencing decision-making at this level” (Robinson;1997;94).

The intifada highlighted the extent to which the Tunis leadership was out of touch with the political atmosphere and movements in the territories. Threatened by the prospect of the emergence of an alternative grassroots leadership (even if they came from the ranks of PLO supporters) that would represent the Palestinians in the occupied territories, it endeavoured to claim the achievements of the intifada as its own and to capitalise on the uprising as a way of injecting new life into the PLO's image on the international stage after its defeat in Beirut (Parker;1999;78-79, Robinson;1997;99). The PLO attempted to gain a stronghold in the uprising by supporting aspects of it

which it could control (Robinson;1997;99), one element of which was the writing of leaflets which directed the course of action of the intifada. With a wave of mass arrests in 1990 of members of the leadership of the Unified National Leadership of the Uprising (UNLU), (one of the largest organising committees of the intifada representing supporters of Fateh, DFLP and PFLP), the functions of the UNLU were taken over by well known political personalities which included Faisal Hussein (Fateh), Zuhara Kamal (DFLP), Ghassan Khatib (PCP/PPP) and Hani Bayadun (PFLP). As Robinson highlights, these figures represented a shift from grassroots leadership to a leadership whose connection with Tunis was well established, thereby giving the PLO considerable control over the direction of the intifada (Robinson;1997;99).

Having capitalised on the intifada, which did much to transform the image of Palestinians and the PLO in the international arena, the PLO's support of Saddam Hussein in the Gulf War liquidated the positive image they had hitherto achieved. As a consequence of their support for Saddam Hussein, the PLO was politically isolated both in the international arena and in the Arab world. More significantly, however, was that funding for the PLO from the Gulf States was no longer forthcoming and compounded with this problem was the break up of the former USSR, which left the PLO with few international supporters (Parker;1999;85). Thus, in retrospect, the Oslo peace agreement was signed at a point at which the PLO was at its weakest and was looking for an economic and political solution to its own crisis of legitimacy (Parker;1999;85, Robinson;1997;176). Various peace initiatives by Arab, European and US leaders led to the convening of a Middle East Peace Conference in Madrid in December 1991 which included Egypt, Syria, Lebanon and a joint Palestinian-Jordanian delegation (as Israel refused to deal directly with the PLO in Tunis). The talks continued throughout 1992-1993 but up until that point an agreement had not been reached between the Palestinians and the Israelis. Fear, however, that the US initiative to broker talks between the Israeli and the Palestinian delegation that

comprised members of the local PLO leadership would achieve results, encouraged the leadership in exile to embark on a secret channel of negotiations with Israel with the Norwegians as mediators. These talks produced the Oslo Accords, formally known as the Declaration of Principles. As Parker explains:

“Arafat loyalists in Tunis were getting increasingly afraid that they would be bypassed if the Washington negotiations led to anything substantial. Rather than wait for eventual recognition under the formal process, they went underground and sought a deal that would recognise the PLO with its diaspora structure as the basis for provisional authority in a new relationship between Israel and the PLO” (Parker;1999;83).

Those who signed the peace agreement had not lived under occupation, which was evident in the terms of the agreement, for the responsibilities turned over to the Palestinians had already been administered by Palestinians under the Civil Administration of the Israeli occupation, and so control went from those Palestinians on the inside to those on the outside (Parker;1999;84). The main differences were the official recognition of the PLO by Israel and the fact that the Tunis PLO were given the authority to police the Palestinian population in the main cities and towns of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The signing of the Oslo Accords was undertaken without any consultation between the different levels of the PLO in the Occupied Territories nor with the Palestinian National Council, which functioned as a parliament in exile with representatives from different political groups and independent representatives of the Palestinian people (Said;1995;5-6).

Realities of The Oslo Accords

Under the Oslo Accords, Israel agreed to withdraw from designated areas in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and to give Palestinians authority over education, culture, health, social welfare, tourism, direct taxation and value added tax on local production

(Shehadeh;1995;30). However Israel maintained control over water resources, military orders, (which includes items such as permission to drill wells for water and to plant crops such as tomatoes and eggplants), foreign exchange, regulation of trade and movement of goods and people in and out of the territories (Shehadeh;1995;31). The terrain that the Palestinian National Authority has complete jurisdiction over only constitutes approximately 3% of the total surface area of the West Bank and Gaza Strip. This area is known as 'Area A' and comprises most of the large towns. However, 'Area A' is non-continuous, and Israel remains in charge of the road networks and the entry and exit of persons and goods between them. A further 27% of land is designated as 'Area B', which is made up of a significant number of Palestinian villages. In these areas the PNA has only civil and police power, while 'internal security' remains under Israeli control. 'Internal security' is defined by Israel and any perceived threat in these areas can result in land confiscation, house demolition, arrests and curfews. The remaining 70% of land is designated as 'Area C' and includes Israeli settlements, water-rich areas, agricultural land and so forth (Rabbani;1996;4). What in fact this agreement has created is a series of isolated autonomous cantons within the West Bank and Gaza Strip. It is noteworthy in the agreements that the PLO has conceded that the land is disputed rather than occupied (Aruri;1995;37). This shift in terminology serves to negate the idea that the land has been and still is occupied and therefore serves to diminish Palestinian claims to the land. Thus during the interim phase, a period in which Palestinians and Israelis have committed themselves to negotiating a final peace agreement, many aspects of the occupation are still perpetuated. Nor is there any mechanism in existence for Palestinians to protest against Israeli actions during this phase of negotiations. Hence, while an agreement is being negotiated, Israel maintains the ability to continue with settlement building in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and around Jerusalem.⁴ In addition, a closure of the West Bank

⁴This is evident in the fact that since the signing of the Oslo Accords a further 5% of land has been confiscated in the West Bank which includes land for the building of settlements and a network of bypass roads to the settlements

nominally on the grounds of security, as a form of collective punishment has been in force since March 1993, preventing West Bank residents from entering Jerusalem or Israel. This in turn has seriously affected Arab businesses in Jerusalem, part of whose trade came from the West Bank clientele. The closure has also affected unemployment levels and living standards, as Palestinians are unable to reach their jobs or take up work as day labourers in Israel's manual and construction industries (Hilal;1999;140, Murphy;1995;36).

This draws our attention to the economic aspects of the peace agreement and the interim period. Under the Paris Protocol Agreement signed between the PLO and Israel in 1994, the PLO agreed to adopt policies to develop a free market economy in the autonomous enclaves with the encouragement of Israel, the World Bank and various international donors (Samara;2000;12). It was intended that the agreement was to give the Palestinian Authority the right to undertake decisions in relation to the development of the Palestinian economy. However, a whole set of restrictions was built into the agreement. Taxes and duties have to be pegged in relation to those inside Israel, nor can gasoline or VAT be significantly lower than prices in Israel (Parker;1999;100). Set quotas are placed on the export of agricultural products to Israel (though no such restrictions exist for Israel), while exports and imports into the Palestinian enclaves are also subject to sanctions by Israel (Samara;2000;12). Such restrictions come under the rhetoric of safeguarding the Israeli economy, however the small-scale nature of the Palestinian economy in relation to Israel's means that it is unlikely that the Palestinian economy would be able to encroach in any significant way upon Israel's (Samara;2000;12). Over the past few years the Palestinian market has witnessed a substantial influx of Israeli products (upon which there are no restrictions) produced by the major food and dairy monopolies (Tnuva, Strauss, Osem and Yodfata), which have

(Passia;1999;231).

also been accompanied by prominent advertising campaigns (Krizm;2000;11).⁵ The lack of protection for Palestinian businesses serves to increase the asymmetrical relationship of the two economies. Over the last few years there has been a growing integration of the Palestinian economy into the Israeli one, which encourages significant dependency of the former on the latter, preventing the development of a separate Palestinian economy. In Gaza, for example, Israel has encouraged the growth of ornamental crops such as flowers. The lower production costs in Gaza enable Israel to maintain its share of the flower market in Europe, since Israeli contractors control Palestinian routes to the European market. These contractors are the main buyers of Palestinian produce and have created the conditions in which they act as middlemen to foreign markets.⁶ Parker suggests that these new arrangements merely represent a restructuring of the dependent economic relationship that existed under occupation (Parker;1999;106).

With these economic policies Palestinians have experienced a drop in their incomes according to figures produced by the PNA for 1996-1997 (Samara;2000;14). Thus, as Jamil Hilal forecasted, the adoption of a free market economy which was encouraged by the international community has served to widen social inequalities and increase poverty among the Palestinians (Hilal;1998;140). These changes in the economic life of Palestine should be juxtaposed with Emma Murphy's suggestion that the political failure or success of the PNA depends upon its ability to bring about economic improvements to people's lives which have been seriously affected by the intifada and the Gulf war crisis (Murphy;1995;35).

⁵Tnuva recently announced the opening of its factories in the West Bank with Palestinian business partners. Although this creates jobs for Palestinians it damages local industries which are unable to compete with such large companies and who are hampered by restrictions on the export of their products to Israel. While Israeli companies are allowed to export their dairy products to the Palestinian areas, Palestinian companies hold no such privileges (Krizm;2000;11).

⁶Similarly 90% of the citrus fruit production in Gaza goes directly to Israeli juice factories giving them significant power in determining the prices of the yields (Usher;1999;45).

Over the last few years disillusionment and frustration with the peace agreement has been increasing among the Palestinians (Hass;1995;28). Yet Israel, the former target of Palestinian grievances, has been distanced from them through the peace agreements and the establishment of the PNA (Murphy;1995;28). This, as Parker highlights, carries implications for articulations of Palestinian identity for the

“Current agreements represent a challenge to the social and spatial inclusiveness of Palestinian nationalist ideology and structures. There is no longer any clear object of resistance- no authority with clear responsibility for economic and social hardships- and thus an important tool for carving out the awareness of unity has been blunted” (Parker;1999;65).

In the absence of a clear antagonism, divisions and differences amongst Palestinians come to the surface (Parker;2000;66). Nor have opposition groups been able to articulate an alternative political programme and the calls of the PFLP and the DFLP to boycott the PNA have met with little support (Connell;1995;7 Abu Amr;1995;43). Selim Tamari also highlights that those who are against the agreement, “are afraid of the challenges and the tasks of becoming an oppositional force in a civil society which is ruled by their own bourgeoisie, their own state and their own repressive society” (Tamari;1994;18).

The PLO while in exile was seen as the representative of all the Palestinian people. However, with the signing of the peace agreement they in fact reduced their constituency to the Palestinian population in the Occupied Territories. Thus the agreement, while recognising the PLO, also worked to undermine “its claim to represent the interests of its traditional constituency” (Parker;1999;67).The consequence of this move has been the division of the Palestinian people, as no significant provisions are made in the agreement for refugees, those in the Diaspora or the rights of the Palestinians who live inside Israel (Said;1995;xxix,Doumani & Stork;1994;3). Internally, the population of the West Bank, Jerusalem and Gaza Strip has also been severely fragmented through its spatial isolation in the autonomous

areas which has led to the emergence of strong local chauvinisms, as people no longer move frequently or freely between the different autonomous areas. Parker argues that the PLO's constituency is in fact Israel and the international donors who provide them with financial and political legitimacy, and that this in turn fosters the PLO's dependency upon them (Parker;1999;72).⁷

When revolutionary movements come to power they bring with them the leadership that brought about the social and political transformations. However the leadership which was installed in Palestine was not made up of those who produced the intifada uprising. Therefore, it was necessary for them to supplant the local leadership that had emerged and to return the power that had devolved back to the centre (Robinson;1997;177). This would then seem to explain the authoritarian nature of the PNA's rule and the heavy police presence in the autonomous areas. The police's duty seems to be not so much to protect Palestinians, but to contain social unrest likely to arise from dissatisfaction and disillusionment with the leadership, the peace process and the corresponding lack of political agency. Graham Usher highlights that the authoritarianism of the leadership and the 'securitisation' of Palestinian society reveals the presence of a 'culture of defeat' and has "contributed to a process of the de-politicisation of Palestinian society in which many of its ablest members have 'collectively withdrawn'" (Usher;1999;79).

As the discussion above has outlined, between the beginning of the intifada and the establishment of the Palestinian national authority there have been significant social, political and economic changes within Palestinian society and in particular in the direction and objectives of the national movement. One of the most marked transformations is that there now is a central authority present on parts of the land that

⁷As the PNA receives its funding from international donors and from the rebate of income taxes of Palestinian from its areas who work inside Israel (Samara;2000;12) and not directly from its own population, the conditions are not created for it to achieve its political hegemony by representing the interests of the population (Robinson;1997;200).

was Palestine that has assumed responsibility for the representation of the people. Many elements of a fledgling state are under development, with the establishment of ministries, elected leaders and so forth. However the intifada was an incomplete revolution that did not bring total liberation from occupation nor did it establish leaders of the revolution as the new government. In turn the nature of the agreement signed has left many key issues of the dispute unresolved. These include the divided city of Jerusalem, liberation of the occupied territories, settlement building in the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the fate of refugees within the territories and the Arab World. As a consequence, Palestinian society is in a state of limbo as solutions to the key areas of the conflict have been deferred. In light of this, Palestinians are forced to exist in a context of disavowal, for while Palestinians have achieved many of the signs of a nation state, such as a police force, ministries, a president, national institutions and TV stations, they have not been totally liberated from occupation. The prolongation of this transitional stage has led to despondence with the political process and with the signs of nation, for they no longer symbolise the nation and the homeland that Palestinians aspired to achieve. Whereas during the intifada a Palestinian would be willing to be shot for raising the flag in the Occupied Territories, it is no longer a coveted sign. In a sense, the proliferation of signs of nationhood without a nation have led to a loss of value of these signs, which are satirically looked upon by the population. The absence of those individuals and groups who were engaged in initiating change and development has given the new authorities freedom to represent the Palestinians without contestation, as Palestinians believe highlighting internal divisions will defeat the cause of liberation from occupation. On the other hand, the withdrawal to home and hearth has been accompanied by greater emphasis on family and clan loyalties which had during the intifada years been surpassed by national affiliation. Palestinians are thus forced to exist in a situation of disavowal in which everything resembles a nation state but is not quite one. However the complexity lies in the fact that,

“As Palestinians in the occupied territories inch closer to the realisation of statehood, the ideal image of the ‘Nation’ is tarnished and diminished by the concessions and pragmatic sacrifices necessitated in building a state from the ground up. The Palestine that results from that process of state formation will not be one that gives back to all Palestinians all they have lost nor bequeath to them all they imagine could be gained were the antagonisms that have made them what they are to evanesce. Many of them will not recognise in the subject positions it provides for its citizens, a place in which they can locate the identities their experiences have constituted for them. That Palestine will not be their Palestine” (Bowman;1994;165).

The Changing Role and Content of Art

The political, social and economic changes that have taken place, which were discussed above, provide us with the context for understanding the elements that have contoured contemporary developments in Palestinian art. The marked changes focus on the content and role of art in Palestinian society. Artists are currently engaged in researching issues of subject matter, medium and symbolism in relation to the representation of identity, place and the collective past. Artists are also questioning their role vis a vis the local and international community.

With the PNA now seen as responsible for representing Palestinian identity, there has been a significant decline in the impetus among artists to create nationalistic art with scenes of the idealised landscape, the peasantry and the glorified motherland, all of which appealed to the populace. Nabil Anani, for example, distinguished between the different phases in Palestinian art prior to and after the arrival of the *Sulta*. “Politics kills art if you ask art to serve politics. However, during the occupation art had a different role, we wanted to do this, we needed and wanted to defend our identity, but now there is the *Sulta*” (Anani; 14th February 2000). Implicit in Anani’s remark is that the representation of the homeland and national identity is now the role of the *Sulta*; whereas before, artists took it upon themselves to represent and safeguard their national identity through the images they created and exhibitions. Sliman Mansour

explained that with the loss of the national impetus, “many artists who worked on political themes have disappeared as the criteria for judging art has moved toward quality” (Mansour; 14th February 2000).⁸ Khaled Hourani, who works at the recently established Ministry of Culture, echoed Mansour’s observations saying: “there are artists who don’t understand what is happening, they were dependent on politics. So now they find themselves in front of the question of art without the props of the political and the national; but this questioning of art is good” (Hourani; 14th February 2000). Tayseer Barakaat also argued that the criteria of a work of art had changed: “An artist no longer becomes famous for painting pain” (Barakaat; 14th February 2000). Barakaat proposes that art is now judged on ‘quality’⁹ and its ability to represent issues of humanity that can engage a wide spectrum of people including the international art audience (Barakaat; 14th February 2000). Barakaat’s views reflect the acknowledgment of a broader arena for the consumption of art. Whereas in the past artists were concerned with appealing to and motivating the Palestinian public, artists now desire their art to function in an international context.

Correspondingly, the viewing of art is no longer seen as an expression of national affiliation, hence the visiting of exhibitions has become very much a class-based activity patronised by the middle and upper class and has lost its populist base. The transformations in artistic representations accompanied by the decline in importance of expressions of national identity have all worked to transform the consumption of art. Attendance at art exhibitions has lost its significance of being a patriotic/nationalistic activity for art was not consumed for art’s sake only. As I demonstrated in earlier chapters, culture was an important arena for defining and articulating Palestinian

⁸ Sliman Mansour is one of the older generation of Palestinian Artists and has been part of the Palestinian movement since the 1970’s. Hence he has been part of and witnessed many of the different phases of Palestinian Art through his work as an artist, as Head of League of Palestinian Artists between and in his role as Director of the Al Wasiti Art Centre thus making him an authority on Palestinian Art.

⁹By quality Barakaat refers to the level of technical proficiency evident in a piece of artwork. Before and during the Intifada many artists who had no technical training created nationalistic art, which was often very poorly executed by traditional academic standards.

identity and for countering Israel's negation of that identity. Previously art exhibitions were held in schools, universities and YMCA centres, by nature of the venues a wide cross section of the community was encouraged to attend and we can assume felt art was accessible to them. Mansour comments that it was mainly students and young people who attended, and who were not from rich families. (Mansour;1981;3).However, the absence of an overtly national content in contemporary art and its placement in the gallery space¹⁰ has transformed art viewing into a class-based activity. Khaled Hourani spoke of a time when hundreds of people came to the opening of his show in Hebron, the city of his birth (14th February 2000), visitor numbers which directors of centres now have great difficulty attaining.

It is evident from the above discussion that the relationship between nationalism and art is being re-assessed by artists. This should not be taken as indicative of a rejection of the representation of national and political identity by artists, for both Khaled Hourani and Sliman Mansour argue that such issues continue to inform the content of artistic works. Hourani claims that, "We realise that the national and the political inspires the artist in a direct way, but artists now start from a different point, it is more akin to sufism, it is metaphysical. National and political issues are still there but it is more as though they are in the background and present in an indirect way" (Hourani; 14th February 2000). While Mansour suggested that, "there is a place for national art but the message should not concentrate on a grand narrative. If you want to move people you need to concentrate on one thing, one object" (Mansour; 14th February 2000). Jawad al Malhi also argues that his abstract figurative works are still informed by questions of national identity, but that figures do not necessarily have to be adorned in the markers of Palestinian material culture to be representative of one's identity and condition (Malhi; 7th March 2000). Therefore, what artists are exploring are divergent ways of

¹⁰Numerous art galleries and centres have opened since the beginning of the Peace Process, including The Wasiti Art Centre in Jerusalem, The Khalil Sakanini Cultural Centre in Ramallah, The Mamal Foundation for Contemporary Art in Jerusalem and The Arts and Crafts Village in Gaza.

articulating their identity, ways that are not confined to representations of an essentialist identity and which corresponds to a departure from previous symbolism. What is being re-constituted, then, is the symbolic language via which national and political identity is represented and the meanings that previous signifiers carried. The debates Palestinian artists are involved in have also been the preoccupations of other artists and theorists in different contexts. Theodor Adorno several decades ago was engaged in questions surrounding 'committed art'. For Adorno art that posed challenges to interpretation was 'committed' because it resisted absorption into the system of advanced capitalism and the homogenising effects of commercialism through the use of alternative forms of articulation, which were not part of the popular vernacular (Bronner). Hence Adorno championed the art of the avant-garde. From Adorno's perspective, the new ventures in Palestinian art would be classified as closer representations of identity than the populist national art of previous years. Thus, in a sense, by not using popular forms of representation artists are in fact truer to their aims. Suzi Gablick, a contemporary artist and theorist, suggests in her writings that much art today reflects dominant culture, such as cultural consumerism. She calls for a committed art that is morally conscious and engaged rather than existing as 'art for art's sake', which she sees as the role art has been allocated in advanced capitalist society. This has served to marginalise artists who, with no other social role, pursue the interests of curators, critics and collectors (Gablick;3;1998). She speaks of art that has greater concern for the soul, art that is directed towards more than merely the visual sensibility (Gablick;7;1998). At this juncture it would seem that she is in agreement with Adorno who writes, "Aesthetic feeling is not what is being aroused in us. It is more like a sense of wonderment in the presence of what we behold; a sense of being overwhelmed in the presence of a phenomenon that is non-conceptual while at the same time being determinate." (Adorno;236;1997). In light of the discussion above, we can argue that artists are engaged in challenging hegemonic forces such as capitalism,

consumerism and nationalism that seek to incorporate or marginalise artists and their work.

For some Palestinian artists the decline in the national and political role of art has caused a crisis in their art practice, as observed by Mansour and Hourani in their comments. Yet at the same time it has been a catalyst for questioning the subject matter and role of Palestinian art after many years in which art was seen as an arena for representing national identity and the homeland. It is noteworthy that the *Sulta* has not as yet commissioned artists to undertake major public works such as murals or monuments, evident from the absence of this kind of art in Palestine. Hence, the *Sulta* is not using the field of art to represent and establish their vision of the nation and the homeland. Mansour proposes an explanation for this,

“The PLO used to support exhibitions for political reasons. You see, they were fighting Israel who was always saying that they were terrorists, so to give them a broader image- so they were not just men with guns, they supported cultural activities in order to show that they were a peoples’ movement with artists, fighters etc. They needed artists to legitimise themselves and they supported a certain line, for example they would suggest an exhibition for Mothers’ day, or prisoners’ day, so what kind of art do you expect to come out? They steered art in a way, but at the same time it also opened up ideas for one to think about. They would open a doorway for you. Now that they have recognition from Israel and the USA they don’t have a need for artists. In fact, artists are a threat to their security as artists might be disruptive if they create truthful representations” (Mansour; 14th February 2000).

Thus, perhaps it is the case that the *Sulta* does not see art as a field in which to articulate their representations of Palestine and in Mansour’s opinion it is a field of representation that poses a potential threat to them. The lack of art projects initiated by the Ministry of Culture between 1998-2000 would seem to support these views.

The decline of the national impetus in art has stimulated a diversification in the field of art, evident in the work of Palestinian artists, which I will discuss shortly.¹¹ Yet although Mansour and Barakaat suggest that the criteria for judging art has undergone a transformation, the diversity present implies consensus upon the content and role of art after a period of heightened nationalism has not been defined, hence like Palestinian society the visual arts are in a transitional phase. There is a growing division in the field of art, as representations of national identity no longer hold the field together. What art should be after nationalism is currently being negotiated and contested. Parker suggests that “one way in which disillusionment with the interim order has revealed itself is as a breakdown over the content and symbolism of Palestinian nationalism” (Parker;1999;69). In this phase Hourani sees the road ahead for Palestinian art as an open one, but that it is currently dividing into two main streams. He highlights that:

“Change firstly doesn’t affect all people in the same way and at the same speed, people are traditional and take time to change. Now on this open road there are those who are open to new ideas, new techniques, new influences and new media and there are those who are traditional. Now how much the first is going to have an affect? Well the traditional way is going to stay influential, less than before perhaps, but the traditional imagery will remain because there is a public and culture that builds this, therefore the gap is going to increase between the two roads” (Hourani; 14th February 2000).

He suggests that the divisions in the streams of art are not a result of a generation gap, for there are members of the older generation who are engaged with transformations in the field of the arts and who are receptive to new ideas, and there are members of the younger generation who hold traditional views of what art should be and are inspired by its former nationalistic role. Hourani argues that traditional representations are more popular and well received by the public than the work of avant-garde artists whose work and audience constitute a minority (Hourani; 14th February 2000). What in fact his comments highlight is the emergence of certain divisions among Palestinians that are

¹¹Some of these differences were always present and can be traced in the catalogues of the exhibitions of the League of Palestinian Artists, however they have come to the surface now that the national role of art has been eclipsed.

evident in their cultural preferences, and how they themselves choose to respond to change and the decline of the role of nationalism in culture.¹²

The trends for diversification in art, as I suggested, do not signify an abandonment of the representation of identity on the part of Palestinian artists. On the contrary, artists are very much engaged in researching ways of representing the landscape, the collective past and identity. However, what is underway is both a questioning of the symbolism that was used to represent such notions and a *questioning of the concepts themselves* which becomes evident if we examine a selection of works executed in the contemporary period.

Contemporary Palestinian Art

Olive Pickers (1998, oil on canvas) (fig.100) by Sliman Mansour, is a re-working of his theme of olive picking, around which he produced numerous images in his career. It will be remembered from an earlier chapter that his paintings were populated with

¹²Hourani's remarks seem to be supported by the type of exhibitions of Palestinian art that have been held in recent years in Palestine. Artists are grouping themselves around certain categories, for example, those artists who do not see art in terms of political and national imperatives will exhibit and work together on projects such as the workshop and exhibition at The Gaza Arts and Crafts Village held in March 2000. This project included, among others, Jawad al Malhi, Rana Bishara, Tayseer Barakaat, and Khaled Hourani. Yet at the same time the diversity of ideas is one of the explanations for the greater tendency among the galleries and cultural centres in Palestine to schedule solo exhibitions. For example, if one examines the programme of the Khalil Sakanini Cultural Centre in Ramallah, The Al Wasiti Art Centre in Jerusalem, The Ma'Mal Foundation in Jerusalem and the Arts and Crafts Village in Gaza (the four main art establishments in Palestine) one finds that the majority of exhibitions hosted over the last several years were solo shows. This would seem to suggest that the diversity in the work of the artist creates difficulties in conceiving exhibitions that unite the artists under one theme. The rise of solo exhibitions also relates to the increase in importance in furthering the individual careers of artists.

robust figures and his Palestinian landscapes were rich with produce. Olive Pickers of 1998 presents an alternative vision. The landscape and all its features have disappeared into a uniform flat grey surface and the figures seem to float in a non-space with no markers of time or location. The land in the image has become a site that resembles the space of exile in Mansour's early national allegory, Camel of Hardships (1974, oil on canvas) (fig.11). The irony is thus that the peasant who was the national signifier of the bond of the people to the land becomes exiled precisely when the land becomes Palestine once again, for, no longer rooted in the landscape, the peasants float in this ambiguous non-space. The loss of the imagined space of the homeland is evident in its depiction as a flat grey space in which the vision of the past and the future has been painted over. The disappearance of the landscape can be read as intending to signify a lack of rootedness and a sense of alienation. Through a re-working of the theme of olive pickers, Sliman Mansour highlights the crisis in national identity and the symbolism of its representation. The loss of the space of the imagined homeland manifests itself in the loss of the representation of the landscape in the painting, suggesting that the utopian vision of the homeland is incommensurable with the liberation of only parts of the home terrain.

To recall, the image of olive pickers was strongly associated with national identity and the idea of an identity rooted in the land. The olive picker, like the peasant, embodies tradition, steadfastness and the bond with homeland. However, the peasants in this painting are represented as isolated figures that seem to be grasping the air in their gestures of picking olives. Their actions recall those of a mime artist, in which the picking of olives becomes a performance. The gestures of the peasants who continue to pick the olives even in the absence of the landscape suggest that continuity and repetition no longer signify steadfastness and tradition, but rather become a parody of national identity. In addition, the repetitive actions of the olive pickers resemble

performances similar to the actions of *dabaka* dancers on the theatre stage, which all play to fantasies about the life of the peasantry.

Jerusalem (1998 oil on wood) (fig. 101) also created by Mansour in 1998, is another re-working of a popular theme in Mansour's work: the image of Jerusalem. In this work it is the landscape of Jerusalem that is the subject of the painting. Mansour does not image the city as the 'golden city' as in his work Camel of Hardships or his watercolours of the old city. Rather what we see is a close up of the walls of the city. The old stone walls have been smoothed into solid grey masses resembling walls of cement that recall a prison compound or refugee camp. The figures are silhouettes that have been cut away from the outer of the two surfaces of the painting, hence all that remains are their outlines. We can distinguish, however, that they represent a group of women who through their gestures seem to be part of a traditional wedding procession even though all the details of their costumes and individual identity have been effaced. In this work the women become a mere shadow and a trace upon the landscape, while the walls of the city become an oppressive structure. The monumental female figures and the highly worked depictions of their peasant costume that we saw in Mansour's previous paintings disappear. Two of the central representations of the homeland, the image of the peasant woman and Jerusalem, which were previously depicted in a utopian light in Mansour's work, are thus transformed in this painting. In both works there is a sense of absence. This arises not only from the loss of the landscape in the Olive Pickers and the procession of women in Jerusalem, but from the absence of plenitude associated with the images of Jerusalem and peasant women that were formerly created by the artist. With these two paintings, then, Mansour is deconstructing the former visual language of national identity.

For Ashraf Fawakhry the *hmar* (the ass), the main character of his works, emerged from his search for a new symbol of Palestinian identity that stemmed from a

despondence with such symbols as the *kufiyeh* and the Palestinian flag (Fawakhry; 15th October 1998). We find the *hmar* in his work wandering across numerous terrains, mainly consumer goods and everyday objects such as a Palestinian postal stamp, a packet of camel cigarettes and a plaster (c.1997 mixed media) (fig. 102). The *hmar* is no longer located in an agricultural terrain, but is lost among these different synthetic surfaces. Sometimes he is hard to recognise, yet he is always present like a black spot, for part of the visual strategy of the works is for the viewer to engage in locating the donkey. Thus the donkey remains a persistent presence, a metaphor perhaps for the continual presence of Palestinians. Fawakhry has produced hundreds of images in this series, stamping the form of *hmar* onto a whole range of everyday surfaces and objects. The donkey always seems awkwardly positioned, as though Fawakhry's intention is to suggest a sense of estrangement arising from the collision of identities, through the juxtaposition of an agricultural motif with the textures of modern life. Fawakhry's *hmar* series engages with landscape tradition, for his *hmar* invokes nostalgia, humor and empathy that taps into the longing for the homeland while uncannily highlighting the ironies of Palestinian identity through the contexts we find the donkey in.

The transformation of the Palestinian landscape through commercialism, and in particular the demise of agricultural land, was the impetus for one of the few purely landscape paintings Mansour has created in recent years, entitled From Bir Zeit (1999, oil on canvas) (fig. 103). Mansour explained that the painting acted as a way of preserving the landscape, which was likely to be transformed by developers. (Mansour; 20th October 1999). Mansour's painting is a rare example of a depiction of the Palestinian landscape whose central theme is not human habitation or the cultivation of the land. The painting documents the landscape before its transformation in a heightened realist style focusing on details of the terrain. It is interesting that it is at the junction when it is Palestinians who will be transforming the landscape that this type of

depiction of the landscape was undertaken. The representation of the Birzeit landscape, which was the locale of Mansour's birthplace, is noticeably lacking romanticism. The vistas are not constructed to give us a grand sense of perspective and the light is not that golden light found in Mansour's paintings. Nor, however, is this a holistic image of the landscape, for the painting is divided into a grid in which each section of the landscape is parcelled off, the intention perhaps being to indicate the fragmentation and privatisation of the land. Although it was in the nineteenth century that land was transformed into private property, the economic conditions of the historical Palestinian landscape did not inform the utopian and picturesque images of the village and the landscape that were previously created by artists. For in the past the land under occupation, although subject to transformations, was still a location of fantasies for dreams of the past and the future. This differs considerably from the idea of the 'disappearance' of the landscape, which suggests its permanent loss both in real terms and in terms of a space of imagining.

The disillusionment with nationalism has led to a search for other historical identities; a line of enquiry which informs the recent works of Tayseer Barakaat in which Canaanite symbolism is used to represent an ancient, seemingly timeless relationship to the land. Barakaat's work had never been confined to representing national identity through the use of the established national visual vocabulary.¹³ It was during the intifada that Barakaat began to represent an ancient historical relationship to the land. He explains that his work was and continues to be an exploration of the relationship between

¹³His women were not, for example, found in peasant costumes working the land. Rather they were figures inspired by mythology, folktales and who dwelt among the palm trees of Gaza or in abstract representations of domestic structures of the desert. In some of his early paintings we also find the imaginative play of children. The importance of the space of imagination was a prominent feature of his work and was depicted through images of the fantasy of the flight to freedom. It can be argued that the themes his paintings expressed are the desire for freedom and the importance of the imagination as a space of escapism.

history, significance of place and the present. He argues that there is a continuous binding thread between people of different historical ages who inhabit a region (Barakaat; 14th February 2000). Hence in his works one finds abstract landscapes populated by iconic figures that are inscribed into the surface of the land and whose profiles resemble ancient symbols or languages. In many ways, his works betray the desire to re-articulate the relationship between people and place, rooting it in an ancient past that is 'naturalised' through his artistic representations. In turn, the bond to the land that is a cornerstone of the nationalist discourse remains a central concept in the artwork but is re-articulated in an identity prior to nationalism.

Taleb Dweik is one of the artists who have continued to create utopian representations of the landscape. His landscapes of Jerusalem such as Jerusalem (1998, mixed media) (fig. 104) are jewel-like, scintillating with a multitude of colours. Although he too has moved towards greater abstraction, the Dome of the Rock and the architecture of the old city can still be discerned in his images. In another work of the same title, Jerusalem (1998, mixed media) (fig. 105), he images a wall of the old city covered in flowers, transforming it into an organic form which can be read as recalling the landscape of paradise. His image stands in marked contrast to Mansour's representation of the same city (fig. 101) discussed above. Dweik's paintings fall into the category of images of Palestinian cultural heritage, which Mansour claims is one of the genres of Palestinian art that has remained popular during the interim period (Mansour; 14th February 2000). These types of images of Jerusalem, the landscape and the peasantry continue to be the preoccupation of some artists as we saw with dates of works discussed in previous chapters. Mansour explained that such representations cater to middle class tastes:

"One thing remained the issue of Palestinian culture and heritage. The representations, you know, of the old life, old villages, artists still put them in their work. The reason for this is that mostly the rich middle class still wants to see these kinds of things and buy these things so they have an effect on the

artists and this thing is not resolved. Well this is what people want to hang in their homes” (Mansour; 14th February 2000).

Paintings of this nature are commercially viable and the demand for this type of imagery, as Mansour suggests, influences the creative practices of artists. The unchanging image of village life or the idealised images of Jerusalem can be understood as providing ‘unproblematic’ images of the past, uncritical in that they do not address contemporary transformations. Whereas before they signified political and national identity, the current preference for them to adorn domestic interiors of the middle classes reveals that they are increasingly being seen as merely decorative imagery. The production of this type of artwork should be understood in the context in which there are very few avenues for artists to economically support themselves and their practice, hence some artists choose to contour their images to appeal to the purchasing public.

Nationalist themes continue to be issues that artists represent in their paintings, which highlight the divergent responses to the question of the role and content of art after the cessation of a nationalist struggle. In particular artists are engaged in questions of how to represent the collective past. Ismail Shammout, whose representation of exile was discussed in the first chapter, created a large-scale painting in 1998 depicting the history of the Palestinians. Shammout’s painting is one of the few monumental ‘nationalist’ allegories of the contemporary period.¹⁴ Shammout’s painting spans 4.5 metres by 1.5 metres and reads from right to left (The March, oil on canvas, 1998) (fig.106). Palestinian history is represented as beginning with the *nakba*. The Israeli forces who emerge from the sky are depicted as a mythological figure of monstrous proportions. Its body is a war machine made from canons that dehumanises the

¹⁴By ‘nationalist’ I mean that the artist uses symbols that were part of the repertoire of nationalism. Sliman Mansour’s paintings are also nationalist works, but in a different way, as he was concerned in working in an interventionist rather than a celebratory fashion with established symbols.

enemy. Representing the antagonists in this way attributes them with supernatural powers and images them as a force greater than man. The Palestinians in contrast are pictured huddled together, helpless, with their arms outstretched for mercy. The *nakba*, then, is imaged in stark terms of aggressors and victims simplifying the conflict between the two peoples to an image of good versus evil that effaces the complexities of the war of 1948.

Two figures standing naked with only the Palestinian flag to cover them serve to draw comparisons between the *nakba* and the exile from Eden. In this narrative the girl and boy cover their 'shame' with the flag. The two lonely figures could be understood to express the severance from family and community, which in the national imagery is represented as the utopia of the past. The girl's nakedness and vulnerability albeit for the flag recalls the positioning of women as a site of identity in the national discourse. Her nakedness serves to naturalise the interpellation of men called to safeguard the women of the community and the female homeland, hence the girl also reads as the metaphoric virgin homeland for which the nation's men sacrifice themselves. Underneath the figure is a woman whose broad arms protect three children in a gesture, which epitomises the qualities of the motherland that provides safety, comfort and nurturing. The painting continues with images of children studying by candlelight and of the community wishfully looking in the direction of the future, yet not necessarily engaged in any particular activity. Here we can suppose that Shammout attempts to image the resistance strategy of *sumud*, however he does not necessarily depict the daily forms of resistance. Dark profiles of soldiers, blindfolded men and the face of a *feyedeem* fighter represent the armed struggle and the intifada, and serve as an image of men's valour in the national cause. The canvas is completed with figures celebrating among whom are women and children dressed in peasant costumes and a procession of Palestinian soldiers.

In Shammout's allegory the past is allegorised into several narratives: the naked girl and mother signify the period after the loss of the homeland, the children studying refer to the time of steadfastness, the fighter and the prisoners the period of active resistance, while the jubilation of the people with soldiers represent the peace process and the arrival of the *Sulta*. These historical periods are contextualised through the way in which the canvas is structured, beginning with the 'darkness' of the *nakba* and ending with the 'light' of the peace process. In Shammout's simplified narrative occupation is depicted as the dark period of Palestinian history and the peace process as the entry into the light and, by inference, freedom.

The last section of the painting is probably the most interesting; dominated by light pastel colours it resembles a utopian Palestinian landscape replete with women in traditional dress and the absence of signs of modernity. The atmosphere is of the entry to paradise, imbuing the arrival of the *Sulta* and their rule with religious significance and imaging the place of their authority as an idealistic environment. Significantly, this utopia is a militarised utopia with an endless line of soldiers marching off the canvas. At the end of the painting, however, it is as though the present beyond jubilation is unrepresentable for the canvas ends with light colours. This would suggest that an artist working in the national idiom can only fill his/her canvas by looking backward in time to depict a past for which there are conventions of representation.

One of the ways in which artists have been addressing the question of how to represent the past is through the creation of works that serve as memorials. Rana Bishara, for instance, has created a book whose pages are made from glass, inscribed with the details of the Palestinian villages destroyed in 1948. The use of glass suggests the fragility of memories, while the transparency of the pages means that the descriptions float on the spaces of the page as the layers merge into one another. The attempt to fix memory in book form is resisted, suggesting the difficulty of containing

the memories of the past. In another work, Homage to Palestine (1998), Bishara took cacti, the symbol of steadfastness and marker of the Palestinian presence on the land, and stacked them in a pickling jar. It is the humbleness of the piece, which is placed on a white pedestal that is most striking. Unlike the assumed role of memorials, the work does not call for our reverence. Rather, traditional domestic work of preserving foods is selected as a memorial for Palestine by Bishara, who in so doing acknowledges the role of women as bearers of cultural identity through their mundane activities and humourlessly comments on the discourse of preserving and archiving the past.

Taysir Batniji from Gaza has also worked on the theme of memorials in his piece Sans Titre (1998, mixed media) (fig.107), which serves as a memorial to martyrs of the intifada. Batniji does not employ the established national form of realist portraiture and photography to remember the dead. Rather, he collects the discarded remnants that society itself uses for announcing martyrdom. For with the death of a martyr his/her image is reproduced in posters and pasted walls of his/her town, village or camp. It is the weathered faceless frames of these posters that Batniji assembles into a memorial that speaks of both memory and forgetfulness. The empty frames, like the tomb of the Unknown Soldier, becomes a space for national imaginings in which anonymity of the nation's heroes can be accommodated (Anderson;1991;9) as there are no names on this memorial. However his act of retrieving these ephemeral remains reads more like a last endeavour to hold onto memory, for the faded frames also point to the way in which time works to deteriorate actual representations and images held in the collective memory of a society.

The question of the complexity of the nation's collective memory is probed in the piece After the Revolution (1997, mixed media) (fig. 108) by Jawad al Malhi who takes a very different approach from Shammout, Bishara and Batniji. A white, bandaged chair is placed in the centre of a room and is lit from one side, creating a stark shadow on

the walls behind it. As one approaches the chair one realises that it is obsolete, as the seat is a void underneath which there is a painting in which it appears that whoever was seated there has defecated out of fear. The installation carries strong connotations of an interrogation room. If this is 'after the revolution' then it as though the piece asks us to confront the uncomfortable memories and traumas of those who were involved in revolutionary politics. Neither the past nor the present is a utopia, rather they collide in Malhi's installation. This is not a glorious history of resistance but one in which fear and vulnerability are all too apparent. The time 'after the revolution' is imaged as a state of inhibition and isolation, perhaps suggesting the consequences of the absence of a convincing ideology - the weight of the past and the guilt of the present in which there is mimicry of statehood that reduces the subject to its bodily function and a stream of faeces.

The transformation of the subject in the context of the nature of life in Palestine can be found to inform the recent works of Jawad al Malhi. It will be remembered that Malhi's canvases of the intifada were populated with robust figures who inhabited the space of the refugee camp. In his paintings we found children playing and people assisting one another in his images of the community. The impetus for these works was to document the nature of life in the camp from the perspective of someone who was from that class. Transformations in the latter half of the intifada, however, propelled him toward a greater concern with psychological complexities of individual subject (Malhi; 29th February, 2000). The figures he produced in the 1990's are spilt and divided in a way in which the presence of the other in the self takes on an embodied form. By the end of the decade his figures have become incomplete and fragmented; no longer the robust forms of his previous paintings, but rather figures whose movements are restricted, suggestive of an affliction of some kind, psychological or physical, as in the paintings in fig. 109 (Untitled, 2000, mixed media). In these images the figures seem to be disintegrating and fragmenting within themselves and within the space around them.

Often they are as ephemeral as dust clouds or are mere outlines of figures whose centres have been eroded away reducing them to empty frames. They all appear in their own separate spaces, standing, observing and inactive. His figures, therefore, have undergone a metamorphosis from being engaged and rooted in their environment to being ephemeral observers. These paintings were inspired by his series of three-dimensional figures which are not more than twenty centimetres in height entitled Presence of Absence (2000, plastic) (fig. 110). Each figure is split and divided, fragilely held together by its reflected profile. Barely visible, as they are made of a transparent material, it is the shadows and numerous silhouettes of these figures that become the traces of their presence.

Was Present (2000, mixed media) (fig.111), a virtually colourless fragment of a figure whose internal organs have been replaced by an electronic eye and neon light is part of the same body of work. Our gaze or the mere shadow of our presence activates the electronic eye while our movements are continually registered with the uncanny clicking sounds, which serve as a constant reminder of both the gaze that is upon us and the presence of the other. The figure in fact only functions in our presence, repeating the same gestures with every encounter. This repetition is ironically not the smooth running of the machine but rather the repetition associated in psychoanalysis with breakdown and malfunction (Philippi;1996;364). It is as though a trace of life remains in the figure, yet the agency of the subject has been reduced to being merely that of a response to the other, stripping the subject of any independence of action.

We can understand the evolution of the figure in Malhi's work to be informed by the social, political and economic developments in Palestinian society. The works are not necessarily reflections of reality but are discursive responses, which speak of the transformations in the will and agency of the subject. The fragmented figures become symbolic of the contradictions and complexities that Palestinians exist in. Malhi's

choice of materials, plastic, electronic parts, painting and so forth are integral to the ideas of the works. Unlike other Palestinian artists he does not believe it is necessary to confine himself to the use of natural materials in order to articulate his identity. Rather he points to the fact that Palestine today is teeming with commodities, cheap Chinese goods and plastic consumables, which has thrown the value of objects into disarray. The use of such materials, therefore, is a deliberate comment on contemporary reality. Working in this way challenges the pre-conceptions that 'third world' artists work exclusively in natural materials, as reflection of their primitivism and closeness to nature, (a view held by international curators who are normally astounded to find contemporary Palestinian art that is not confined to national symbolism). Working with contemporary materials and objects is far more abrasive and closes the distance between cultures, for it plays on the similarity between peoples, rather than relegating artists to an existence in a different time and space.

With the cessation of the intifada, Khaled Hourani is an artist who has moved into pure abstraction having previously created images of stone throwers and Palestinian culture. Like other artists, it would appear that his move to abstraction is a discursive response to issues of agency and subjectivity that become problematic in the context of the presence of a 'culture of defeat' described by Graham Usher as evident in his comments below. His images, whose colours are in hues of ochres, oranges and brown and whose composition are intended to be pleasing to the eye, have themselves changed in meaning over time. Whereas at first they were read as aesthetically pleasing abstract compositions, Hourani suggests that in fact such meanings no longer hold true for the works as he explained in his recent catalogue:

"I was entirely fed up with drawing and colouring because of the limitation of the act. Like everyone else I was faced with the question what is art and why paint? This is my predicament and with my swinging moods I face the scene of a collage of TV images, Atlantic planes, the hunger in Somalia, Palestinian misery, the suffering of love in an Argentinean soap opera and the

distress of sex over the mobile phone...This is why I moved away from personification and symbolism and searched through my old clothes and ragged books and leftover colours, which once juxtaposed again gain a different meaning. I use the colour white and bright colours not as an expression of joy or celebration but I mould the remains of colours in such a way that it is like sprinkling sugar on death" (Hourani;1999;2).

Thus even the abstract painting no longer signifies in the same way, but is a parody of itself (Untitled, mixed media, 1998) (fig.112). It is as though Hourani's intention is to highlight the futility of such works, turning on its head the way in which one would customarily read them.

From the artworks that have been discussed, we have discerned that Palestinian artists are very much engaged in articulations of identity that are informed by their current temporality. The marked transformations that have been witnessed in Palestinian art are the deconstruction and departure from the hegemony of previous national symbolism and trends in narrative paintings, of an art that was predominantly aimed at the populace and at inspiring them in their commitment to their national identity. It is not necessarily the case that artists do not desire of their art to affect the masses but that they have reached a stage where former nationalist symbolism is felt to function in a simplistically pictorial and repetitive way. With their new works, artists are attempting to develop in their audiences more complex ways of seeing and deciphering artworks. This is very much in line with many Palestinians artists' convictions of their role in developing Palestinian society.¹⁵ The art of Palestinians, therefore, is in a transitional stage and it is evident that artists are researching the question of the role and content of art after a period of heightened nationalism. What is apparent on examination is that artists are engaged in articulating the complexities and ambiguities of identity, informed

¹⁵ The endeavours by artists to advance the visual dexterity of their audiences are not always successful and leave the artist experiencing alienation, as Nabil Anani's comments highlight: "when people come to an exhibition they say they don't understand and it s like they place the blame on you the artist, its your fault that you don't make the paintings clearer" (Anani, 14th February, 2000).

by the irony and consequences of history and politics. All are in different ways pre-occupied with representing the homeland, identity and the collective past.

Mansour, for example, is engaged in deconstructing national symbolism that he himself was influential in elaborating and disseminating. Barakaat's despondence with nationalism in turn finds its answer in the search for ancient identities, which are nonetheless informed by the self-same desire to articulate rootedness and connection to the land. Bishara, Batniji and Malhi are all involved in representing the collective past. Bishara employs humour that ironically points to the absence of any national memorial or monument. Malhi arouses stark discomfort that suggests a deep chasm of trauma over the past and present that is far removed from the mournful images of the exile. Batniji's memorial to the martyrs of the intifada represents the workings of time and revolutions that necessarily forget the sacrifices of the people, thus his piece reads as the futility of attempting to hold onto the trace of the trace. Mansour and Malhi via their figurative works comment on the withdrawal of political involvement of the subject, which is represented in stages of fragmentation, disintegration and disappearance. Hourani critiques art practice by creating abstract paintings and collages which for him represent the ineffectiveness of art. Less complex answers to the content and role of art could be found in the work of Shammout and Dweik, with the latter working on commercially popular paintings and the former within the established repertoire of national signs that glorifies the security regime of the *Sulta*.

As artists' visual language has become more 'conceptual' there has been a rise in the demand for their work in the international art arena, as the former nationalistic art was perceived as overtly political. The participation of Palestinian artists in the international context has brought its own series of issues and consequences. Increasingly, recognition of being an artist is dependent on the volume of international shows one has participated in. Simultaneously, politicians and curators champion joint Palestinian

and Israeli exhibitions, for which there is significant funding, as though the juxtaposition of art objects signifies co-existence and peace between two peoples. The tastes of curators and organisers in turn influences art production. On the one hand, art that resembles the trends in internationalism such as installation and video work is favourably looked upon as it is compatible with the contemporary discourse. While others prefer works in natural materials that espouse the primitivism of the artists, which enables curators to place them in another time and space.

Imaging the Nation on Palestinian National Television

As celebratory nationalistic imagery is not being created in the visual arts, nor are artists being sponsored to create such imagery, one needs to examine where the official images of the nation and the homeland are being articulated. It is primarily through television, in order to reach the widest possible audience, that the PNA has been representing its vision of the homeland. On the official channel of the Palestinian National Authority a new vocabulary of national identity is being forged which is best observed in the national songs and their accompanying videos. These montages are broadcast in between television programmes and news broadcasts as well as on national holidays and important national anniversaries. I am going to examine one of the songs and video clips in detail as many of the songs carry similar imagery and are assembled from the same visual material. Thus this song epitomises this form of representation. Examining this form of national popular culture provides a way of exploring the official representation of Palestine by the PNA. The words of the song focus on the leader Yassir Arafat and are as follows:

“This is our leader, this is he/ Whether we are outside or inside/ This is our leader, this is he/ whether we are outside or inside/ His name is Abu Amr/ His name is Abu Amr / God give him strength/ God give him strength/ God give him strength/ God give him strength/ We chose him by love/ And we knew from the very first moment/ We chose him by love/ And we knew from the very first moment/ God protect him/ God protect

him/ God, God, God give him strength/ This is our leader/ Whether we are outside or inside /This is our leader/ Whether we are outside or inside/ We are the banner of freedom/ We are the Palestinians/ We are the banner of freedom/ We are the Palestinians/ We are brothers with no differences between us/ And our unity is our national identity/ We are brothers with no differences between us/ And our unity is our national identity/ God, God, God, God give him strength/ This is our leader, this is he/ Whether we are outside or inside/ This is our leader, this is he/ Whether we are outside or inside/ He is dear to our hearts/ Around him are all the people/ He is dear to our hearts/ Around him are all the people/ He took the road to Peace/ But for the winner it is not hard/ He took the road to Peace/ But for the winner it is not hard/God, God, God give him strength.”

The images that accompany the song are predominantly taken from footage of President Arafat's arrival in Jericho. The sequence opens with crowds of people looking up and waiting in anticipation, on the horizon there is a small yellow helicopter. We then cut to dancers performing a *dabaka* dance with each person wearing a colour of the Palestinian flag and then to a large group of young people putting on *dabaka* dances for the President's arrival. The words of the song commence with the convoy of Mercedes cars carrying the President and his representatives while people are shown lining the streets to greet them. The scene cuts to images of marching scouts and the exercise drills of soldiers. President Arafat is imaged on the podium greeting a young girl scout and giving an award to a soldier. President Arafat is depicted giving speeches, surveying soldiers and walking briskly with his hands in his pockets talking with military commanders and his advisers. He is imaged among the crowds of people shaking hands. The video draws to a close with images of President Arafat receiving the Nobel Peace Prize and seated on the podium. Other videos and songs of a similar nature feature sequences of soldiers demonstrating their training exercises and combat skills. President Arafat is imaged meeting foreign officials, looking contemplatively at

the sea of Gaza, holding children in his arms, *dabaka* dancing and shaking hands with Prime Minister Rabin on the White House Lawn at the signing of the Peace Agreement.

From the descriptions above, it is evident that President Arafat is the centre of the national imagery. He is represented as a dynamic person through being imaged as a military man, as an international leader, as comfortable with important officials and everyday people, as a fatherly figure, as compassionate, as the desired leader, as physically fit and as a peace maker of international reputation. The words of the song extol the high esteem in which the leader is held. Throughout the song the emphasis is placed on the fact that he is the leader of the Palestinians. Particular stress is placed on the importance of the unity of the Palestinian people and the absence of difference between those who have lived in exile and those who have lived in the occupied territories; this is repeated numerous times throughout the song. This repetition acts as a way of enforcing and celebrating unity. The significance of the local leadership of the intifada is also dismissed by stressing that Arafat is the leader of the Palestinians whether they are in the homeland or beyond its borders. In fact, implicit in the song is that the unity of the people comes from their shared love for Arafat, which is how he became their representative in the song.

Increasingly, I would like to argue Palestine is being represented through the figure of the leader Yassir Arafat. He is the embodiment of Palestine and the representation of both the people and the place. The kind of national imagery that is being broadcast supports and elaborates this idea, as the leader is the focus of the songs and the images.

This cult of the leader is not uncommon in the Middle East where presidents or kings are central to the representation of the nation (Rabbani;1995;6). The nation is represented as embodied in one person, a person who is imaged as having multiple

identities in a way that can appeal to many different sectors of the community. In Jordan, for example, portraits of the king depict him in a suit and tie, in military uniform and in traditional Bedouin clothing. King Abdallah II is also imaged as a dynamic man and is represented with his family, inspecting the army, participating in army drills, meeting foreign officials, visiting the Bedouin tribes and so forth. In Jordan and Syria the image of the King and the President respectively are reproduced throughout the nation and can be found in public spaces and the dynamism and activities of the leader are repeatedly broadcasted on national TV. Thus, although the representations of Arafat are unique to the image he is trying to project, they also are part of the political culture of the Middle East in which authority and power is represented through the figure of the leader.

In the national imagery broadcast on Palestinian National Television the emphasis is placed on Yassir Arafat's role as a military leader, an image enhanced by the fact that he is always represented in military uniform. Unlike other world leaders he has not taken up the conventional suit and tie. On numerous occasions in the video clip discussed and in other songs we cut from President Arafat to images of marching police or soldiers. The visual mix is suggestive of the leader's authority; the marching soldiers are an extension of his authority and are his representatives. The leader thus extends himself and makes his presence felt among the people through those who enforce his rule. The military imagery is juxtaposed with the words of the song, which express the love for the leader. The selection of the leader is represented as a love choice 'naturalising' his presidency. Thus, through this rhetoric, a system of one party rule is validated.

As I suggested in the previous chapter, President Arafat has inscribed himself upon the landscape of Palestine through the large police force he commands and through his employees, who are distinguished by their expensive cars and mobile phones. In

addition, during the early days of autonomy and on national holidays miniature reproductions of President Arafat on banners were draped across streets and public spaces. Images of President Arafat were placed at the entrance to cities, as in Ramallah.

News broadcasts also play a central role in the construction of the figure of the President and his multifaceted character as we saw with the video imagery. News bulletins are dominated by the daily agenda of the President; where he went, whom he met and what he did. This construction of the news is not dissimilar to the news broadcasts on Jordan National TV, which feature the activities of the king and his family and are structured around a similar format of accounting the leader's daily agenda. The news, then, plays an important role in creating the image of the leader as being central to the representation of the nation. It is also through news broadcasts that the public are able to consume images of the nation through the depiction of their leader.

The mythology surrounding President Arafat when he was in exile was that he was always on the move and could turn up unexpectedly anywhere and at anytime, a strategy necessitated by the fact that his life was in continual danger. In some ways President Arafat has attempted to maintain this mystique by being constantly on the move. Clifford Geertz in his work on the charisma of leaders highlights that movement was a strategy of the kings of Morocco in the nineteenth century. He writes:

“The kings did not keep a single capital but instead shifted the court restlessly among the so called imperial cities...Motion was the rule, not the exception; and though he could not like God, quite be everywhere at once, he could try at least, to give the impression that he was...Like its rivals the centre wandered: Roam and you will confound adversaries, ‘ another Moroccan proverb runs, ‘sit and they will confound you” (Geertz;1983;137).

The movement of President Arafat performs a unique function in the contemporary period, for through his movement he is seen to knit together the isolated autonomous

areas of Palestine. President Arafat shifts his 'court' from Gaza, to Ramallah, to Nablus and so forth, which is all relayed to the people of the nation via national television. It is his movement that is intended to metaphorically bind Palestine and its people together. In these representations wherever President Arafat is located becomes the centre as people come to him. Thus on the recent Islamic *Eid al Adha*, the evening news broadcast of the 18th March 2000 presented images of local officials and international representatives all lining up in the President's Gaza head quarters to wish him a happy feast. This representation of President Arafat as the embodying the nation reflects the political culture he has established in the autonomous areas in which decision making is centralised in his hands and in which he issues pardons and privileges, and mediates conflicts between different sectors of his bureaucracy and the Fateh party (Usher; 1999;75).

From the images broadcast on national television, Palestinians appear to have all the trappings of a sovereign state: a president, presidential motorcades, a flag, a national anthem, marching bands, a police force, armed soldiers and so forth. However, these are not symbolic representations derived from the existence of a state, but are rather symbols of sovereignty in the absence of state, which serves to transform them into parodies of representations of state. The parody is further emphasised by the asymmetry of the peace agreement in which many aspects of the occupation are perpetuated and in which the agreement has not met the expectations and aspirations Palestinians had of statehood. Thus, the symbols mimic the symbolic representations of a state and in so doing devalue their meaning and become part of the representations of the semblance of a state in the absence of one. For the flag, once a symbol Palestinians were willing to die for in the intifada as Israel had attempted to take down every display of it, (Hunter;1991;89) now "lies forsaken and virtually ignored, its green margins turning into dusty blue from the double exposure of sun and neglect. Aside from the PNA, no political party today uses the flag as its banner, and no

attempts are made by opposition parties to 'save' the flag from what they see as Arafat's defilement through territorial concessions" (Tamari;1995;11). It is not only political parties that have ceased to champion the flag, but the Palestinians themselves, evident in the absence of the flag in public spaces and images. Perhaps, then, this is symbolic of the death of the nationalist struggle and the resignation to live with the current status quo enforced by the PNA and Israel. While this would seem to be the norm, there do arise occasions in which the flag and images of Yassir Arafat and Abu Jihad adorn public spaces. For the release of two Palestinian prisoners who were serving life sentences the Shufhat refugee camp was decked with Palestinian flags and images of Yassir Arafat and Abu Jihad. Celebrations lasted for three days and in the evening the sound of old nationalistic songs could be heard from the street parties. What was apparent in the atmosphere was nostalgia for the days of the national struggle. Thus in this instance, the images, flags and songs are revered for what they used to signify. The release of prisoners and the issue of Jerusalem remain the nodal points around which national identity is expressed.

Postscript

It was precisely around the nodal point of Jerusalem that violence erupted and the second intifada began at the end of September 2000, an uprising that still continues to the present day. The Al Aqsa intifada is very different from the intifada of 1987-1994 and has brought with it significant social, economical, political and religious changes. Having lived through the different phases of the intifada, there are a few observations that I would like to add to the conclusion that bear relation to the themes of the thesis.

Martyrdom is a marked feature of this intifada. The fervour with which young men desire to relieve their impotence over their lack of power over the landscape is all too apparent in the sheer number of suicide bomb attacks. While Israel's closures, curfews,

checkpoints and the construction of a monumental wall separating it from the West Bank testifies to the deep-seated fetishism of the landscape on both sides.

If artists were engaged in questions of the role and content of art prior to the Al Aqsa intifada this has become a more pressing issue. It has either spurred artists in different directions in relation to medium, content and the purpose of art or has resulted in a despondence with artistic practice all together. The dominant popular imagery, however, has been created and broadcasted on Palestinian National Television. National TV overflows with songs and video clips glorifying Jerusalem, imaging the previous and current intifada, the struggle of the people and the work of President Arafat. On many occasions in the first year of the intifada on days in which there was a pronounced level of confrontations the broadcasts would be exclusively filled with video clips and news bulletins. Dependence on news broadcasts dominated the patterns of people's daily routines, in a chronic consumption of information and distress. Unlike the previous intifada there was significant reporting on both national TV and Arab satellite stations, in particular Al Jazeera. Bombing raids were the nightly consumption of viewers who were not in the line of fire, yet ironically often not more than 20km from the site of disaster. This in turn produced its own symptoms of nearness and distance and of collective depression. For one of the distinctions of the uprising is that it is an intifada of locations. Before the re-occupation of the autonomous areas in the West Bank confrontations between Palestinians and the IDF would take place on the borders between the communities, which were turned into war zones. Thus one's location determined one's inclusion in the conflict, which has fragmented Palestine into neighbourhoods and has severed the West Bank from Jerusalem¹⁶. For although the intifada carries the name of Jerusalem, after the swift rounding up of activists there has been a minimal level of confrontations. Thus Jerusalem plays a predominantly symbolic

¹⁶For example if one happened to live in the border zones one would expect experience, live shooting, tear gas and bombardment, while people in other areas of the town would be go about their daily lives.

role in the intifada. Accompanying the live footage of Israel's military operations were the graphic hospital tours in which the bodies of the injured and dead were disseminated on national TV. The camera was used to survey corpses panning over every injury, imagery that verged on the grotesque. This was the bleeding wound of the nation, a constant stream of injured and mutilated male bodies filmed in stark intrusive terms that reduced them to flesh, blood and bullet holes. These representations were far removed from the bravado of the video clips and the rhetoric of news bulletin, popular leaflets and parades of resistance brigades that glorified the masked fighters and martyrs to be. Significantly the popular vernacular of martyrdom continued to reiterate that the martyr would wed his bride Palestine in paradise. Noteworthy is that this is a significantly masculinised conflict, with women playing a minimal role in public spaces. Unlike the previous intifada in which women were involved in daily political activities and confrontations, women are predominantly engaged in activities in the home as the mix of conservative family values and rise in religiosity has called on them to occupy traditional domestic roles as well as to veil themselves.

The intifada is now into its third year and what is most apparent is the adaptation to forms of suppression and the normalisation of chaos and insecurity. The constant stream of incidents that once used to leave the populace paralysed has now become part of daily life. Two elements, perpetuation and repetition, play a central role in this process best exemplified by the siege of Arafat's compound. The re-occupation of the West Bank and the incarceration of Arafat brought Palestinians to a standstill, while they watched and waited for developments on the hour and day by day. However the successive sieges of the compound and re-occupations did not halt the public attention in the same way, as after the first event it had already become normalised. Similarly, people have steadily been numbed by the amount of casualties, now a part of daily news broadcasts. Daily curfews and daily checkpoints are all part of the day's routine. Repetition is probably the most uncanny on the corner of Jaffa Street, where suicide

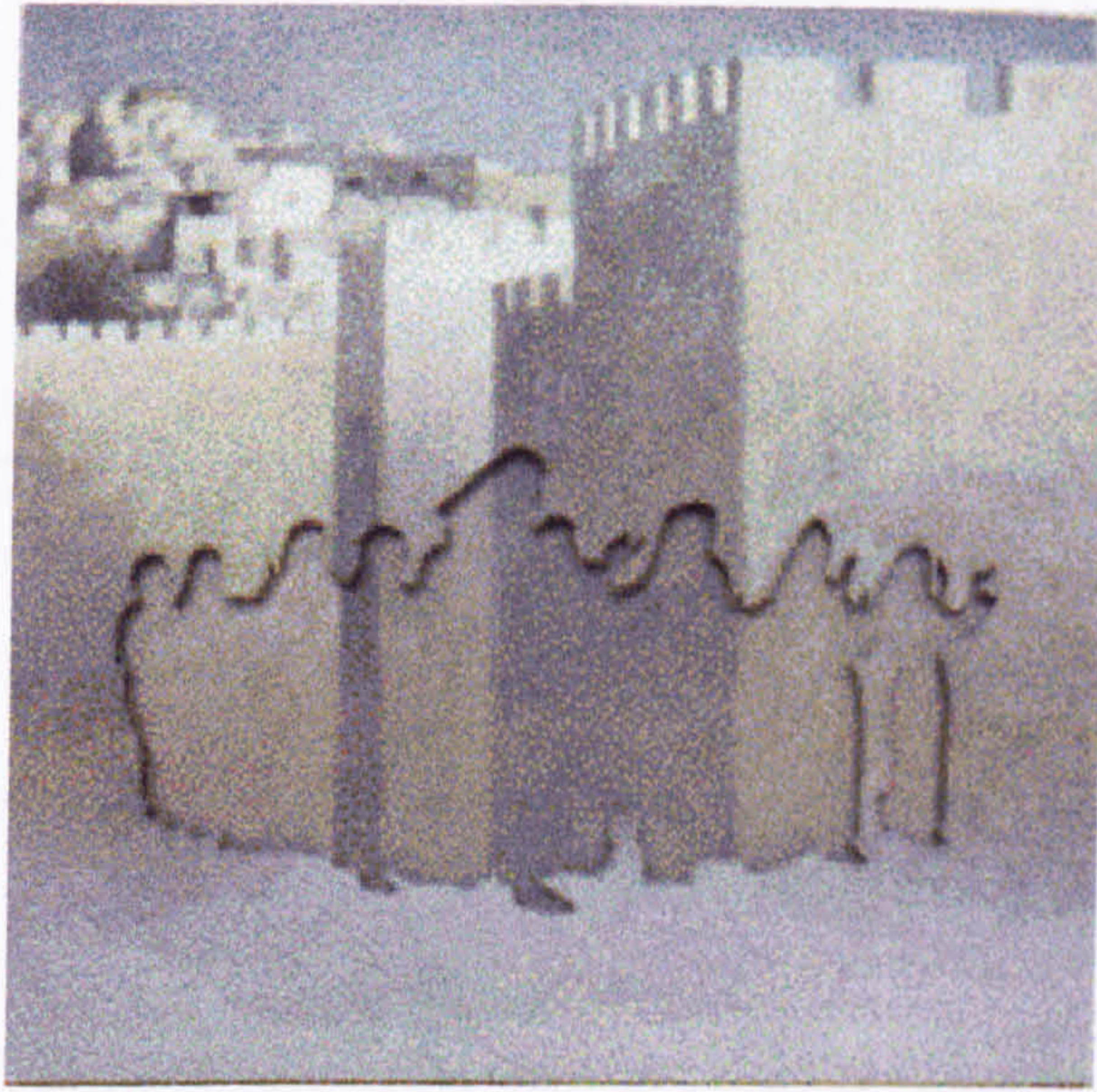
bombers on various occasions have chosen to detonate themselves in the same location. Each time Israel restores the street as though nothing has happened in its desperate attempt to maintain its power over the landscape and to erase the presence of Palestinians.

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Sliman Mansour,
Olive Pickers,
Oil on canvas, 90 x 60cm, 1998.

Fig.100



Sliman Mansour,
Jerusalem,
Oil on wood, 80 x 100cm, 1998.

Fig.101



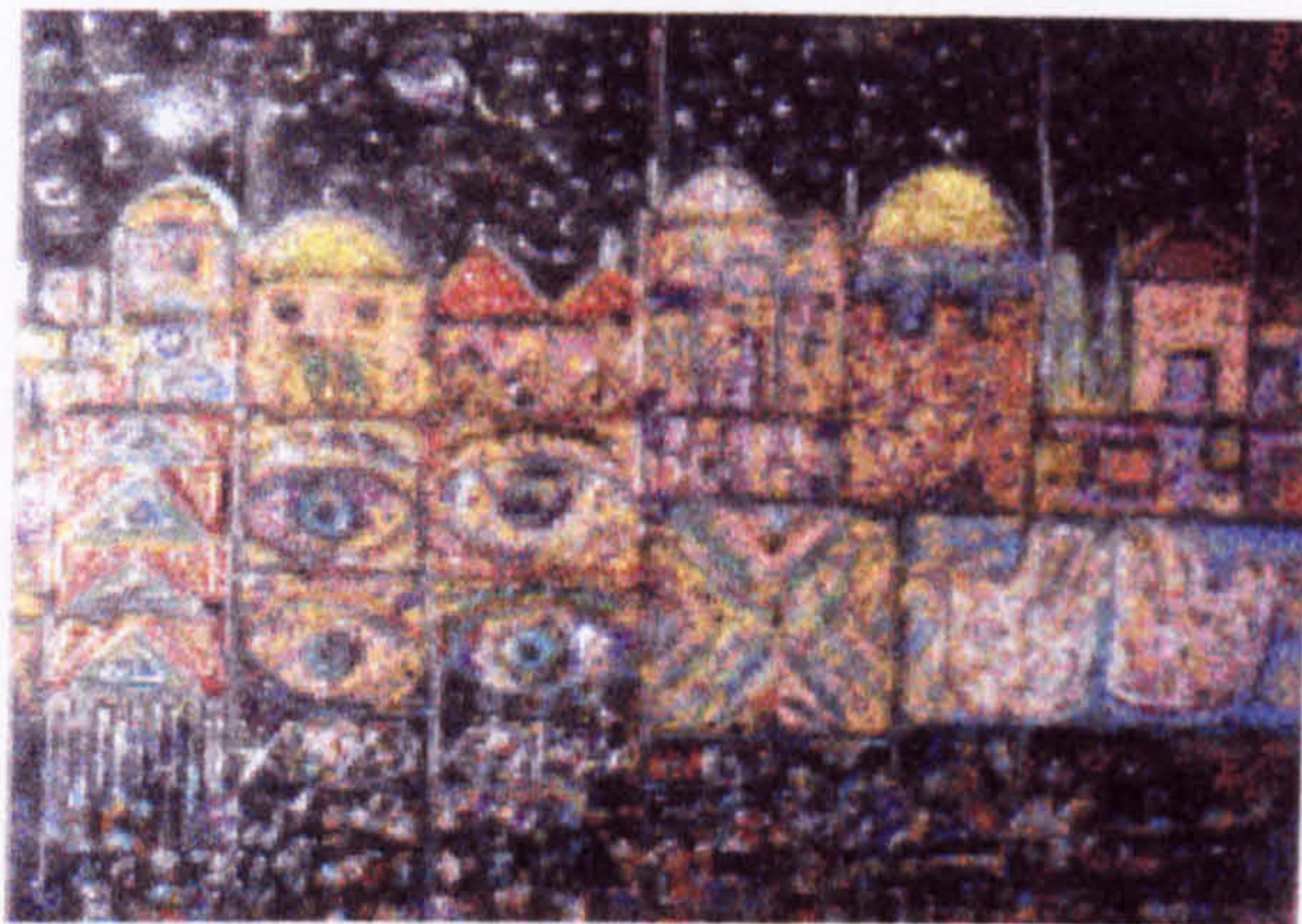
Ashraf Fawakhry,
Untitled,
Mixed media, 17 x 25cm, c.1997.

Fig.102



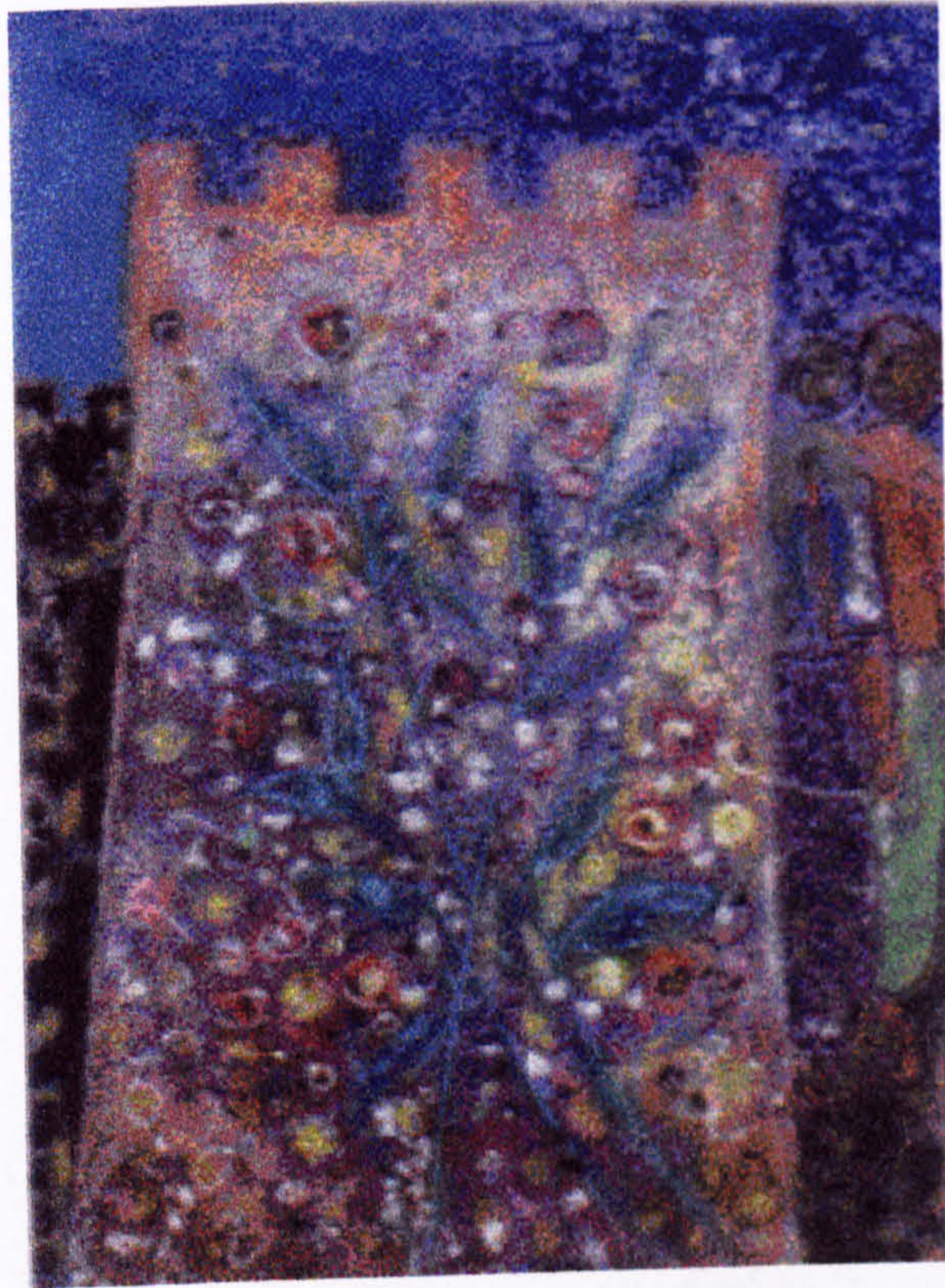
Sliman Mansour,
From Birzeit,
Oil on canvas, 70 x 100cm, 1999.

Fig.103



Taleb Dweik,
Jerusalem,
Mixed media, 50 x 70cm, 1998.

Fig.104



Taleb Dweik,
Jerusalem,
Mixed media, 50 x 70cm, 1998.

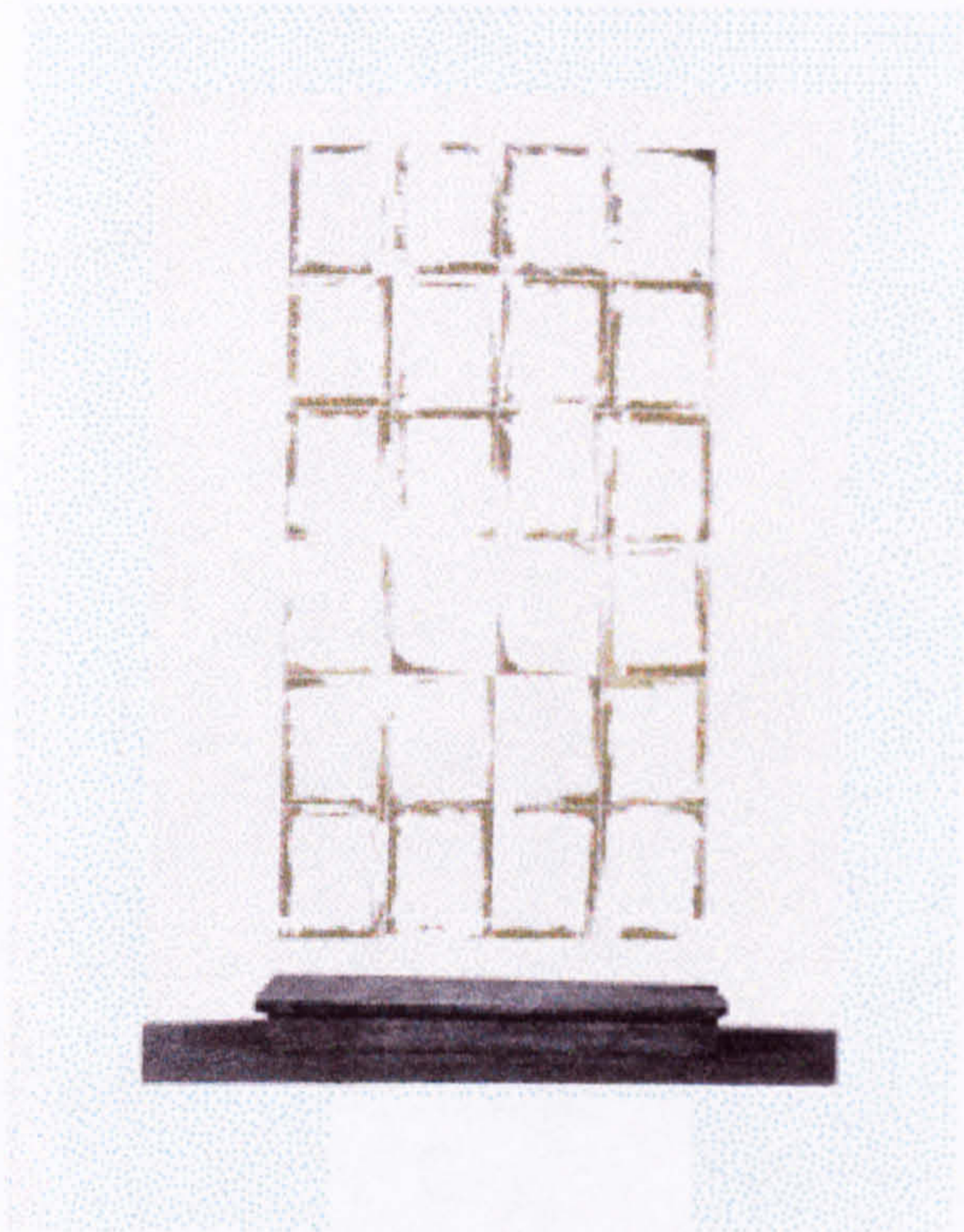
Fig.105



Ismail Shammout,
The March,
Oil on canvas, 400 x 90cm, 1998.

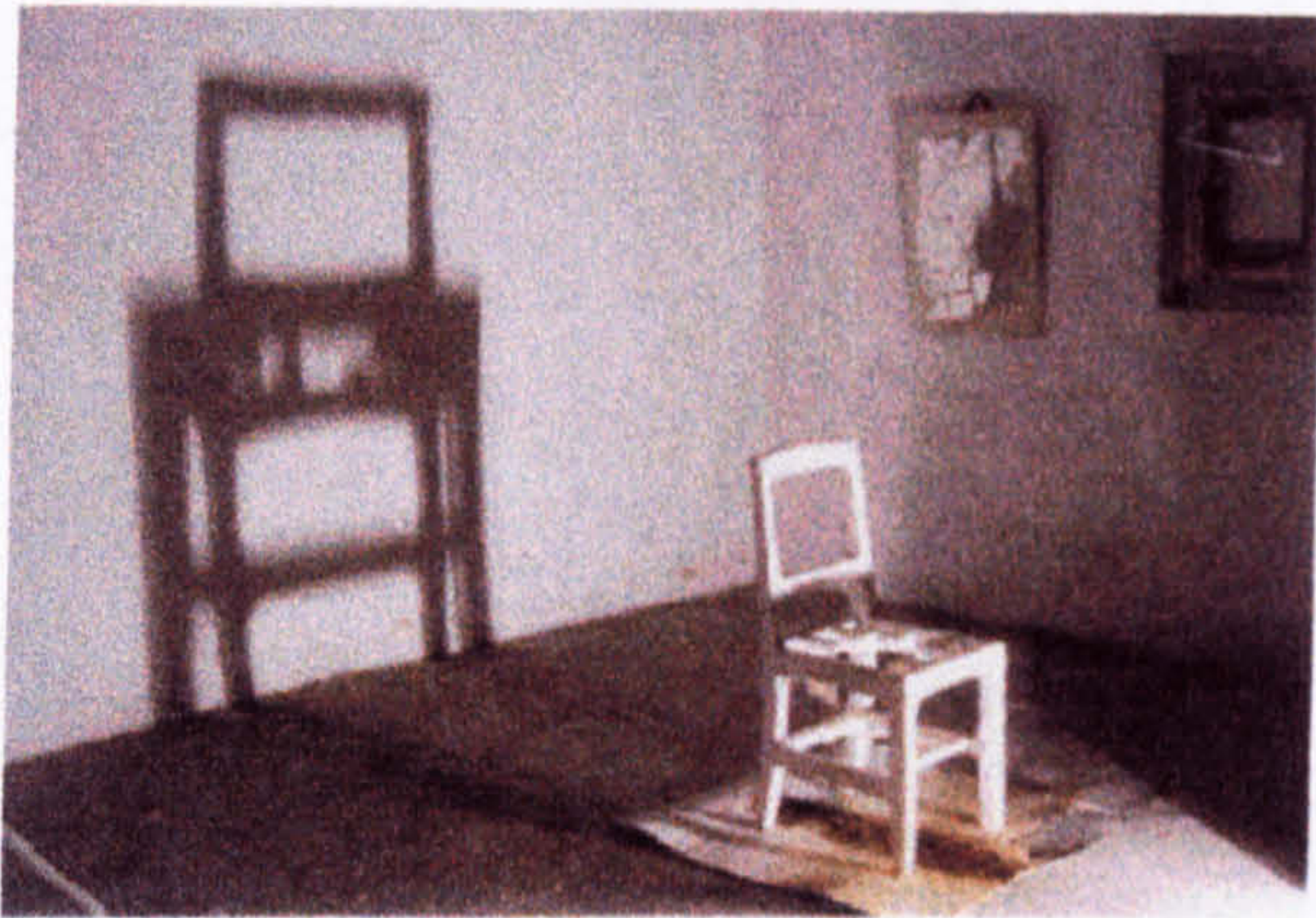
Fig.107

Fig.106



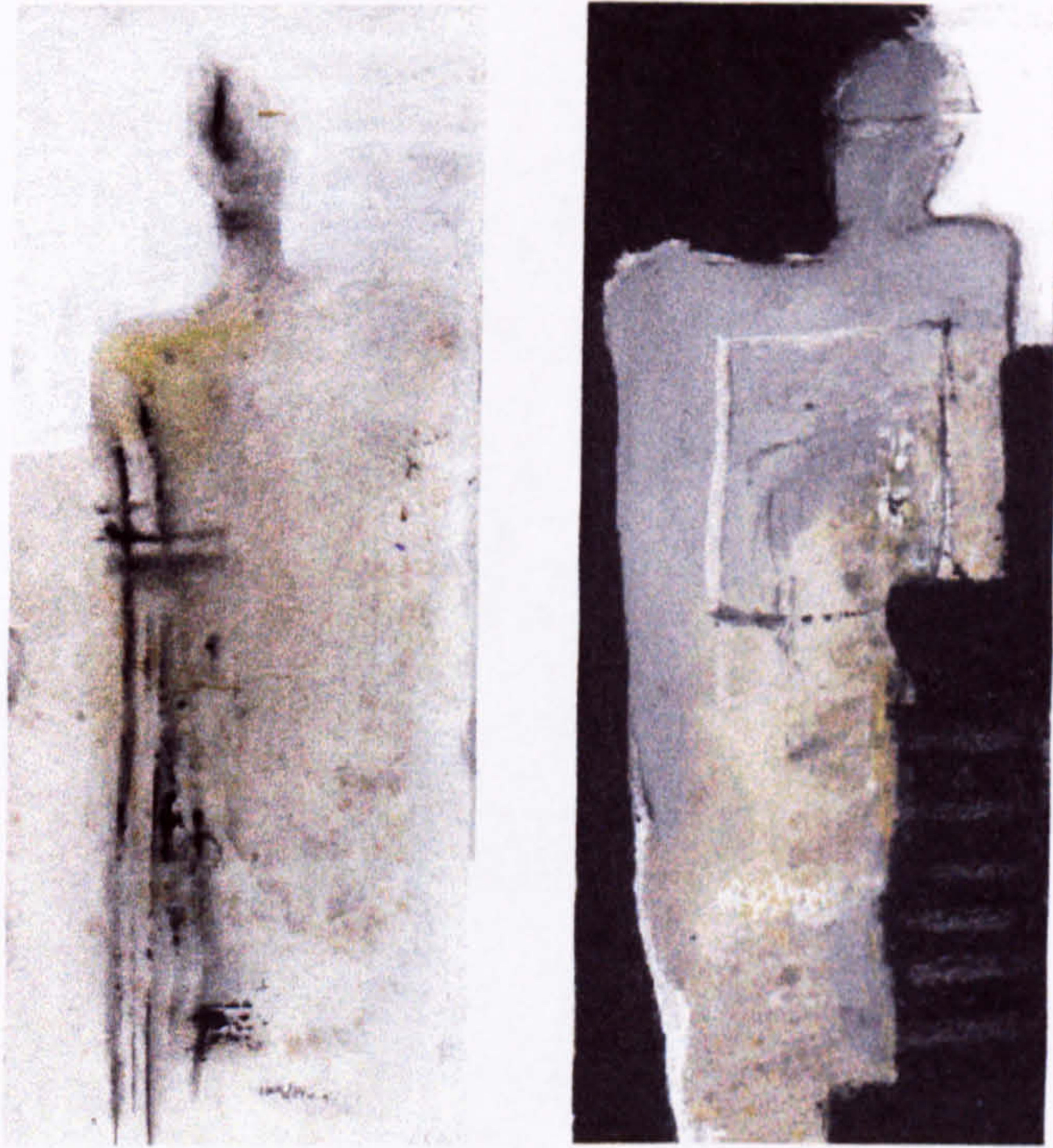
Tayseer Batniji,
Untitled,
Mixed media, 200 x 90cm, 1998.

Fig.107



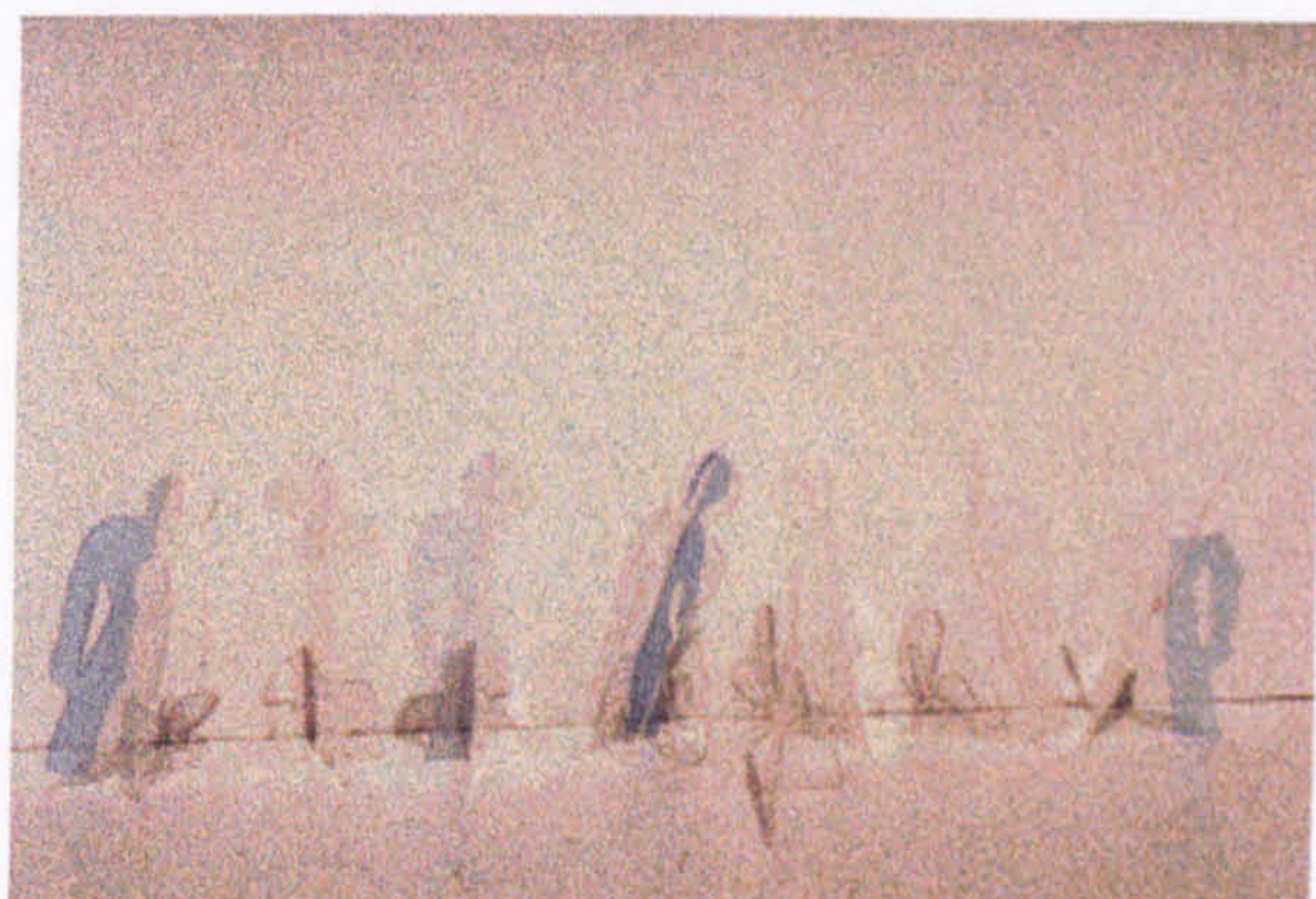
Jawad al Malhi,
After the Revolution,
Installation, 1997.

Fig.108



Jawad al Malhi,
Untitled,
Mixed media, 40 x 16cm, 2000.

Fig.109



Jawad al Malhi,
Presence of Absence,
Plastic, 25 x 15cm, 2000.

Fig.110

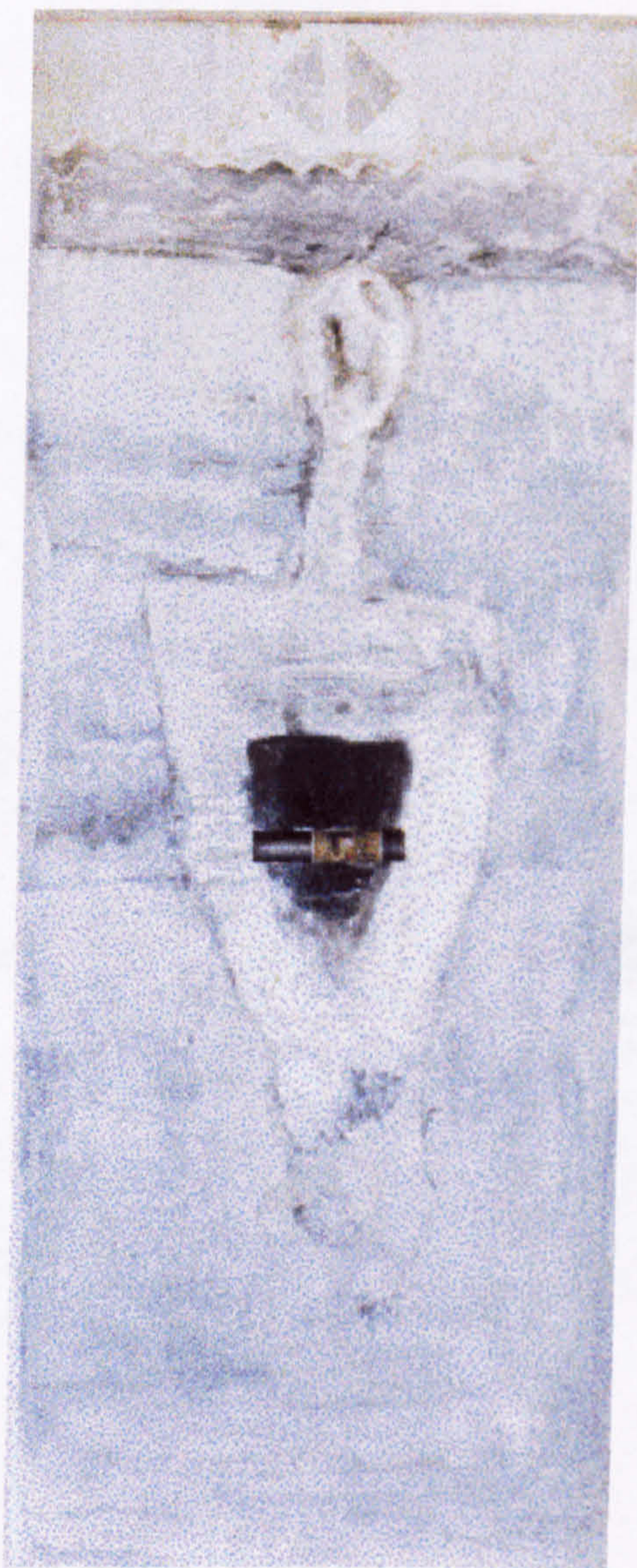


Fig.111
Jawad al Malhi,
Was Present,
Mixed media, 80 x 200cm, 2000.

Fig.111



Khaled Hourani
Untitled
Mixed media, 20 x 20cm, 1992.

Fig.112

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