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Re-Mapping Identity and Memory in Ghada Karmi's *Return: A Palestinian Memoir* and Edward Said's *Out of Place: A Memoir*

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Abstract

Building on the theoretical ideas of Paul Ricoeur, Walter Benjamen and Pierre Nora, this article examines the anticolonial aspect of Edward Said's and Ghada karmi's memoirs, which includes Palestinian voices that articulate the crisis of memory and touch on the significance of memory in the narration of history. It demonstrates that the personal memories of Karmi and Said function as the main component of their incoherent and transient national experience, as well as the potential for resistant acts against the erasure and denial of Palestinian history. These memories, therefore, contribute to the formation of the Palestinian collective narrative as well as maintaining the historical continuity of Palestinians that is obscured by their permanent dislocation. It shows that the act of narration in these memoirs is an act of remembering images from the past through looking inside memory's archives "because this image is an impression left by events, an impression that remains in the mind" (Ricoeur 1984, 10). Both authors seem to write the official history of Palestinians that underlies their struggle for legitimizing their existence in historical Palestine before the Nakba (catastrophe) of 1948. They write it in the form of a historical document that needs to be archived and remembered. This article further demonstrates that both memoirists recall moments and flashes of the past to respond to a state of emergency and a collective crisis that demands memory to be remembered, and necessitates the articulation of memorial sites as historical archives.

Keywords: Memory, Archive, Identity, History, Nation.

Introduction

"When I heard about Edward Said's death on 25 September", Ghada Karmi writes, "I was overwhelmed by an extraordinary sense of grief and personal loss. Perhaps this was not so surprising in view of the similarities between our two stories". In two articles of hers, Karmi asserts that Said's sense of double dispossession and engagement with memory "echo sharply my own experience", since "we were both born in the same part of Jerusalem and both had to leave our native city to live in exile thereafter" (Karmi 2003, para. 1). This article explores the strong resonance between the exilic experiences of Karmi and Said, while addressing the representation of memory and identity in their

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memoirs. Various theoretical threads will be utilized to argue that memories for Karmi and Said are essential in making up the collective memory of the Palestinian community and interpreting their sense of double dispossession and instability. This article further studies the anticolonial aspect of Said's and karmi's discourse, which includes Palestinian voices and the voices of the authors who articulate the crisis of memory. It also engages with Paul Ricoeur's "Time and Narrative" that touches on the significance of memory in the narration of history to show that the act of narration in these memoirs is an act of remembering images from the past through looking inside memory's archives "because this image is an impression left by events, an impression that remains in the mind" (Ricoeur 1984, 10). Walter Benjamin (1968) argues that the articulation of the past is controlled by memories which demand to be remembered: "to articulate what is past does not mean to recognize how it really was," it rather means to take control of a memory, as it flashes in a moment of danger (247). By drawing on this dictum, this study also demonstrates that both memoirists recall moments and flashes of the past to respond to a state of emergency and a collective crisis that demands memory to be remembered, and necessitates the articulation of memorial sites as historical archives. It illustrates that Said and Karmi construct a vision of Palestine resurrected from the ashes of the Nakba; it follows Palestinians' lives after rupture, after annihilation; in Nora's phrase after "the acceleration of history" and before "the slippage of the present into a historical past" (1989, 7). Their memoirs pick up the pieces to construct a Palestinian national and collective narrative that authenticates the Palestinian struggle for their right to return to their homeland. The memoirists imagine their lives in Palestine before the Nakba and after it, an imagining that is not merely an intellectual exercise but an act of opposing colonization and recreating the self and the nation, which Tahrir Hamdi depicts as "the ongoing construction of the Palestinian identity" (2022, 5). Hamdi continues that "imagining Palestine" alludes to "people who indeed existed historically and concretely on this land" (2002, 2). In intertwining their personal narrative of their existence on the Palestinian land before the Nakba with the Palestinian national identity, Said and Karmi emphasise the necessity of returning to their indigenous history, culture, space, and self.

Each memoir follows the lives of the authors' particular families, spanning across generations. Expelled from their homes after the Nakba, they are divided and relocated in various Arab countries, the United Kingdom, and in America. Although each memoir features a large ensemble cast, this article focuses predominantly on the authors themselves, who were too young to remember the Nakba, "unknowing witness[es]" (Said 1999, 118). Said and Karmi, in their respective narratives, grow from infancy to manhood/womanhood, immigrating to and/or living in America and the United Kingdom for most of their lives before returning home—to Palestine— temporarily in search of their Palestinian heritage. In this article, I examine the ways in which the early events of Israeli settler-colonialism continue to haunt the Palestinian authors in an ever-treacherous present. The continuing series of crises experienced after the Nakba are often as disruptive to the lives of the authors as their earlier experiences of the Nakba (Neimneh 2021). I argue that these narratives are constructed as negotiating between history and memory across time, across borders, and among acts of departure and return. As Edward Said argues, "history doesn't only move forward but also backward, in each oscillation between eras managing to

accomplish a greater realism … a higher degree of truth" (2004, 102). Identity—individual, collective, and national—is formed out of memories that are continually enfolding and unfolding across time and space. As Ricoeur (1984) demonstrates, "the actual present of doing something bears witness to the potential present of the capacity to do something and is constituted as the present of the present" (60). The authors unfold their past completely, and in doing so, they are left with a sense of being 'unrooted' in the present: their memories, which tie them to their past, to their history, and to their relationship with their families, are integral to the formation of their identities.

In unfolding their life stories, the Palestinian memoirists Karmi and Said intend to chronicle the Palestinian collective experience of dispossession and delineate their multiple displacements after the occurrence of the Nakba of 1948. Edward Said argues that Palestinian writers and scholars

> gradually established a line of dynastic descent, between the events of 1948 and before and after the catastrophe, that gave substance to the national memory of a collective Palestinian life that persisted, despite the ravages of physical dispossession, military occupation, and Israeli official denials (2000, 189).

In their narratives, both Said and Karmi perceive Palestine as a place of common origin, where they were born, lived and felt at home, before they were expelled from it and thus continuing their lives in diaspora. These narratives in turn substantiate the national memory of a collective Palestinian life of dispossession and incarceration, which has been under threat of domination and negation. Palestinians were cut from their roots, and displaced inside and outside their country after the Nakba of 1948. During the Nakba, more than 700,000 of Palestinian Arabs were uprooted from their homes and hundreds of Palestinian villages were destroyed and others were subjected to the ongoing process of ethnic cleansing. The Nakba has been a central element of the displacement and dispossession of Palestinians, and the trauma and bitterness of it remains raw; the Nakba is a pivotal component in the shaping of the Palestinian identity, collective memory and galvanizing their resistance to the efforts of Israeli-settler colonialism to repress the Palestinian history for the past seven decades (Qabaha and Bilal 2021, 5). Said argues that the Zionist main idea "was to not only deny the Palestinians a historical presence as a collectivity but also to imply that they were not a people who had a long-standing peoplehood" (2000, 187). The personal memories of Karmi and Said therefore function as the main component of their incoherent and transient national experience, as well as the potential for resistant acts against the erasure and denial of Palestinian history. In their memoirs, Karmi and Said attempt to keep the memory of their childhood alive as this serves their own understanding of their own displacement and contributing to the formation of the Palestinian collective narrative. Nora (1989) argues that awareness of a break with the past "is bound up with the sense that memory has been torn-but torn in such a way as to pose the problem of the embodiment of memory in certain sites where a sense of historical continuity persists" (7). Both authors feel that they are detached from the past, and they embark on a physical (as well as textual) journey into the past in search of the sites of their memories to maintain the historical continuity of Palestinians that is obscured by their permanent dislocation.

Karmi's and Said's main task is to keep their personal memories of the past alive in the present, and thus they provide an account of the historical trauma their people have lived since the Nakba. Ricoeur (1984) observes that the mind keeps the memories alive for the present, and when the memory is provoked the contingency of the events of the past elicited are provoked in its wake. He (1984) notes that "certain images must be accorded the power of referring to past things that still exist in the memory" (12). Therefore, by narrating the past we are reminded of the powerful events that left an impression on the memory. In their visit to Jerusalem, Karmi and Said ponder the power of their childhood memory, and examine how its articulation could provide opportunities to resist Palestine's political and historical negation. Because their memories can be seen as "a laboratory for the workings of the mind" (Nalbantian 2003, 1), they allow them in Said's words "to open himself to the deeply disorganized state of his past and origins, glean them, and then try to construct them in order", to reconstruct a historical experience (1999, 6). Although Said was not directly expelled from Palestine by Israeli forces, he was afflicted (at least emotionally) by the Palestinian experience of dispossession in 1948. Growing up in a privileged context, Said acknowledges, in his memoir, "the difference between his own experience ('whereas for me') and those of Palestinian refugees, whose losses are far more catastrophic than his own" (Bernard 2013, 46). This difference also manifests itself in Said's recollection that although "Palestine was where they [his family] were born and grew up", Said's family repressed the subject of Palestinian exile and they seem to shield Edward away from (Palestinian) politics, "which is explained in terms of the defensive self-fashioning of minority subjects" (Moore 2013, 30). However, Said expresses his relationship with Palestine and the collective Palestinian exile at both geographical and positional levels. Said narrates that:

> It was also she [Aunt Nabiha] who communicated to me the desolations of being without a country or a place to return to, of being unprotected by any national authority or institutions, of no longer being able to make sense of the past except as bitter, helpless regret nor of the present with its daily queuing, anxiety-filled searches for jobs, and poverty, hunger, and humiliations (Said 1999, 117).

This passage suggests that Said's perception of Palestine as geography, that is the place where he was born, lived and felt at home and cannot return to, reinforces his passionate interest and advocacy of Palestine as a cause; in other words, "Said's filiation to Palestine produced and reinforced his affiliation to the Palestinian cause" (Qabaha 2018, 135). As such, their memories allow them to act, in Karmi's words, as "a custodian of the Palestinian national history" in which the Palestinian memoirists are "the vital witnesses to the dispossession and loss of the homeland which lay at the root of the bitter conflict that had blighted all our lives" from that time until the present moment (2015, 144). Ricoeur argues that "the duty of memory consists essentially in a duty not to forget. A good share of the past is placed under the sign of the task not to forget" (2004, 30). Both authors seem to write the official history of Palestinians that underlies their struggle for legitimizing their existence in historical Palestine before the Nakba of 1948. They write it in the form of a historical document that needs to be archived and to be remembered, in other words, they write to not forget their past and their history. Klein argues that the

word memory can be used as a synonym for history; "we sometimes use memory as a synonym for history to soften our prose, to humanize it, and to make it more accessible" (129). By substituting history with memory, the history becomes more approachable to the audience because they relate themselves to it. Klein notes that memory "often serves to help draw general readers into a sense of the relevance of history for their own lives" (129). Both Said and Karmi mean to show that their personal memories are repertoire of Palestinian collective memories of dispossession that prove the legitimacy of their right to exist and return to a land stolen by Israeli settler colonialism. In their memoirs, Karmi and Said write the story of every Palestinian since they relate themselves immediately to the events of the Nakba and they seem to share Palestinian refugees similar sentiments (Qabaha 2022).

Karmi and Said feel dispossessed physically and psychically, and they feel the necessity of retrieving their personal memories of certain sites and spaces in Palestine to revitalize their history. Nora argues that "memory gives history legitimacy because memory is related to things concrete like objects and spaces" (1989, 9). He states that "what we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history", and "the quest for memory is the search for one's history" (1989, 13). In their memoirs, Said and Karmi are searching for their original identities that are located in a history that needs to be recaptured. Nora explains that memory allows social groups to revisit their history and thus redefine their identity; "the passage from memory to history has required every social group to redefine its identity through the revitalization of its own history" (1989, 15). The history of the authors' people is denied and their right to return is unfulfilled. Said and Karmi comment on the precariousness of the Palestinian present and the uncertainty of its future. When he was asked about the meaning of the title of his memoir, Said stated that "not being able to go back. It's really a strong feeling I have. I would describe my life as a series of departures and ret urns. But the departure is always anxious. The return always uncertain. Precarious". And before that Said stressed to the interviewer: "I feel I have no place. I am cut from my origins. I live in exile. I am exiled" (Viswanathan 2005, 456). The authors attribute this state of precariousness to the Nakba of 1948, the tormenting effects of which exist in the present moment. This is perhaps best represented in "In Search of Palestine – Edward Said's Return Home", a film presented by Edward Said and produced by the BBC in 1998. This film captures the interconnection between Said's personal recollection and the shared memory of Palestinian people, while amounting to a painful inquiry into his past. This means memory is a repertoire of history and this gives memory the power to narrate the past. Referring to Edward Said's exilic experience, Waïl Hassan argues that "private feelings, and private life are inextricably woven into the fabric of collective history". "Needless to say", he adds, "such indissoluble ties exist in all human contexts, but in an extreme situation like that of Palestinians living in exile or under occupation, it is impossible to obscure such ties" (2011, 6). For this reason, Said and Karmi stress their attachment to the Palestine of the past and link themselves to the Palestinian diaspora that is ingrained in the consciousness of Palestinians no matter where they were relocated.

Both Said and Karmi attempt to preserve the Palestine of the past through memory. The Palestine they long for is located in a remembered and inaccessible past and thus they carry through an image of it. Benjamin argues that "the past can be seized only as an image which flashes up at the instant when it can

be recognized and is never seen again" (1968, 247). The author explains that by narrating the past, we feel alert to a memory that needs to be remembered in a state of emergency. According to Benjamin, it is the memory that controls the narration of the past and therefore it needs to be linked to personal memories. Said and Karmi show that their personal memories are the only tool they have to reconnect with their past and reimagine Jerusalem. As Ricoeur states, "remembering is not only welcoming, receiving an image of the past, it is also searching for it, "doing something"" (1984, 56). They attempt in the present to restore their childhood homeland by recalling certain occasions or images still alive in their memory, but what they remember are just elements or impressions of it. As Salman Rushdie (1991) notes, "exiles or emigrants or expatriates, are haunted by some sense of loss, some urge to reclaim, to look back, even at the risk of being mutated into pillars of salt" (9). However, the alienation of the exiled authors from their homes creates uncertainties, which means that they will not be capable of reclaiming the precise thing they lost, and they will instead "create fictions, not actual cities or villages, but invisible ones, imaginary homelands" (Rushdie 1991, 9). This act of remembering allows them to feel 'at home' in a way they cannot conjure physically, inhabiting a space where they feel a lack of belonging. Said recalls that although he, before 1947, spent more time in Cairo than in Palestine, "Palestine acquired a languid, almost dreamlike aspect for me […]. I recall that thinking being in Jerusalem was pleasant but tantalizingly open, temporary, even transitory" (1999, 21-22). Said, in his memoir, also celebrates that his early memories in Jerusalem "conveyed a sense of warmth and comfort by contrast with the harsh alienation I felt in my New York life" (1999, 217). He is 'reminded' in New York, the place to which his father sent him to join a boarding school, "of my alien, insecure and highly provisional identity once again" (1999, 217). Said's condition of not having a link with Palestine/Cairo in the present triggers his sense of displacement in the US ("To this day I still feel that I am away from home"), and that also reinforces his sense of distress and non-belonging (1999, 222).

The memoirists are dislocated and their lives are defined by this sense of ephemerality and lack of stability, and yet they are able to discern what imaginatively re-locates them in their native place. Said defines exile as "fundamentally a discontinuous state of being, exiles are cut off from their roots, their land, their past" (2000, 51). Said believes that re-attachment to a native place is uncertain and simultaneously there is no place where the exile can have a certain sense of stability. Neimneh and Obeidat call this "geographical dissonance" (2015, 21). Said's, like Karmi's, possibility of return to the region of his home(s)becomes infused with uncertainty or inability, turning him into a person who feels that "it does not seem important or even desirable to be 'right' and in place" (Said 1999, 294). Like Karmi, Said reflects on his unwillingness to feel at home in a new environment in exile and this unwillingness results from retrieving the past that impinges on their consciousness.

Through acts of remembrance, both authors try to re-establish their connection with their place of origin, which David Harvey defines as the "locus of collective memory"—a site where identity is created through the construction of memories linking a group of people with the past (1991, 306). Karmi and Said try to restore a particular time (before the Nakba) and place (pre-colonial Palestine) that is important in determining the pattern of their lives in the present. Halbwachs states that:

> every collective memory unfolds within a spatial framework. Now space is a reality that endures: since our impressions rush by, one after another, and leave nothing behind in the mind, we can understand how we recapture the past only by understanding how it is, in effect, preserved by our physical surroundings. It is to space - the space we occupy, traverse, have continual access to, or can at any time reconstruct in thought and imagination - that we must turn our attention. Our thought must focus on it if this or that category of remembrances is to reappear (1992, 7).

Karmi's memory unfolds in the context of her childhood in Jerusalem and she rememorates and reimagines it when the Nakba happened. She associates her memory of the Nakba of 1948 with her loss of physical contact with Fatima (her family's maid who reappears again and again in her narrative) when she was expelled from Palestine:

> I clung to her by the taxi, unwilling to let go or accept that she would come no further with us. To leave her was to leave all that I knew as home, its comfort and security, and for what? A journey to an unfamiliar place and unfamiliar people I did not want to see. When I was eventually persuaded to let her go and made to settle back into the taxi, a silent emptiness descended on me, as if my whole life had ended on that terrible day (2015, 265).

Karmi intends to emphasize that inherent in her departure from her home after the Nakba happened are memories of loss and distress (Qabaha 2018, 190). She describes the journey into exile as a journey from security into insecurity, from familiarity into unfamiliarity, from identification into non-identification.

Karmi's obsession with this particular time before the Nakba can be seen as a sign of her commitment to retrieving the collective memory of a land lost by its events. Rachel Gregory Fox argues that the unfolding of memories represents an "act of return as remembrance and retelling" (2015, 139). Throughout her memoir, Karmi implies that Fatima embodies the version of Palestine that existed before the establishment of the state of Israel, the place to which she really belonged and that she needs to discover to be able "to find my roots and a credible identity" (2015, 13). Ricoeur argues that "searching for a memory indeed attests to one of the major finalities of the act of remembering, namely, struggling against forgetting, wresting a few scraps of memory from rapacity of time … from sinking into oblivion" (2004, 30). This is not because Karmi in the present deals with imagined constructions, but rather because she deals with childhood as she remembers it. As Ricoeur (1984) argues, "time has no being since the future is not yet, the past is no longer, and the present does not remain" (7). Karmi seems to tell us that we cannot recollect our lives in a linear manner from birth to the present, but instead our memories are of singular events, which often spring to the foreground of our minds without any conscious effort and for reasons we cannot easily recognize. These memories which are situated in time and place need to be recovered to make sense of our identities. Nora believes that "memory takes root in the concrete, in spaces, gestures, images, and objects" (1989, 9). The memories Karmi recalls are time-bound, yet they also connect to a specific place—they are located in the particular.

The geographical distance between the memoirists and their native place needs to be bridged through rememoration so as to feel they belong. Karmi writes, "I would have to go there myself and re-establish my connection with the people who lived there, my people, whose lives I would share, even if only for a while" (2015, 17). Karmi seems to be looking for the recognition of her native people and her personal memories with them to alleviate the feeling of a persistent sense of displacement and lack of belonging that torments (but also animates) her. She describes that the Nakba was "a seminal event in every Palestinian's life, the root of all the sufferings that followed, and I hungered to reach back for its elusive memory through first-hand accounts of that time" (2015, 212). Karmi believes that understanding her displacement in the present is conditional on her ability to remomerate the time she lived in Palestine before the Nakba, and to find Fatima who, arguably, stands in the narrative as an allegory for historic Palestine. Her temporary return/visit to Jerusalem seems to be a reading/examining/ comparing experience between the past and the present. Karmi tries "to unseal the memory of the Nakba, so dim and unattainable, and draws it back into a communal space that could be shared, examined and compared" (2015, 212), yet she finds Palestine a "torn-up, unhappy land," and her journey "had filled me [her] with bitterness and grief" (2015, 7). Karmi finds that the Palestine she imagined is quite different from the Palestine she finds on ground. Her memories of it do not match its geo-political reality. According to Ricoeur,

> Socrates proposes the following: suppose you were asked, 'if a man has come to know a certain thing, and continues to preserve the memory of it, is it possible that, at the moment when he remembers it, he doesn't know this thing that he is remembering?' Can a man who has learned something not know it when he is remembering it?' (1984, 8)

Karmi tries to remember Palestine as she knew it before the Nakba, but she fails to do so because of the death of her maid who is her repertoire of these memories, and who, as argued above, stands for the pre-colonial Palestine. The death of Fatima indicates Karmi's persistent inability to "feel connected to a past" and find "a context in which I belonged and could claim as truly mine," and restore the coherence and wholeness of "that I knew as home" (2015, 52). For Karmi, Fatima manifests pre-colonial Palestine which Israeli settler-colonialism has drastically changed. She describes that "although I had visited the city [Jerusalem] before, each time I went there it seemed more built-up and more unrecognisable as the Arab place of my childhood" (2015, 44). Karmi refers to the colonial transformation and Judaization of Jerusalem, which Said describes as "a city, an idea, an entire history, and of course a specifiable moment in history or a geographical locale often typified by a photograph of the Dome of the Rock" (Said 2000, 180). Israeli government constantly alters and destroys various historical and cultural landmarks in Jerusalem, and it transforms its demographic and legal status so as to curtail its Palestinian character.

Israel, Karmi contends, "succeeded in fragmenting us beyond recall" with the 1948 Nakba and we "were scattered all over the world, never to return" (2015, 314). "The temporal displacement or dispossession" of Palestinian refugees, their exclusion "from past and future time," as Mattar calls it (2014, 109), has irrevocably obstructed Palestinians from returning to their roots. "The gap in time of

over fifty years in our collective history since then," Karmi asserts, "had made us different people, with new lives and new identities" (2015, 314). Karmi returns to Palestine in 2005 only to feel even more disconnected than before:

> I had travelled to the land of my birth with a sense of return, but it was a return to the past, to the Palestine of distant memory, not to the place that it is now. The people who lived in this Palestine were nothing to do with the past I was seeking, nor were they a part of some historical tableau frozen in time that I could reconnect with. This Palestinian world I had briefly joined was different: a new-old place (2015, 313).

Karmi dismays at her loss of connection with the past, to which no return is possible. As Said argues, "no return to the past is without irony, or without a sense that a full return, or repatriation, is impossible" (2000, xxxv). Instead of connecting her with her native place and childhood memories, Karmi's return necessitates other forms of estrangement and exile. According to Said, "perhaps the greatest battle Palestinians have waged as a people has been over the right to a remembered presence and, with that presence, the right to possess and reclaim a collective historical reality" (2000, 184). Karmi introduces herself as one of the Nakba generation that bore witness to the Zionist encroachment over the Palestinian land, and her childhood memories about what happened in the Nakba legitimizes their struggle to reclaim a collective historical reality. As Ricoeur notes, "we have nothing better than memory to signify that something has taken place, has occurred, has happened *before* we declare that we remember it" (1984, 21). Karmi remembers looking down on a night-time Tel Aviv from the windows of a plane taking her back to London and thinking hopelessly, "Flotsam and jetsam, that's what we've become, scattered and divided. There's no room for us or our memories here. And it won't ever be reversed" (2015, 1). Tel Aviv is a reference to the Jewish state which is founded on the cadastral displacement and effacement of Palestinians. In her memoir, Karmi delineates the ongoing Israeli colonial practices and its racial discrimination and exclusion. Karmi demonstrates that the wounds of the Nakba are getting deeper because the Israeli military occupation continues to displace and relocate Palestinians and build its settlements and populate them with Jewish migrants and settlers. This Israeli practice of domination obliges Palestinians to dwell in their memories of loss and to "to re-live and re-imagine the *Nakba*, a memory that is more than a memory as it is lived and re-lived in the daily nakbas of the Palestinian people" (Hamdi 2021, 36).

Thus, the memoirists illustrate the resilience of the Nakba as memory and experience in the life of Palestinians, and substantiates that the Nakba as a process and not as an event since its traumatic memories are still affecting Palestinians until today (Qabaha and Bilal 2021). The establishment of Israeli settlements is based on the eradication of Palestinian historical existence. The Palestinian Nakba is an ever-present as it is communicated and enacted through the Israeli on-going displacement and replacement of Palestinians. Fox and Qabaha (2021, 17) argue that "underpinned by the historical socio-political paradigms of settler-colonialism […] the post-millennial period has given rise to continuing,

increasingly visible, violence by the Israeli occupation". They give an example of the West Bank Separation Wall which aims to restrict Palestinian movement, displace them and annex a large amount of what remained of the Palestinian land. This wall illustrates how "the mundane elements of planning and architecture have become tactical tools and the means of dispossession" (Weizman 2007, 5). Saloul introduces the notion of 'ongoing memory' which represents "a memory that harks back to a traumatic originary event (al-Nakba) and, at the same time, is constantly reworked, reactivated by new events and rearticulated in new acts of memory" (2012, 211). The current Palestinian political situation that Karmi describes demonstrates this notion of ongoing memory as Israel increasingly and ruthlessly annexes the Palestinian land, destroys Palestinians' homes, and expels them, which brings to the Palestinians' minds the Nakba of 1948. Ihab Saloul argues that "second and third generation of post-Nakba Palestinians, although they have not experienced this originating moment in 1948, are still "inside" the event itself living the catastrophe every day" (2012, 107). This continuity of the traumatic/traumatizing history of Palestinians invokes fears in the present and anxiety about the future; their existence in the present is threatened to elimination and their aspirations for national autonomy in the future are thwarted.

Karmi contends that our relation to memory is something entirely different from what we would expect from it: no longer a recall of the past but re-living it. Nora argues that "fear of a rapid and final disappearance combines with anxiety about the meaning of the present and uncertainty about the future to give even the most humble testimony, the most modest vestige, the potential dignity of the memorable" (1989, 13). In the history-memory axiom, the assumption is that the past could be retrieved by our accurate perceptions of it, and can be resuscitated by an effort of rememoration. Karmi contends that "for us [Palestinian refugees] the past is still the present" (2015, 269) in sense that the present turns into a sort of recycled, up-dated past, and the future invisible, unpredictable, uncontrollable, "so have we gone from the idea of a visible past to an invisible one; from a solid and steady past to our fractured past; from a history sought in the continuity of memory to a memory cast in the discontinuity of history" (Nora 1989, 16-17). Karmi ponders about the possibility of the continuity of history that is conditional on the continuity of memory. Karmi laments that "my geographical memory has faded during the years of exile", and she "no longer know[s] the geography of my [her] own land" (2015, 114). Israel has changed 'the Palestine' Karmi knew in the past into a new place with "new landscape, new alien language, new inhabitants" (116). Likewise, Said returns to Palestine to find it changed into Israel. He narrates in the preface of his memoir that

> One of the routine questions I was asked by Israeli officials (since my U.S. passport indicated that I was born in Jerusalem) was exactly when after birth I had left Israel. I responded by saying that I left Palestine in December 1947, accenting the word "Palestine" (1999, V).

Such an attitude compels Said to remomerate his family's history in Jerusalem "for by the early spring of 1948 my entire extended family had been swept out of the place, and has remained in exile ever since" (1999, VI). Tom Thomas contends that Said's memoir "tells the story [of Palestine] to keep it alive, to fight oblivion" (2012, 136). Said resorts to the Palestinian collective memory to interpret his

present that is interconnected with the past. Halbwachs argues that "collective memory is essentially a reconstruction of the past in the light of the present" (1980, 34). Said retrieves his memory of pre-1948 Palestine, which Israeli colonialism negated, by including in his memoirs "photos [of his family that] would become perhaps the richest archival resource for Palestinians' lives until 1948" (1999, 77). Halbwachs adds that "memory needs continuous feeding from collective sources" (1980, 34). As such, the personal narratives of Said and Karmi contribute to the continuity of the Palestinian collective memory and thus their history, which Said views as active and dynamic. He argues that "collective memory is not an inert and passive thing, but a field of activity in which past events are selected, reconstructed, maintained, modified, and endowed with political meaning" (2000, 185). Said now moves from the state of being unknowing witness to the state of bearing witness. As Hamdi argues, "bearing witness not only serves as a means of recording a past tragedy but also involves a complex repertoire of strategies, including interrogating the past, recreating it and, most importantly, forging resistance against the assassination of liberation itself" (2022, 21). The Palestinian writer acts the role of custodian of his or her community's past, history and memory. The witness writer "is inevitably encapsulating her or his people's suffering, documenting it and producing an archive that would prove necessary for a mass witnessing" (Hamdi 2022, 21). The witness writers archive the mass suffering of their people to which they relate and which they memorate its originating source. This rememoration serves to help draw the native community into a sense of the relevance of the traumatic history for their own lives. Ricoeur argues that "testimony constitutes the fundamental transitional structure between memory and history" (1984, 21). This is because testimony represents the authentic articulation of memory and nothing better than it to attest that something had taken place in the past. Memory is faithful to the past and tied to truth recovery and thus writing the history of the conflict. As Nora (1989) notes, "what we call memory today is therefore not memory but already history. What we take to be flare-ups of memory are in fact its final consumption in the flames of history", therefore "the quest for memory is the search for one's history" (13). As such, testimony contributes to realizing and actualizing Palestine and its central historical cause. While these memoirs acknowledge the Nakba as a catastrophic daily existence, they also audaciously lay the foundations for the eventual return of the exiled.

إعادة رسم خريطة الهوية والذاكرة في السيرة الذاتية لغادة كرمي *(العودة: مذكرات فلسطينية)* والسيرة الذاتية لإدوارد سعيد *(خارج المكان: مذكرات)*

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الملخص

من خلال البناء على الأفكار النظريّة لبول ريكور ووالتر بنيامين وبيير نورا، يتناول هذا المقال الجانب المناهض للاستعمار في مذكرات إدوارد سعيد وغادة كرمي، وهما تتضمنان أصواتًا فلسطينيّة تعبر عن أزمة الذاكرة وتتطرق إلى أهميتها في السرد التاريخي. و يوضح هذا المقال أن الذكريات الشخصيّة لكرمي وسعيد تعمل عنصراً رئيسياً في تجربتهما الوطنيّة غير المتماسكة والعابرة، فضلاً عن إمكانيّة القيام بأعمال مناهضة محو التاريخ الفلسطيني وإنكاره. وبالتالي، تساهم هذه الذكريات في تشكيل الرواية الجماعيّة الفلسطينيّة، فضلاً عن الحفاظ على الاستمراريّة التاريخيّة للفلسطينيين التي يحجبها المنفى الدائم. ويبين هذا المقال أن فعل السرد في هذه المذكرات هو فعل تذكر صور من الماضي من خلال النظر داخل أرشيفات الذاكرة "لأن هذه الصورة هي انطباع تركته الأحداث، انطباع يبقى في العقل" (ريكور، 1983، 10)، ويبدو أن كلا المؤلفين يكتب التاريخ الرسمي للفلسطينيين، الذي يرتكز عليه نضالهم من أجل إضفاء الشرعيّة على وجودهم في فلسطين التاريخيّة قبل نكبة 1948. يكتبانه في شكل وثيقة تاريخيّة تحتاج إلى أرشفة وتذكر. يوضح المقال كذلك أن كلا المؤلفين يستذكر لحظات وومضات من الماضي للاستجابة لحالة الطوارئ والأزمة الجماعيّة التي تتطلب تذكر الذاكرة، وتوضيح المواقع التذكاريّة بوصفها أرشيفات تاريخيّة.

الكلمات مفتاحية: الذاكرة، الأرشيف، الهوية، التاريخ، الوطن.

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