Hip Hop from ’48 Palestine

Youth, Music, and the Present/Absent

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This essay sheds light on the ways in which a particular group of Palestinian youth offers a critical perspective on national identity in the colonial present, using hip hop to stretch the boundaries of nation and articulate the notion of a present absence that refuses to disappear. The production of identity on the terrain of culture is always fraught in relation to issues of authenticity, displacement, indigeneity, and nationalism and no more so than in the ongoing history of settler colonialism in Palestine. In the last decade, underground hip hop produced by Palestinian youth has grown and become a significant element of a transnational Palestinian youth culture as well as an expression of political critique that has begun to infuse the global Palestinian rights movement. This music is linked to a larger phenomenon of cultural production by a Palestinian generation that has come of age listening to the sounds of rap, in Palestine as well as in the diaspora, and that has used hip hop to engage with the question of Palestinian self-determination and with the politics of Zionism, colonialism, and resistance.

Our research focuses on hip hop produced by Palestinian youth within the 1948 borders of Israel, a site that reveals some of the most acute contradictions of nationalism, citizenship, and settler colonialism. Through hip hop, a new generation of “1948 Palestinians” is constructing national identities and historical narratives in the face of their ongoing erasure and repression.[1] We argue that this Palestinian rap reimagines the geography of the nation, linking the experiences of “ ’48 Palestinians” to those in the Occupied Territories and in the diaspora, and producing an archive of censored histories. While scholars have recently begun to

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pay attention to hip hop from "'48 Palestine," our research situates this music within a genealogy of artistic and protest movements by Palestinians in Israel to demonstrate how it articulates and critiques a complex citizen-subject positioning, against and through what we call the "present/absent."[2]

Palestinian rap is part of a transnational Palestinian youth movement that has produced a new genre of hip hop layering Palestinian, Arab, and American musical forms. This genre of hip hop must be situated within a broader current of Arab and Arab American hip hop that draws both on progressive rap produced in the United States and elsewhere, and on traditions of improvised and folk poetry in Arabic, such as *zajal*, *mawwal*, and *saj'*, and the percussiveness and lyricism of Arab music.[3] For example, Amal Eqeiq suggests that '48 Palestinian hip hop is continuing in a tradition of *'amudi*, or social realist poetry, that developed after the *Nakba* (or "catastrophe" of the 1948 war that led to the creation of Israel and the dispossession and displacement of Palestinians).[4] It is important to note that Palestinian rap belongs to a longer genealogy of Arab protest music and poetry and aesthetic innovation, re-creating and sampling traditional forms while (re)imagining national community and transnational movements in particular historical moments. Palestinian hip hop, like all genres of hip hop, and indeed like most forms of youth culture, is a contested artistic form that represents the intersection of debates about tradition/modernity and nationalism/globalization, and is often a charged site of anxieties about authenticity and national identity in the face of colonialism and apartheid.[5] At the center of these debates — as in the case of anxieties everywhere about (and projected onto) youth cultures — is the epistemology of "youth" itself, of what a new generation represents and the meaning of their relationship to their past and future in the ever evolving, if seemingly vanishing, present.[6]

The diffusion of hip hop into the Arab world has followed the mainstreaming of rap in the United States; hip hop is, by now, a global signifier of being "cool" or simply being young or youthful. It has also been embraced by new groups of young people within and outside the United States who are drawn to it as a medium to express their social and political concerns.[7] So while hip hop has become a hypercommodified youth culture, it is also an increasingly transnational and hybridized cultural form that has been transformed by youth around the world and injected into, or produced by, a range of political movements, including those of the Arab Spring. This tension between critique and commodification is a dialectic that is inherent to popular culture and is the subject of by now well-established debates in studies of youth culture and mass culture, and a tension that continues to mark debates about hip hop and discussions of Palestinian rap and hip-hop culture as well. Much work in cultural stud-

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ies and youth subculture studies has addressed the complexity of reading resistance in spectacular, or sonic, forms of cultural production in relation to highly diverse generational or sociological categories whose members do not always resonate with the political critiques, explicit or implicit, of subcultures associated with those particular categories; this is also the case with '48 Palestinian youth, who are undeniably differentiated — as are all groups of youth or fans of particular musical genres. In addition, the category of "youth" is often associated with the specter of rebellion, and fears or hopes of change, making the notion of generation an often overdetermined framework for understanding the relation between "youth" and "resistance," but one which nonetheless is necessary to explore in understanding the production and reception of youth culture, including Palestinian hip hop. There is, obviously, a specificity to both the political critique and the cultural form of music and poetry produced by '48 Palestinian rappers, which is the focus of our research.

This essay focuses primarily on the pioneering Palestinian hip-hop group DAM, from Lid, and also on the female duo Arapeyat from Akka, Saz from Ramleh, and Wlad el 7ara (Awlad el Hara, or Children of the Neighborhood) from Nazareth.[8] Using rap to express social and political critique, their music conveys the experiences of exclusion and repression as second-class citizens living in a Jewish state as well as of suspicion from fellow Palestinians and Arabs. They offer a searing critique of issues of dispossession, exclusion, racism, and violence, linking questions of citizenship, nationalism, gender, and generation and engaging in a "discursive battle" that is fundamentally about the meaning of "Palestinian" for those considered invisible, internal, inauthentic, or absent.[9]

Our research is based on interviews with rappers as well as analyses of their music and, in particular, their lyrics, music videos, and performances (in the period 2007 to 2011). Given the importance of poetry (rap) to the genre of hip hop, and our interest in the discursive construction of national imaginaries, we largely focus on a textual analysis of the music, and especially lyrics, as a cultural form of political critique, while acknowledging that there is clearly more work that needs to be done from a musicological perspective. In the first section of the article, we will discuss the historical and political contexts of the national identity of '48 Palestinians, situating hip hop within a longer genealogy of artistic and protest movements by Palestinians "inside" historic Palestine. In the following sections, we will explore the national and political identities articulated in the music of DAM and other rappers, showing how this music expresses the attempts of a new generation of '48 Palestinians to resist the erasure of Palestinian narratives and to use hip hop to connect Palestinian youth on the "inside" with those on the "outside" — in the West Bank, in Gaza, and in the diaspora. The term *inside* is used by Palestinians to refer to the

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territory occupied by Israel in 1948, and *outside* to the West Bank, Gaza, East Jerusalem, or the diaspora. But this vocabulary has a deeper signification beyond the designation of physical space or even the ambiguous glossing of the presence of '48 Palestinians; it suggests the (sometimes shifting and contingent) vocabulary used by Palestinians to capture their relationships to the colonial state's (also shifting and evolving) partitioning of people and land — through new boundaries, expanding walls, and legal regimes of exclusion — and also to one another. Thus, the designation of being "inside" evokes the fraught sense of belonging of '48 Palestinians who remain confined by the invisible checkpoints and political walls of racially discriminatory state policies.

'48 Palestinians: The Present Absentee

The notion of the "present absentee," and the condition of being "present/absent," is the analytic that perhaps most aptly, and painfully, captures the liminal presence of '48 Palestinians. After the Zionist conquest of Palestine in 1948 and the ethnic cleansing that followed, about 15 percent of the Palestinian people remained within the newly constructed settler-colonial state of Israel.[10] Some of these Palestinians who remained were categorized by the Jewish state as "present absentees," a term that indicates the physical presence yet legal absence of those designated as such by the Israeli state and excluded from the privileges and rights afforded to Jewish citizens.[11] Although Palestinians inside the state of Israel were native to the land before the colonization of Palestine in 1948, they are not included in the national identity of the Jewish ethnic state, which is a settler colonial regime that has produced a systematic regime of exclusion that has been described as an apartheid system by scholars such as Uri Davis.[12] Partly due to the mythology of Israeli democracy within the Green Line, the systematic discrimination against Palestinian citizens of Israel is not widely known, although it is by now well documented: for example, in the funding awarded to social and cultural programs in Palestinian neighborhoods, villages, and towns; in job opportunities; in access to education; and in citizenship rights, including the right of return, which is available only to Jews.[13]

The term *present absentee* technically refers to those Palestinians who were unable to provide evidence, in the eyes of the state, for their presence in their villages and towns during the war in 1948. However, we argue that the absence of legally just treatment of Palestinians within Israel makes them all present absentees in a sense, given that they are physically present yet not included in the national community as defined by the Jewish state.[14] This is not to diminish the severe ramifications for those legally classified as present absentees, but to emphasize that the disappearance of the Pal-

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estinians "inside" Israel, and in the eyes of the Palestinian national movement and also of the world at large — only to reemerge recently in political discourse — is embedded in the paradox of an ever-present absence that every generation of '48 Palestinians has struggled with in different ways. Thus, the notion of the present absentee is not simply a metaphor that slides over from a juridical category of the Israeli state. The concept of the "present absent" offers a profound analytic lens for understanding the fundamental contradictions of the social, political, and cultural conditions created by specific histories of settler colonialism for '48 Palestinians, who are simultaneously visible/invisible, internal/external, indigenous/inauthentic, and, always, absent/present.

We argue that the concept of the present absent is rooted in a particular history and apparatus of settler colonialism in Palestine and suggests the complexity of the politics of incorporation, coercive inclusion, assimilation, subversion, loss, and disappearance of '48 Palestinians. Much work has analyzed the relationship between settler colonialism in Palestine and the creation of the Jewish state, which privileges Jews and dispossesses and excludes non-Jews; to give just one example, land belonging to Arabs was confiscated by the state to create Jewish-only towns and cities, which not only led to the displacement of Palestinians but also encroached on Palestinian villages and towns — similar to Israeli settlement policies in the West Bank.[15] This dispossession was a manifestation of an official policy of Judaization of the Galilee that aimed at increasing the number of Jews in northern Israel (an area where many Palestinians remained) and directly or indirectly encouraging Palestinians to leave. Furthermore, the colonial state apparatus generated ambiguous categories for regulating the colonized population and territories — differentiating between peoples and geographic spaces, for example, between Israel, East/West Jerusalem, Gaza, and Areas A, B, and C in the West Bank — what Ann Stoler refers to as the inherent blurring of rights and "epistemic murk" constitutive of the architecture of settler colonial states.[16] The slash in our notion of the present/absent is crucial in denoting a constant shifting between presence and absence in the colonialist construction and treatment of Palestinian subjects within the Israeli state that is inherent to, and not an exception from, technologies of colonial rule. This state of exception has had ongoing implications for how '48 Palestinians inhabit, think through, and challenge their presence/absence.

This paradoxical political predicament of '48 Palestinians is crucial to understand in relation to their cultural production, we argue, because their condition has not always been viewed as a national question in relation to settler colonialism; there is a conceptual absence in the presumably postcolonial present and particularly in the dominant framing of the Palestine question. During the 1948 conquest of Palestine, Zionist groups

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occupied more lands than had been allotted to the Jewish state according to the UN partition plan outlined in UN Resolution 181, a resolution that was forced on the native Palestinian population. Although the majority of the Palestinians who remained on lands conquered by Zionists should actually have been categorized as a population under occupation or colonization, neither the Western powers nor the Arab states and Palestinian leadership called for their right to self-determination; thus they were excluded from the Arab, Palestinian, and international discourse of rights-based resistance, unlike the Palestinians who came under Israeli rule in 1967. The question of '48 Palestinians became an internal Israeli issue, and they were considered and treated as a "minority" in a state that was built on the destruction of their own society and land.[17]

Furthermore, the ambiguity in the status of Palestinians living as an indigenous minority within the colonial state mirrors the ways they are generally perceived by the larger Palestinian community and within the Arab national context, although for different reasons. Zionism, after all, is based on a settler-colonialist logic of "terra nullius," or the notion of an empty land that has to be populated and civilized, that required the erasure of the Palestinians inside the newly created state of Israel. However, it is harder to explain the logic underlying the historical absence of '48 Palestinians from the Palestinian and Arab national movement, which for generations either completely ignored them or maligned them as "traitors" for presumably deciding to remain within the Jewish state and accepting Israeli citizenship. The '48 Palestinians were seen as inherently compromising/ compromised, as tainted by a colonizing Jewish culture and society; this is why the notion of the present/absent is laced by a vexed national politics of authenticity and betrayal but also a sense of abandonment by those who remained "within" the Jewish state and persisted in the struggle to challenge colonialist policies. The present absent is, thus, also an absent present, which raises complex and crucial questions about the history of the colonial present, a history that we argue runs through the critique waged by '48 Palestinian hip hop.

It is possible, too, that the Arab national movement absorbed the international discourse about the Palestinian question, which turned it mainly into an issue of refugees or an issue of land, without reference to the people who remained on the land. Thus Zionist propaganda that insisted that Palestine was an "empty land" met a self-inflicted Arab shortsightedness in evading the issue of '48 Palestinians still present within historic Palestine. As a result, '48 Palestinians were largely absent legally, politically, and nationally not only within Israel, but also within the landscape of Palestinian and Arab nationalism. This contradiction of being present yet absent is vividly illustrated in Palestinian director Elia Suleiman's film *Chronicles of a Disappearance* (1996), a satire about daily life in '48 Pales-

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tine. The Palestinian protagonist, who remains silent throughout the film, is simultaneously present yet absent with regard to the Israeli state and his fellow Arabs, a visible yet voiceless cipher. In fact, Suleiman's recent film about a Palestinian family's life in Nazareth since 1948 is titled *The Time That Remains: Chronicles of a Present Absentee* (2009).

In response to their segregation and ghettoization by Israel and also to their marginalization within the Palestinian and Arab national movement, '48 Palestinians attempted to maintain their identities as Palestinian Arabs and to break out of their isolation. They deployed many strategies of resistance, one of which was the use of arts and culture for articulating a national identity repressed by the settler colonial regime. Poetry, fiction, film, and music have historically been used by various generations of '48 Palestinians to protest, educate, and mobilize as part of their larger effort to build a Palestinian national movement "inside" Israel. One could argue that given that armed struggle was considered illegal for '48 Palestinians, since international law did not recognize their right to resist, the Palestinian minority in Israel channeled their protest into a range of cultural forms, in addition to civil disobedience and other forms of political mobilization.[18] Not many know that Palestinian citizens in Israel lived under military rule from 1948 to 1966, a period when nationalist expression and political organizing was criminalized and repressed, though they continually engaged in political organizing and public protests. Israel continues to unofficially place limitations on the freedom of association and expression of Palestinian citizens, so artistic production has been an important vehicle for expressing a politics that could not always be produced in other ways.[19]

Palestinian hip hop continues this tradition of vibrant artistic protest established by the community since the early years after the Palestinian *Nakba*. Renowned writers such as Mahmoud Darwish from the destroyed village of al-Birweh and Emile Habibi from Haifa, to offer just two examples, tried to resist Israeli policies of marginalization, oppression, and censorship through their poetry and fiction, respectively. There were numerous musicians from the "inside," such as Le Trio Jubran, from Nazareth, and Yu'ad, from Rameh, who produced a specifically Palestinian music, and there have been several notable film directors. These artists also tried to connect with Palestinian and Arab nationalist movements that began in the 1950s, as well as to the Third World and the larger international community, forging connections with other struggles against colonialism and racial exclusion. Darwish's well-known poems "Identity Card" and "The Speech of the Red Indian" are powerful examples of this conscious strategy of looking inward as well as outward. "Identity Card," written during the peak of pan-Arab nationalism, is a cry against the Israeli state that denied '48 Palestinians sovereignty over self-definition, and it is also a plea to the Arab world not to forget those who lived inside colonial Israel.

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Thus, poetry, literature, and music were crucial to maintaining Arab language and identity in the face of Israeli policies of erasing and suppressing Palestinian histories. The Zionist project of national miseducation and repression created for '48 Palestinians a new identity, "Israeli Arab," attempting to produce a new subject not Palestinian in name and neither fully Israeli nor fully Arab, an ambiguity that is central to the paradox of the present/absent. In response, '48 Palestinian artists fought to register their presence and to expose the Zionist propaganda of a state based on "democracy" and "progress," core euphemisms of Western modernity and colonization. Literary figures, artists, and musicians memorialized events such as the massacres of Deir Yassin, Kafr Qassim, and Land Day; the 1967, 1973, and 1982 wars; and the killing of '48 Palestinian demonstrators in October 2000 during the second Intifada. Arts and popular culture became a medium for producing a collective memory for later generations, for the Palestinian and Arab people and for global publics who have been subjected to Israeli and Zionist campaigns of misinformation for decades.

The performance poetry and music of political Palestinian rappers today is an evolving genre that echoes the efforts of earlier generations of artists who expressed a political critique of their condition while experimenting with new aesthetic forms. Clearly, there were historical shifts in the political strategies and artistic modes of this evolving national movement in response to global shifts in political resistance and culture. Artists from '48 Palestine engaged with Palestinian and Arab political currents, such as the Arab national movement that emerged in the 1950s and the Palestinian liberation movement beginning in the 1960s, through their aesthetic work and also political organizing. Despite political repression, Palestinians inside formed and participated in national organizations such as the Israeli Communist Party and al-Ard Movement from the 1950s, Abna' al-Balad from the 1960s, the Progressive Movement in the 1980s, and Al-Tajammu' from the 1990s, as well as in local groups and coalitions that resisted Israeli policies.[20]

Thus, rather than exceptionalizing Palestinian hip hop, the music of young '48 Palestinian rappers should be seen as emerging from earlier attempts to use music and poetry to connect with and mobilize Palestinian and Arab as well as larger publics. Situating Palestinian hip hop within this historical framework should also make clear that '48 Palestinian rap today is being produced in a particular historical moment and there are continuities as well as discontinuities with earlier forms of cultural production and innovation. Palestinian hip hop as a form of political critique needs to be situated in the period following the Oslo Accords of 1993, which excluded the question of '48 Palestinians and which generated a counternarrative of Palestinianism in response to this absence within the Oslo framework of Palestinian statehood. We consider this genre of music

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in relation to the production of the category of “Palestinian” identity and also to the production, or erasure, of history; to the disappearance of other presences; and to what is at stake in their vanishing.

The Palestinian Al Jazeera

Hip hop today is a global cultural and musical form, and ’48 Palestinian rappers have used this idiom to translate their experiences to other marginalized and minority groups around the world via the Internet, using new media such as MySpace, YouTube, and Facebook. Hip hop has its roots in an oppositional subculture in the United States and so lends itself to protest music, particularly in its manifestation as progressive or conscious rap, subgenres that depart from mainstream or gangsta rap. Hip hop emerged in New York in the late 1970s as a subculture created by marginalized African American and Puerto Rican youth in the South Bronx who responded to urban restructuring, deindustrialization, poverty, and racism by producing a new cultural expression of their experiences of political abandonment and alienation.[21] This youth subculture consists of several elements, musical as well as visual and kinesthetic: rap (MCing), deejaying, graffiti, and break dancing. Tricia Rose describes hip hop as a hybrid cultural form that mixes Afro-Caribbean and African American musical, oral, visual, and dance practices with contemporary technologies and urban cultures to create a “counterdominant narrative.”[22] The “heavy reliance on lyricism” makes hip hop a genre that can be powerfully used for social and political commentary by layering poetry over beats, with rappers described as poets or MCs.[23] If hip hop was described as “the Black CNN” by Chuck D of Public Enemy, suggesting its role as a tool for sharing news of the social and political realities of urban, disadvantaged youth of color in the United States, it is conceivable that today hip hop has become the “Palestinian Al Jazeera,” as observed by Tamer Nafar of DAM (see fig. 1).[24]

We suggest that ’48 Palestinian rap is a poetics of displacement and protest which simultaneously unsettles and re-creates national cultural imaginaries. Joseph Massad situates the political rap produced by Palestinian youth in a longer tradition of revolutionary, underground Arabic music and political songs that have supported the Palestinian liberation movement since the 1950s and that mixed nationalist poetry with hybrid Arab-Western musical instrumentation.[25] Palestinian rappers are responding to the global popularity of hip hop as well as to Arab musical and poetic traditions that they have grown up with, and are incorporating both genres into a new cultural form. These hip-hop artists acknowledge this hybridity themselves—a hybridity that does create some unease for other Palestinians, including youth. For example, DAM notes that its diverse

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artistic and political influences are "Jamal Abdel Nasser, Naji al-'Ali, Ghassan Kanafani, Fadwa Tuqan, Tupac Shakur, Toufiq Ziyyad, Malcolm X, Marcel Khalife, Fairuz, El Sheikh Imam, The Notorious BIG, George Habash, Edward Said, Nas, and KRS One."[26] In fact, DAM mixes Arabic music and instrumentation with samples of speeches and poetry by Arab and Palestinian leaders such as Abdel Nasser and Toufiq Ziyyad, acknowledging the inspiration of these cultural and political icons.

The '48 Palestinian rappers in this essay belong to a transnational Arab hip-hop subculture that includes a rapidly growing network of young artists in Palestine, such as Abeer and MWR inside '48 Palestine; Checkpoint 303, Boikutt, Stormtrap, Bad Luck Rappers (now Palestinian Street), and Tashweesh (formerly Ramallah Underground) in the West Bank; G-Town and OC Soldiers from Jerusalem; PR (Palestine Rapperz) in Gaza; as well as numerous MCs in the Palestinian and Arab diaspora who perform all over Europe and North America.[27] There are many Palestinian and Arab American MCs in the United States who do political rap, many of whom also perform in Palestine and are part of a transnational hip-hop circuit linking Palestine with the Arab world and larger diaspora.[28]

MCs from '48 Palestine, the West Bank, Jerusalem, and Gaza have found audiences within and beyond Palestine by using new technologies to distribute and publicize their music through the hip-hop underground. This follows in the tradition of underground Arabic music on cassettes and radio broadcasts from the 1960s and 1970s that supported the Palestinian guerrilla movement and also Palestinian movements inside Israel. Hip hop today is inevitably embedded in the complex relationship between protest music and the culture industry that makes the question of resistance and cooptation for progressive rap a complicated one, in the United States and also in Palestine. In fact, Iron Sheik, a Palestinian American MC whose family is from Nazareth, suggests that the "message rap" produced by Palestinians and Palestinian Americans is reinvigorating the progressive potential of hip hop; he observes, "I feel ambivalent about what hip hop has become in the U.S. and I'm happy to see messages in rap again."[29] While one cannot gloss over the ways in which commodification and marketing inevitably seep into presumably radical forms of cultural protest, it is also true that Palestinian narratives challenging Zionism, and in particular those that oppose settler colonialism and not just Israeli occupation, do not circulate easily in the United States and are not generally consumed by mainstream American audiences. The question then becomes what forms of popular culture are more easily commodifiable, what kinds of publics or counterpublics are mobilized through the consumption of different cultural forms, and why. We argue that the dissent encoded within '48 Palestinian hip hop challenges the mythologies of the Zionist state, through a cultural and

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Figure 1. Cover of DAM's forthcoming album, titled *A Hole in the Pocket: We Have Nothing but Honesty*. Courtesy of DAM

discursive battle about the Palestinian question, and also the censorship and distortion of this issue in mainstream US media and society; in both arenas, then, the notion of a presence/absence is a central framework through which this political rap offers a sonic critique.

Furthermore, '48 Palestinian hip hop directly and indirectly evokes the framework of race and racism to narrate the condition of the present/absent, a framework that is not easily attached to discussions of Israel or Israeli culture in dominant US discourse. For Palestinian youth growing up in a settler colonial state, progressive rap by African American, Latino, or Native American youth often speaks to their experiences of growing up as a racialized minority and dealing with police brutality, drugs, violence, and incarceration.[30] Tamer Nafar says he was inspired by African American rappers such as Tupac Shakur who spoke about the poverty and racism affecting inner-city youth that he, too, experienced growing up in Lid: "My reality is hip hop. I listened to the lyrics and felt they were describing me, my situation. You can exchange the word 'nigger' with 'Palestinian.' Lid is the ghetto, the biggest crime and drug center in the Middle East. When I heard Tupac sing, 'It's a White Man's World,' I decided to take hip hop seriously."[31] Safa Hathoot of Arapeyat says she was drawn to hip hop at the age of ten because she identified with the "racism and deprivation" critiqued by black rappers and notes, "We're from Akka, it hurts us

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to see young people doing drugs, not studying. . . . I don't do hip hop for nothing, I do it for a cause."

Tamer Nafar, his brother Suheil, and Mahmoud Jreri, who formed DAM in 2000, are all from Lid, a mixed Palestinian-Jewish city near Tel Aviv. Poverty, underemployment and unemployment, racism and racial segregation mark the experiences of Palestinian youth in mixed cities such as Lid and Akka; as Tamer Nafar comments, "We grew up in our Arabic neighborhoods, Arabic ghettos. . . . You have a separate wall between both neighborhoods, between the Arabic poverty [*sic*] neighborhoods and the Jewish, rich kibbutz."[32] While early '48 Palestinian hip hop emerged from cities where urban experiences of police brutality and segregation resonated with the narratives in urban American hip hop, there is a pervasive experience of racism and unemployment that is shared with Palestinian youth in villages and smaller towns, where young people are similarly exposed to American rap through films, television, and the Internet. It is also important to keep in mind that most Palestinian villages are in the vicinity of Jewish towns and cities, which are more affluent and receive more state services, and so can be understood as the external ghettos, or even slums, of these cities.

DAM claims to be the first Palestinian rap group and has garnered growing attention with a community of fans around the world, touring widely across Europe and the United States. DAM's success has inspired a growing movement of rappers from other Palestinian communities in Israel. 'Adi, of Wlad il 7ara, said that he formed a rap group with two other young men from Nazareth after attending a DAM concert in 2001 and seeing a hall filled with other young Palestinians, a moving experience.[33] He had also watched rap videos featuring images of African American youth being attacked by the police, which resonated with his own experience of growing up Palestinian in Israel. The Palestinian American MC Ragtop, who has performed with DAM, insightfully suggests that the attraction of hip hop to '48 Palestinian youth is a result of their strong identification with the oppositional with the oppositional relationship to the state and the racism of majority culture expressed in progressive rap in the United States and can use rap to speak about their condition to the Israeli and global public as well as to Palestinian/Arab youth.[34] These MCs (who rap in the Palestinian/regional dialect of Arabic) are bilingual in Arabic and Hebrew, and some are trilingual, such as Tamer Nafar, who is also very articulate in English, so they use multiple languages, as well as the language of rap, to reach diverse audiences, local, national, and global. Even as hip hop has traveled to Palestine and become transformed, '48 Palestinian hip hop travels across social and national boundaries; this is, precisely, the allure of underground rap for Palestinian youth—that it can move freely across borders when bodies cannot.

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There are three major aspects of the articulation of the present/absent in ’48 Palestinian hip hop that we discuss here: (1) the critique of official narratives and state policies that rupture Israeli mythologies of democracy and inclusion; (2) the rewriting of the ambiguity and alienation of being Palestinians from “’48”; and (3) the attempt to connect Palestinians “inside” and “outside.”

Who’s the Terrorist?

DAM (or Da Arabian MCs; *dam* also means “persisting” in Arabic and “blood” in Hebrew) released their first full album, *Ihdaa* (*Dedication*), in 2006. Tamer Nafar says that the group’s name suggests “eternal blood, like we will stay here forever” (Democracy Now 2008), evoking a politics of resilience and survival (or *sumood*, in Arabic), that seems particularly apt for the more than 1 million Palestinians inside Israel who have persisted in their struggle to assert a Palestinian identity.[35] DAM became internationally famous with their first single, the searing song “Meen Erhabi” (“Who’s the Terrorist?”), which was released in 2001 and reportedly downloaded more than 1 million times from their website until 2008.[36] The song layers Arabic rap over female vocals in Arabic, the sounds of the *nay* (Arabic flute), traditional Arabic rhythms, and electronic beats. It concludes with the voices of older Palestinian men lamenting the destruction of their olive trees. In the powerful video for “Meen Erhabi,” produced by Jackie Salloum and circulated on the Internet via YouTube, DAM raps over images of the occupation and the second Intifada. The lyrics appear in the video as English subtitles, translated by DAM:

> Who’s a terrorist?
> Me, a terrorist?
> How am I a terrorist
> When you’ve taken my land?
> You’re the terrorist!
> You’ve taken everything I own while I’m living in my homeland.
> You want me to go to the law?
> You’re the witness, the lawyer, and the judge.
> I’ll be sentenced to death,
> To end up the majority in the cemetery.
> . . . .
> You attack me but still you cry out,
> When I remind you it was you attacked me
> You silence me and shout,
> “Don’t they have parents to keep them at home?”

The lyrics and video images for “Meen Erhabi” undo Zionist myths that underwrite the settler colonial project of the state, pointing out that Pales-

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tinians "inside" are living in a homeland where they have been displaced but where they will eventually become the majority — despite fears of the demographic expansion of the Palestinian community and plans for their expulsion (euphemistically called "transfer" by Israeli political and religious figures) — only in the cemetery. The song powerfully critiques Orientalist and racialized notions of terrorism ascribed to Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims, by pointing to daily as well as dramatic episodes of state terror, which are obscured by the reversal of victimhood and by the notion that Palestinian youth are inherently violent, raised to become militants by uncaring parents. In fact, Tamer Nafar says the song was inspired by the distorted coverage of the second Intifada in the Western mainstream media: "Back in the year 2000, Israeli police and army murdered more than a thousand Palestinians and the world stood still, didn't do nothing. And a few years later, a Palestinian guy got into Tel Aviv and he committed a suicide bombing which led to twenty-one victims, young kids who were also killed. Twenty-one versus thousands of Palestinians, and suddenly the world says, 'Let's stop the war, and let's stop the murder. Let's stop the terror!' And we saw that as an unfair thing, to shut down one eye and to open the other one, and to . . . legitimize the killing of Palestinians."[37]

"Meen Erhabi" also astutely critiques the notion of legal justice and the official claim that Israel is a democracy with equal rights for all its citizens, by pointing out that there is no neutral arbiter of justice in a state where discrimination is built into citizenship and the law itself.[38] This is even alluded to in an Israeli government report issued by the Orr Commission in 2003, which noted that specific rights granted only to Jewish citizens are encoded in "the Law of Return and the Laws of Citizenship; in the normative definitions of the educational, media, and judiciary systems, and . . . the Jewish Agency and the Jewish National Fund. They were also expressed in the very legal definition of the state as a Jewish state."[39] In the song "G'areeb Fi Biladi" ("Stranger in My Own Country," *Dedication*), DAM notes the paradox inherent in the notion of a state that claims to be both democratic and Jewish and that discriminates against its Palestinian citizens in multiple realms. The English translation is DAM's:

> Who cares about us? We are dying slowly
> Controlled by a Zionist democratic government!
> Ya', democratic to the Jewish soul
> And Zionist to the Arabic soul
> That is to say, what is forbidden? to him is forbidden? to me
> And what is allowed to him is forbidden to me
> And what's allowed to me is unwanted by me.

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The song begins and ends with samples of '48 Palestinian poet and political leader Toufiq Ziyyad reciting his famous poem "Unadikum" ("I Call upon You"), suggesting the historical continuity of these contradictions of exclusionary citizenship, and persistence in fighting against it.[40]

The Orr Commission's report was issued after an investigation of a historical event in 2000 that was a turning point in the consciousness of Palestinian youth inside Israel: Black October. Thirteen young Palestinians were killed by Israeli police within two weeks during demonstrations and acts of civil disobedience that broke out in support of the Intifada that had begun in the Occupied Territories and that galvanized political resistance among a younger generation of '48 Palestinians. DAM commemorates the deaths of these thirteen shaheeds (martyrs), naming each one in "G'areeb Fi Biladi." Inas Margieh, who grew up in Nazareth and has worked with Baladna, a Palestinian youth organization in Haifa, notes that Black October was "a turning point" in the political discourse for '48 Palestinians and for youth, in particular, who saw young Palestinians being shot dead by live bullets in Nazareth. She recalls, "Literally, there was a war in Nasra [Nazareth]. . . . One youth said, 'All of a sudden, I knew I was in a battlefield.' . . . Young people who were six or seven at the time were born into a reality with no illusions. This experience would always stay with them, this is why there was a change in political identity for this generation."[41] Like the deaths of Palestinians in Galilee who were protesting Israel's land expropriation policies in 1976, which are commemorated annually on Land Day, the events of October 2000 deeply affected what Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker call "the Stand-Tall Generation."[42] In DAM's song "Mali Hurriye" ("I Don't Have Freedom," *Dedication)*, they rap:

> We want an angry generation
> To plough the sky, to blow up history
> To blow up our thoughts
> We want a new generation
> That does not forgive mistakes
> That does not bend
> We want a generation of giants . . .

The song highlights the question of generational identity, sampling the voices of children singing in Arabic as well as the sounds of the oud and tabla.

This generation of Palestinians, who are the grandchildren of the generation that experienced the *Nakba* and the children of those who mobilized the Palestinian minority in Israel in the 1970s and 1980s, are assertively challenging the fundamental definition of Israel as "the state of the Jewish people"; they are demanding full citizenship and equality, building on the new phase of the Palestinian national movement within

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Israel that has been developing since the 1990s.[43] Many in this generation reject the illusion of civil rights and citizenship as promised by the Israeli state. Saz raps: "The authorities give you freedom of expression? No! / Are you an Israeli citizen? Of course not! / It's about time we faced the facts / We deserve equal rights, lift your head up, *stand tall*" (our emphasis).[44] It is important to note that the notion of a "generation of giants," standing tall, does not imply that previous generations of '48 Palestinians were quiescent or laid low. Rather, DAM and Saz are calling for their generation to take up an ongoing struggle while standing on the shoulders of giants who went before, and to engage with the current phase of a growing nationalist movement, using a cultural idiom that resonates with their peers and with youth globally.

When we interviewed Tamer Nafar in 2007, he was getting ready for a series of ten shows around Israel as part of a campaign to resist the government's call for Palestinian citizens to sign up for national "civil service."[45] Margieh points out that this program was a tactic of co-optation by the state to "bring Palestinian youth closer into the system," and, as others have pointed out, a propaganda effort to appear inclusive in the eyes of the international community as well as an attempt to coerce Palestinian citizens to "prove their loyalty to the Jewish and militarized state."[46] DAM had just written a song that addressed the contradictions in this recruitment of a dispossessed minority for national duty, with a sardonic title that would resonate with American minorities resisting US military recruitment: "Wanted: An Arab Who Lost His Memory." DAM and other '48 Palestinian MCs have successfully used their music as a tool for political mobilization of a younger generation of Palestinians and Arabs and around key international campaigns, such as the growing boycott and divestment movement targeting Israel, by performing at political and community events for Arab as well as non-Arab audiences around the world. For example, in 2008 DAM performed at a Palestinian concert in the Civic Center Plaza in San Francisco commemorating the sixtieth anniversary of the *Nakba*, which was attended by a large and diverse audience of Palestinians and non-Palestinians of all ages, and they have also performed at several college campuses across the United States.

Alienation and Belonging

The political critique waged through hip hop by '48 Palestinian youth represents an explicit opposition to the paradoxical citizen-subject created for them by the Israeli state. In a documentary film about his life and music, the young MC Saz (Samih Zakout) articulates a deeply skeptical view of the exclusionary inclusion of Palestinians in the Israeli state as it is constructed via the designation "Israeli Arab": "I don't consider myself

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Israeli, I don't have a relationship with Israel. What's Israeli citizenship to me? My blue ID?"[47] Later in the film, he reflects, "As time goes by, I realize I have nothing to do with this country. I have nothing here, but the land is mine. The police, the school, nothing is mine, nothing belongs to me." For Saz and others of his generation, "the state of Israel has failed and it is now their turn to put it on probation" until it offers them "genuine equality, including the recognition of collective rights and the rectification of past wrongs. Until then, they see the state as a mere provider of services, not a locus of true affiliation. . . . Their point of departure—a clear sense of not belonging—is their first step toward emancipation."[48] This sense of radical alienation of youth, who reject the deliberate absenting of their Palestinian identity in the state's label, Israeli Arabs, and of their history in the Zionist school curriculum, is expressed in DAM's "G'areeb Fi Biladi":

> 'Cause it's denying my existence
> Still blind to my colors, my history and my people
> Brainwashing my children
> So that they grow up in a reality
> That doesn't represent them
> The blue ID card worth nothing to us
> Let us believe we are a part of a nation
> That does nothing but makes us feel like strangers
> Me?? A stranger in my own country!!!

As the song suggests, '48 Palestinians have an acute sense of estrangement from a settler colonialist project that was built on their erasure and grapple daily with the paradox of being a minority in their own land, surrounded by an alien and hostile culture and society. These contradictions of belonging and memory are also expressed in the paradoxical category of the present absentee—present yet absent, citizen yet not citizen—that is at the core of the political, cultural, and social alienation that underlies the politics of '48 Palestinian youth. Saz talks about being beaten by the Israeli police, simply for not having his ID card while shopping in the market, and of being watched by bystanders "like an animal"; he observes: "It's time Arabs woke up, especially here in Lid, Ramleh. . . . I've had it, I don't want to live this life. So I chose rap. . . . I especially want the young Arabs to be able to walk down the street and lift their heads up without anyone marking them with an 'X.' "[49]

The state discriminates against '48 Palestinians, directly and indirectly, in the provision of social services; many, including college students, have waged legal and political battles to fight for equality, so the state is not seen even as a mere source of social support by many.[50] Tamer Nafar says that his generation of '48 Palestinians is concerned with "finding

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[their] identity, getting an education, finding jobs," trying to get housing, and struggling to assert themselves as Palestinians. Hathoot, who formed Arapeyat with Nahwa Abed Alal in 2001 and has gone on to become a solo rapper, observes that hip hop is a pedagogical tool for her generation:

> We say we're Palestinian but . . . outside they treat you as Israeli. For young people, it's hard to know your identity. We never say we're Israeli, we always say we're Arab in all our songs. In schools, they don't teach us about Darwish or about Palestine. They don't teach us about our history, we don't know it, so we teach youth through our songs. When I was in school, I didn't know about Darwish or about Palestinian history. Through hip hop, I came to know and became *wataniya* [politically conscious]. Identity is our number one issue, and hip hop is our tool of education.

This insistence on expressing a national identity in the face of its erasure is echoed in DAM's song "Ng'ayer Bukra" ("Change Tomorrow"), from *Dedication,* which features children from Lid and is focused on issues of education, employment, identity, and historical memory affecting '48 Palestinian youth. Referring to Darwish's famous poem "Identity Card," in which the poet tells an imagined Israeli police interrogator to document his Arab identity, DAM raps: "Don't grab a gun but grab a pen and write / I'M AN ARAB like Mahmoud Darwish did." DAM's community activism includes workshops for '48 Palestinian youth, educating them about Palestinian identity and history, and campaigns mobilizing the community around key issues.

DAM publicly supports nonviolent resistance, but it is important to note that they are also critical of the liberal discourse about violence and of "coexistence" programs, Jewish-Arab youth dialogues, and "peace" talks that evade political and structural inequalities: "This situation reminds me of apartheid and Nelson Mandela / Didn't he say Gandhi, flowers don't always work / So to all the people of love and peace / How can we have coexistence when we don't even exist? / It takes a revolution to find a solution" (from "Inquilab" ["Revolution"] on *Dedication*). Saz offers a similar critique of liberal notions of coexistence in the film, which shows him in an argument about participation in Israeli military service with Jewish Israeli youth at a Jewish-Arab youth program. These rappers offer an important critique in a context where Palestinian identity or nationhood is generally legible only within the frame of liberal, cross-cultural, or interfaith dialogue and only when paired with Israeli or Jewish interlocutors.

Furthermore, international funding and nongovernmental organizations have increasingly shaped the cultural sphere and discussions of national identity in Palestine, influencing the political discourse of cultural programs, including those that target youth. Palestinian MCs such as DAM seem to implicitly challenge the use of Palestinian youth

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culture to evade the difficult realities of apartheid-style discrimination and undermine radical political movements, suggesting a self-reflexive critique of the politics of culture that is encoded within their music itself. These MCs argue that hip hop has been integral to Arab youth politics not just in Palestine but across the region. ‘Adi observed that many Palestinian hip-hop fans are critical of the status quo and described them as “trouble makers” who are engaged in political activism. We interviewed ‘Adi during the Egyptian revolution in 2011, and he noted that many of the youth “revolting in the streets” of Cairo were identified with hip hop and shared a subculture with Palestinian youth who have participated in demonstrations “inside ’48,” including protests in solidarity with the Arab revolutions. This does not imply that all hip-hop fans are progressive or politically active, but simply highlights that hip hop is an element of the political culture of this generation of Palestinian and Arab youth; it was not by accident that the soundtrack to the Tunisian and Egyptian revolutions was filled with powerful Arabic rap and accompanied by hip-hop videos.[51]

Connecting the “Inside” and “Outside”

One of the central themes in the music of DAM and other hip-hop groups from ’48 Palestine is bridging the “inside” and “outside” in the Palestinian nation and challenging Israeli policies of dividing and disconnecting Palestinians inside from the West Bank and Gaza, as well as from the diaspora and the larger Arab world. This connection has been forged on two levels: socially, through performances by ’48 Palestinian rappers and contact and collaboration between artists from various parts of Palestine and the diaspora; and politically, through an ideological framework that emphasizes a shared colonial predicament and stretches a narrow conception of “occupation.” As a widely known group, DAM has played a significant role in connecting Palestinian youth “inside” and “outside” at their concerts in the last few years, performing at concerts and hip-hop “battles” in Ramallah and at cultural festivals in Jerusalem and Taybeh to large, enthusiastic audiences, which often include ’48 Palestinian youth who travel to attend concerts in the West Bank. DAM and other ’48 Palestinian MCs also belong to a larger artistic community that increasingly connects Palestinian artists from various locations; for example, after the murder of the director of the Freedom Theater in Jenin in 2011, DAM appeared at an event at the Al-Kasaba theater in Ramallah in memory of Juliano Mer-Khamis.

The documentary film *Slingshot Hip Hop* (dir. Jackie Salloum, 2008; see fig. 2) has a moving scene of DAM performing at the Dheisheh refugee camp in Bethlehem and also of their meeting with a Palestin-

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Figure 2. Poster for film *Slingshot Hip Hop*, directed by Jackie Salloum, 2008. Courtesy of Jackie Salloum

ian MC from Gaza after talking to him by phone and watching recordings of his performances, underscoring the connections being forged through hip hop between various "insides" and "outsides." Yet as the film illustrates in its account of the difficulties facing youth trying to travel across Israeli borders, the potential for unification through hip hop is still curtailed by the Israeli siege of Gaza and restrictions on travel for Palestinians from Gaza and the West Bank. New technologies have helped disseminate this music among youth who cannot otherwise meet one another physically and provide a medium for bridging groups of youth in '48 Palestine and the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. Hathoot recalls that before she became engaged with hip hop she did not know much about the lives of youth in " '67 Palestine" but is now connected to other rappers, such as PR in Gaza, via the Internet.

The political connections being produced through hip hop among Palestinian communities that are increasingly fragmented and divided, physically and also ideologically, are equally significant. MWR's song "Because I'm an Arab" critiques the "religious and class divisions fostered by Israeli policies," articulating the need for greater unity among Palestinians across geographic and social barriers.[52] Palestine solidarity movements in the United States have tended to focus on the West Bank, Gaza, and the refugee question, so the issue of '48 Palestinians has generally been much less discussed, though at various moments greater attention has been paid to the apartheid nature of the Israeli state (such as in the growing boycott, divestment, and sanctions movement). In his public statements and at concerts, Tamer Nafar emphasizes the connections between Palestinians on "the inside" and those in the West Bank and Gaza, observing, "We have families over there . . . and we're all in the same struggle. . . . [Here], instead of the army, you have police inside. . . . They demolish houses . . . they don't give you permission to build. . . . And they still have us inside of

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prisons . . . they see us as a threat."[53] In fact, in 2007, two thousand homes were deemed illegal and were under threat of demolition in Lid, whose Palestinian population, a third of the city, is "routinely denied housing permits" and basic municipal services.[54]

Hathoot describes the political reality of '48 Palestinians through the profound metaphor of an internal or "inside war" that is less tangible and more difficult to confront than the military occupation in the West Bank; she says: "The war is not visible, you can't do anything about it. But you always feel you're Arab, everywhere, in schools, at work. We wish we could do something. People in Ramallah and in the West Bank, they can do something. But here we live with it every day, it's an inside war, it's harder." The hip hop of '48 Palestinian artists articulates the connections between different forms of colonization and, as Hathoot's frustration suggests, it also articulates the need for a more complex form of resistance in an invisible war, offering an immanent analysis of visible and invisible checkpoints, walls, and barriers "inside" and "outside." The discursive critique of settler colonization and apartheid produced through hip hop becomes a way of making this invisible war visible, and this absent colonization present.

One of the central paradoxes created by the settler colonial state for '48 Palestinians is that their citizenship in Israel makes them suspect for other Palestinians and Arabs, yet their identity as Palestinians is erased and suppressed by Israel. DAM directly challenges the perception that '48 Palestinians are somehow less loyal, authentic, or resistant for being citizens of Israel:

> And our Arabian roots are still strong
> But still our Arabian brothers are calling us renegades!!??
> Noooooooooooooooooooooo
> We never sold our country,
> The occupation has written our destiny
> Which is, that the whole world till today is treating us as Israelis
> And Israel till tomorrow will treat us as Palestinians.
> ("G'areeb Fi Biladi," *Dedication*)

Mahmoud Jreri of DAM describes this situation as a difficult "Catch 22: that the Arab world treats you as an Israeli, and the Israelis treat you as Palestinian."[55] In fact, "the band says that this anomaly prevented them from being signed either by an Israeli or an Arab label," so their album, *Dedication*, was released by a German label; Jreri comments, "We had to go outside just to get inside."[56] Hathoot, too, spoke of the difficulties of getting funding to release an album, so the Internet and YouTube videos are often an easier medium for these MCs to distribute their music. Furthermore, the "outside," for these artists, is a place they continually occupy and reimagine, challenging the meaning of being "inside" the

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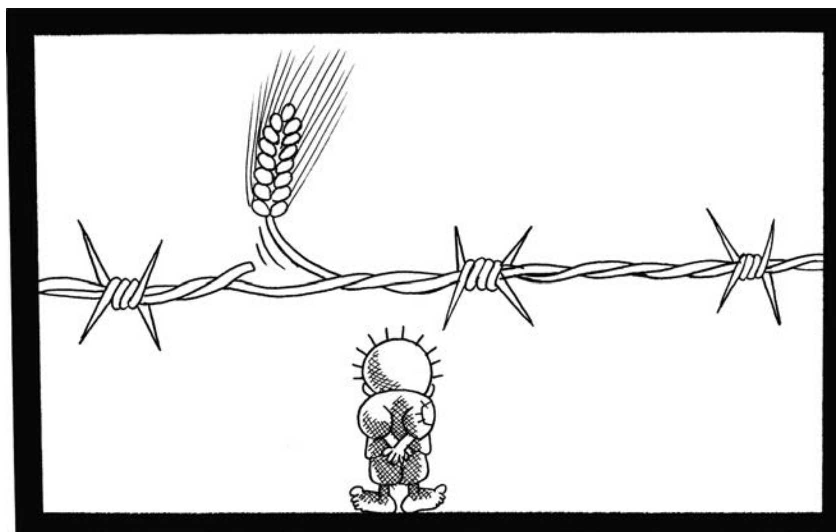

Figure 3. Handala, Palestinian political cartoonist Naji Al-Ali's famous icon. Courtesy of the family of Naji Al-Ali

state and "outside" the nation, and using their music to speak to the condition of an ever-present absence. For example, for 'Adi, rap's African American history and connection to African poetic and musical traditions is a connection with another "outside," with Africa via Arab communities in the north of the continent. He situates Palestinians and Arabs inside this geography and connects Palestinian hip hop to its diasporic cultural forms, as part of the black Mediterranean and Afro-Arab histories.

The notion of "inside" also situates the predicament of '48 Palestinians at the center of the larger Palestinian national movement. Tamer Nafar links it to the question of displacement and the right of refugees to return; he suggests that Palestinians "inside" symbolize "the first step of return, because we are still a signature, Palestinian signature . . . as a culture . . . inside of Palestine."[57] He notes that the persistence of this indelible Palestinian presence is considered a "cancer" for Israeli politicians who wish to excise the non-Jewish population and cleanse the remaining Palestinians, their history and culture. Yet there is an increasing public expression of political identity among youth in the Stand-Tall generation, some of whom are publicly adopting symbols of Palestinian resistance, such as T-shirts or jewelry displaying Naji al-Ali's iconic figure of the Handala (a youth with his back turned to the observer, another symbol of the present/absent), and mixing this with hip-hop style (see fig. 3). Many are also involved in mobilizing with other '48 Palestinian youth through groups such as Baladna in Haifa, Baqaa and Haq in Nazareth, and Khoutwa in Lid.

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Present/Absent

Hip hop by youth from '48 Palestine addresses the central paradox of the "present absent," which evokes the ambivalent existence of a colonized "minority," present yet absent within the Palestinian national movement, threateningly visible yet politically invisible within the (Israeli) state and (Palestinian) nation, simultaneously viewed as Arab yet not Palestinian, Israeli yet not Jewish, loyal yet disloyal, indigenous yet not authentic. This music is concerned with history, but not through static notions of "tradition," and it articulates national identity, but not based on identitarian exclusion. The musical epistemology offered by artists such as DAM, Arapeyat, Saz, Wlad el 7ara, and others should not be romanticized or considered utopian; however, in its emphasis on the paradoxical presence/absence of '48 Palestine, it grapples with key contradictions of twenty-first-century colonialisms and Western modernity, using new forms of cultural resistance to old-school oppression. The hip hop of '48 Palestinians connects the issues of occupation and settler colonialism to the condition of exile, linking '48 Palestine with the West Bank, Gaza, and the diaspora, and invoking the ghostly memory of those who were supposed to have disappeared but who continue to haunt the border of inside/outside.

Notes

We wish to thank all the artists and activists who shared their time and insights with us.

1. "'48 Palestinians"—an appellation used by most Palestinians—refers to those Palestinians who remained on their lands within the 1948 borders of Israel and to their descendants.

2. For example: Amal Eqeiq, "Louder than the Blue ID: Palestinian Hip-Hop in Israel," in *Displaced at Home: Ethnicity and Gender among Palestinians in Israel*, ed. Rhoda A. Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 53–71.

3. Will Youmans, "Arab American Hip-Hop," in *Etching Our Own Image: Voices from within the Arab American Art Movement*, ed. Anan Ameri and Holly Arida (Newcastle, UK: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2007), 42–58; Sunaina Maira, "'We Ain't Missing': Palestinian Hip Hop—A Transnational Youth Movement," *New Centennial Review*, no. 2 (2008): 161–92.

4. Eqeiq, "Louder than the Blue ID," 69.

5. The question of national and cultural authenticity of Palestinian rap emerged repeatedly in interviews and focus group discussions about hip hop that we did with Palestinian youth in the West Bank in fall 2011.

6. See Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep, introduction to *Youthscapes: The Popular, the National, the Global*, ed. Sunaina Maira and Elisabeth Soep (Philadelphia: University of Pennysylvania Press, 2006), xv–xxxv.

7. Halifu Osumare, *The Africanist Aesthetic in Global Hip-Hop: Power Moves* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007).

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8. Using letters and numbers is a common way of transliterating Arabic into English for the cell phone and Internet generation.

9. Theri A. Pickens, "Mic Check. Can You Hear Me? Suheir Hammad and the Politics of Spoken Word Poetry," *Al-Raida*, no. 124 (2009): 9.

10. Walid Khalidi, ed., *From Haven to Conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine Problem until 1948* (Beirut: Institute of Palestine Studies, 1987); Nur Masalha, *Expulsion of the Palestinians: The Concept of "Transfer" in Zionist Political Thought, 1882–1948* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1992); Ilan Pappe, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2007).

11. According to the Absentees' Property Law (1950), which applies only to Palestinians, their property comes under the control of the state. See Sabri Jiryis, *The Arabs in Israel* (Beirut: Institute for Palestine Studies, 1969).

12. Uri Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State* (London: Zed, 1987).

13. Jiryis, *Arabs in Israel*; Nimer Sultany, *Citizens without Citizenship: Israel and the Palestinian Minority 2000–2002* (Haifa: Mada—Arab Center for Applied Social Research, 2003).

14. See Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*; Rebecca B. Kook, *The Logic of Democratic Exclusion: African Americans in the United States and Palestinian Citizens in Israel* (Oxford: Lexington, 2002); Sultany, *Citizens without Citizenship*.

15. Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*.

16. Ann Stoler, *Haunted by Empire: Geographies of Intimacy in North American History* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006), 8–9.

17. Magid Shihade, "Conflict among Arabs and Jews in Israel: Why It Has Been So 'Peaceful'" (master's thesis, University of Washington–Seattle, 2001); Magid Shihade, *Not Just a Soccer Game: Colonialism and Conflict among Palestinians in Israel* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2011).

18. Shihade, "Conflict among Arabs and Jews."

19. Kook, *The Logic of Democratic Exclusion*; Sultany, *Citizens without Citizenship*.

20. See Ahmad H. Sa'di, "Control and Resistance at Local-Level Institutions: A Study of Kafr Yassif's Local Council under the Military Government," *Arab Studies Quarterly*, no. 3 (2001): 31–47; Marwan Bishara, *Palestine/Israel: Peace or Apartheid—Occupation, Terrorism, and the Future* (London: Zed, 2006); Kook, *The Logic of Democratic Exclusion*; Davis, *Israel: An Apartheid State*.

21. Jeff Chang, *Can't Stop, Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation* (New York: St. Martin's, 2005).

22. Tricia Rose, *Black Noise: Rap Music and Black Culture in Contemporary America* (Hanover, NH: University Press of New England, 1994), 82.

23. Youmans, "Arab American Hip-Hop," 42.

24. Murray Forman, *The 'Hood Comes First: Race, Space, and Place in Rap and Hip-Hop* (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2002); Rose, *Black Noise*; Nafar quoted in Rachel Shabi, "Palestinian Political Rap Attracts Growing Crowds," *Common Ground News*, 9 January 2007, www.commongroundnews.org/article.php?id=20160&lan=en&sid=1&sp=0.

25. Joseph Massad, "Liberating Songs: Palestine Put to Music," in *Palestine, Israel, and the Politics of Popular Culture*, ed. Rebecca Stein and Ted Swedenburg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2005), 175–201.

26. "DAM," www.myspace.com/damrap (accessed 2 February 2007).

27. See Joan Gross, David McMurray, and Ted Swedenburg, "Arab Noise and Ramadan Nights: Rap, Rai, and Franco-Maghrebi Identities," in *Displacement, Diaspora, and Geographies of Identity*, ed. Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 119–55.

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28. For example, Arab Summit (a North American collective), Poli Heat (San Francisco), MC Shaheed (New Orleans), Gaza Strip (New York), ASH ONE (New Jersey), and Arabic Assassin (Houston).

29. Iron Sheik, interview by the authors, 4 November 2008, Dearborn, MI.

30. See Sayed Kashua's novel *Dancing Arabs*, trans. Miriam Shlesinger (New York: Grove, 2002), about growing up Palestinian in Israel.

31. Quoted in Taleed El-Sabawi, "Palestinian Conflict Bounces to a New Beat," *AngeLingo*, no. 2 (2005), angelingo.usc.edu/issue03/politics/a_palhiphop.php (accessed 4 February 2007).

32. Democracy Now, "Palestinian Rap Group DAM Use Hip-Hop to Convey the Frustrations, Hopes of a Dispossessed: Interview with Tamer Nafar," 15 May 2008, www.democracynow.org/2008/5/15/slingshot_hip_hop_palestinian_rap_group.

33. 'Adi, telephone interview by the authors, 6 February 2011.

34. Ragtop, e-mail communication with the authors, 7 February 2008.

35. Democracy Now, "Palestinian Rap Group DAM Use Hip-Hop: Interview."

36. Dan Charnas, "Review of DAM's *Dedication*," *Washington Post Online*, 9 January 2008, www.kabobfest.com/2008/01/washington-post-reviews-dam-cd.html.

37. Democracy Now, "Palestinian Rap Group DAM Use Hip-Hop: Interview."

38. See Adalah, *Institutionalized Discrimination against Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Shafa'amr, Israel: Adalah—The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel, 2001); "Law and Violence," special issue, *Adalah's Review: The Journal of the Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel*, no. 3 (2002).

39. Dan Rabinowitz and Khawla Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders: The Experience of the Palestinian Citizens of Israel* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 160. The Orr Commission's analysis of discrimination and violence against Palestinian citizens failed to hold the Israeli police accountable or to make practical recommendations to address the ongoing problems faced by the Palestinian community.

40. Massad notes that in the song "Unadikum," Ziyyad "implores the diaspora and West Bank and Gaza Palestinians not to forget their compatriots." Massad, "Liberating Songs," 189.

41. Inas Margieh, interview by the authors, 18 December 2010, East Jerusalem.

42. The label is drawn from Samih al-Qasem's poem "Standing Tall" ("Muntasib al Qama"): "Standing tall I march / My head held high / An olive branch held in my palm / A coffin on my shoulder / On I walk," cited in Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders*, 2.

43. Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders*, 2–3.

44. *Saz*, dir. Gil Karni, 2006.

45. Interview by the authors, 11 December 2007, by telephone.

46. Rhoda Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair, introduction to *Displaced at Home: Ethnicity and Gender among Palestinians in Israel*, ed. Rhoda A. Kanaaneh and Isis Nusair (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2010), 17.

47. *Saz*, 2006.

48. Rabinowitz and Abu-Baker, *Coffins on Our Shoulders*, 137.

49. *Saz*, 2006.

50. Ibid.; Adalah, *Institutionalized Discrimination against Palestinian Citizens of Israel*; Sultany, *Citizens without Citizenship*.

51. For example, the song and video "#Jan 25 Egypt," featuring Omar Offendum, The Narcicyst, Freeway, Ayah, and Amir Sulaiman (produced by Sami

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Matar). See *Shahadat*, special issue on hip hop, ed. Rayya El Zein, Winter 2012, issuu.com/arteeast/docs/shahadatwinter2012.

52. Massad, "Liberating Songs," 193.
53. Democracy Now, "Palestinian Rap Group DAM Use Hip-Hop: Interview."
54. Shabi, "Palestinian Political Rap."
55. Cited in Shabi, "Palestinian Political Rap."
56. Ibid.
57. Democracy Now, "Palestinian Rap Group DAM Use Hip-Hop: Interview."

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