



RESEARCH ARTICLES

Enclosure Landscapes: Historical Reflections on Palestinian Geography

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In a series of engaging observations on colonialism and territorial conquest, Edward Said crafted the notion of “imaginative geography” to describe the ideological impulses of dominant groups seeking control of places and people.¹ According to Said, imagined geography is a process initiated by groups with territorial ambitions who reinvent meanings about the landscapes they covet, and frame discourses justifying why they are entitled to take control of the places being reinvented. Influenced by the spatially oriented concept of power in Foucault, the ideologically oriented notion of hegemony in Gramsci, as well as Raymond Williams’s view of landscape as a site where different groups contest rights to land and property, Said developed his idea to explain the formation of knowledge systems – ways of thinking – used by groups coveting territory to justify the seizure of territorial landscapes and the imposition of new systems of sovereignty over people living there.² Although conceding the incentives for territorial expansion to be material, Said argued that the inspiration for controlling other places and people derived from culturally shaped attitudes and ideologies. Re-imagining landscapes, he insists – making new meanings about places – is but a prelude to remaking them.

In developing his argument, Said emerged as a protagonist in debates about landscape itself. Initially anticipating and later refining the insights of theorists in this debate such as Meinig (1979) and Cosgrove (1984), Said wrote how landscapes resemble texts imbued with meanings about the societies anchored to them. Just as books communicate through words, landscapes communicate through morphological and architectural elements that convey meanings about the life processes occurring on them.

Yet, just as texts are open to interpretation from the reader, landscapes are open to interpretation from the viewer. In contrast to landscapes as reflections of society, however, the idea of landscape mediated by interpretation opens territory to a very different proposition – to invention and

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imagination. For Said, when individual or group actors cast imaginative gazes upon territory they covet, the landscapes captured in such gazes become sites not of reflection, but projection. While Said conceded that not all projections of meaning onto territorial landscapes are imperial, he argued that imagining land differently is a precursor to imperial undertakings. Thus for Said, landscapes are legible in two ways, one in which they reflect society, the other when human actors project an imagined vision of propriety onto land they seek to possess. In both cases, landscapes communicate meanings about the fundamental themes of human society, power and conflict. As reflections of life, landscapes transcribe power and conflict in the societies anchored to them morphologically through the interplay of the natural and built environment. As projections of territorial desire, landscapes transcribe these themes discursively as sites for the contested imaginations between different groups. In both cases, however, whether reflecting society or emerging as the focus of projections, landscapes tell a similar story of power and rivalry between different groups in human society.³

There is arguably no landscape that reveals this interplay of imagination, power, and conflict more forcefully than the fragmented and partitioned geography of Palestine. With its walls, gates, and closed routes of circulation, the Palestinian geography reflects the imaginations of two groups of people with different notions of who rightfully belongs on this land. At the same time, these built forms imposed on the land by one group at the expense of the other communicate in an unambiguous way the asymmetrical power between the two groups and their different capacities for projecting their respective imagined visions onto the landscape. While this landscape beckons to other contemporary geographies of partition for comparison—such as the borderlands of Operation Gatekeeper on the U.S./Mexican frontier—and reflects similar collective psychologies of fear and antipathy toward “otherness” embedded in such environments, this article references a more enduring lineage to understand the fragmentation cast upon Palestinian territory.

The argument in this study is that the deliberately fractured Palestinian geography conforms to a historically recurrent pattern of power in which groups with territorial ambitions re-imagine and remake the territorial landscapes they covet. This practice of re-imagining and remaking geography has resulted in outcomes on the landscape of a particular type—*enclosure landscapes*. In creating enclosure landscapes, groups seeking territory essentially recast systems of land stewardship—the patterns of land ownership, occupancy and use, and the routes of mobility and trespass permitted on the landscape—in order to install themselves as a new group of sovereigns on the land. What results from enclosure is the transfer of land to the new group of aspiring stewards, and the relocation of those dispossessed to different and invariably more confined territorial spaces.

Practitioners of enclosure reorganize sovereignty and stewardship on the landscape by means of three basic instruments. One instrument is *cartographical* and involves the use of maps for projecting differently configured boundary lines and demarcating new areas of sovereignty and control on the landscape.⁴ The second is a *legal* instrument that codifies the boundary lines of the map by reorganizing systems for ownership and use of land, and reconfiguring routes of circulation and trespass on the landscape. The final instrument is *architectural*, consisting of built forms imposed on the landscape that reinforce the new legalities of property rights and the systems of mobility and trespass by partitioning territorial space and recasting the material attributes of the landscape itself. Maps, law, and architecture represent technologies of force grafted upon spatial environments. Practitioners of enclosure enlist these technologies to reorder systems of sovereignty, rights of property, and patterns of mobility on land while disciplining human bodies to circulate across landscapes in particular ways.⁵ Using the power of maps to project and reshape, the law to classify and legitimize, and architecture to partition and impede, promoters of enclosure essentially reconfigure boundary lines on landscapes in order to secure and consolidate their dominant position on the land and redirect subaltern groups into specific territorial spaces.

The Palestinian geography is part of this ongoing story. Represented on the Palestinian landscape is not only the contested imagination of Zionists and Palestinians about who belongs on the land. The Palestinian landscape is a site of historically ongoing encounters between groups seeking territory, and less powerful subalterns anchored to the land in ways that challenge such territorial aspirations. It is the recurrent nature of these encounters over time and across geography that link the enclosure landscape of Palestine today to those similarly enclosed in the past.

In order to develop this argument, this article compares the patterns of imagination and power on the Palestinian landscape alongside two other enclosure landscapes. One landscape is that of early modern enclosures in England; the other is the landscape of the Anglo-American frontier. What the comparison reveals is that the Palestinian landscape, far from being a singular phenomenon uniquely situated historically and geographically, is, rather, part of a long-standing narrative in which groups with territorial ambitions use similar instruments to take control of land by enclosing it. Like earlier practitioners of enclosure, those in Palestine have re-imagined the Palestinian geography, deploying maps, law, and architecture in order to elevate themselves as masters of the landscape and realize their geographical imagination.

This article is organized into five parts. The first section situates imaginative geography within debates about landscape. The next two sections focus on the patterns of territorial imagination and power

deriving from a longstanding discourse about land improvement and property rights that gave rise to enclosure landscapes in England and the United States. The fourth section reveals how the Palestinian geography has been reshaped by a similar pattern of imagination and power, a familiar discourse of improvement and entitlement to land, and a parallel set of cartographical, legal, and architectural instruments echoing the two landscapes of the past. In the final section I discuss the broader issues of situating the Palestinian landscape in a comparative perspective.

Imagined landscapes

At the time Edward Said was completing his pioneering work, *Orientalism* (1978), landscape as a geographical concept was in the throes of a longstanding but still ongoing debate.⁶ Inspired by the work of Carl Sauer (1925), arguably the first geographer to define landscapes as products of both topographical forms and human activity,⁷ theorists in this debate aimed to uncover how landscapes embodied social and cultural phenomena. It was not until 1979, however, that this debate took a decisive turn with the publication of a landmark anthology edited by Donald Meinig. According to Meinig, landscapes were social and cultural products, but the connection from society to landscape was one that occurred through the subjective world of the viewer. Thus for Meinig, "landscape is composed not only by what lies before our eyes, but also what lies in our heads."⁸ In this way, Meinig and his followers recast the meaning of landscape as "text." Sauer and geographers influenced by him had only vaguely hinted at the connection from society to landscape that enabled landscape to assume the role of text. By contrast, Meinig and his followers were raising questions about the material attributes of landscape itself in focusing on the relationship between landscape and the cultural and ideological values of human actors viewing the land. For Meinig, landscape was not an objective reflection but a subjective interpretation.

At the core of this issue is a much older and vexing philosophical dilemma about the material world, and whether landscape as an element of the material world has an objective reality beyond the way it is represented in the mind of the person perceiving it. Geographers following Meinig insisted on landscape as a mediated rather than objective reality. As explained by Denis Cosgrove, "landscapes have an unquestionably material presence, yet they come into being only at the moment of their apprehension by an external observer."⁹

Much like Cosgrove, Said conceded landscape to be a material phenomenon but one fundamentally invented and imagined. The question posed throughout his work was about the relationship between

the imagined character of landscape and the imperial ambition of groups desiring territory. At the same time, Said was interested in actual material outcomes on landscapes deriving from this process of imagining land. Perhaps no landscape reveals this interplay of meaning-making and reshaped morphology more profoundly than the landscape arguably most interesting to Said – the landscape of Palestine. As Said himself would acknowledge, however, what is occurring on the Palestinian geography is but one story in a lineage of landscapes re-imagined and remade.¹⁰

The imagined geography of private property

In early modern England, a discourse on the virtues of improving land motivated large landowners to re-imagine and remake the landscape of the English countryside.¹¹ Initially popularized by agrarian writers in the sixteenth century, this discourse strengthened during the following century as a new generation of agrarian publicists influenced by the Enlightenment conveyed to estate owners the rationality along with the moral virtues and financial benefits of improving their estates. At the same time, “improvement” in these writings assumed a new meaning tied to a very specific activity – *enclosing land*.¹² This practice consisted of two primary instruments, a legal instrument for creating an individual right of ownership upon land, and an architectural instrument of walls, hedges, or fencing for demarcating newly-created plots of private property. By the seventeenth century, enclosure emerged more explicitly as the remedy for what agrarian experts insisted was the main impediment to improvement – open field farming with rights to use land as a common resource. Consequently, what English estate owners imagined as an improved landscape was an enclosed landscape of privately owned plots of landed property.

While this shift in outlook is often attributed to the work on property of John Locke (1690), his views were more the culmination rather than the catalyst of the improvement discourse that enabled estate owners to re-imagine and remake the landscape. What had been evolving as part of the improvement discourse since the late sixteenth century that helped imbue landowners with an imagined vision of an enclosed landscape was a notion of land as a bounded and territorialized *thing*. Prior to the late sixteenth century, estate owners registered land in manor courts through written descriptions. By the late sixteenth century, however, land assumed an additional meaning as measurable plots of ground and was represented not only through texts but also by graphic surveys. As a bounded plot of ground known through the graphic language of the survey, land, much like other physical things, was more easily conceivable as property; as something that could be possessed to which a right of property could be as-

signed. The derivation for this shift in the representational meaning of land was a discourse complementary to the discourse of improvement – the discourse of mapping.

Mapmakers, in conjunction with estate owners, helped create a “cartographic revolution” in England marked not only by new mapmaking techniques, but also a new awareness of maps in demarcating land as property.¹³ Recruited by improvement-driven estate owners, the surveyor/mapmaker provided estates with a graphic inventory rather than a textual description of the various tenancies, the freehold properties, and the common lands on the manor.¹⁴ For estate owners, seeing the property relations on the manor cartographically – “to know one’s own” – was the basis for imagining how the boundary lines demarcating the various tenancies and freehold properties could be redrawn and how the estate could be enclosed for improvement.¹⁵

What emerged was the estate map drawn to scale.¹⁶ Proliferating in the century to follow, estate maps are what provided landowners with a new way of seeing land as something physical inspiring them to re-imagine the landscape. When at the end of the seventeenth century Locke wrote of the “chief matter of property” being “the earth itself” (p. 21), he was reflecting this change in the representational meaning of land. For Locke, rights to property deriving from land improvement had physical and visual attributes: it was *cultivated* and it was *enclosed* by fences.¹⁷ At the same time, Locke was specific about the fate of land absent these material characteristics. For Locke, land “left wholly to nature that hath no improvement” was “waste,” and suggested that leaving land as waste not only violated the spirit of rationality but it also contravened the laws of God and nature. If, reasoned Locke, land lying in waste could be improved by cultivation, enclosure, and fencing, then the improver of that land had a private right to it – and the blessing of a Higher Authority to claim it.

Empowered with Locke’s reasoning, English estate owners by the mid-eighteenth century were aggressively claiming title to land that had resisted earlier enclosure and was still being exploited as a common resource by small cultivators.¹⁸ These expansions onto land considered waste were reinforced by newly accepted assumptions popularized by eighteenth-century agrarian writers such as Arthur Young, that large farms were economically efficient while small farms were irrational impediments to progress.¹⁹ Parliament also helped accelerate enclosure in this period. By enabling landowners to enclose land by Act, Parliamentary enclosure added new powers of compulsion to the prerogatives already in use by estates for enclosing land and eliminating common rights on it.²⁰

As a result, estates spearheaded a “landlord’s revolution” in the English countryside, taking land out of common usage.²¹ At the same time, as estates assumed ownership of land historically used in common by

small tenant cultivators, the latter became part of a demographic revolution during the latter half of the eighteenth century with many of them migrating to newly emergent industrial towns and disappearing from the agrarian landscape.²² Those remaining were consigned to the reconstituted farms as wage earners or as workers in new rural industries, demographic changes marked by the elimination of small farms, and the proliferation of wage labor on the rural landscape.

Spearheading these changes and proliferating across the landscape was a different type of agrarian institution – the enclosed “rent-maximizing farm” of 1000 acres or more.²³ Its primary feature was the lease of land by the estate to large tenant farmers who employed wage labor to work the land. The other distinguishing feature of this transformation in the countryside was in the structure of landholding. At the end of the seventeenth century, at least 33 percent of the land was still held by small holders. By 1801, less than 10 percent of the land was cultivated by small farmers.²⁴ What resulted as rent-maximizing farms spread across the countryside was a reconfiguration of the landscape into geometrically linear blocs of privately-owned property as a system of stewardship promoting common rights to land succumbed to an agrarian system dominated by large farms and wage labor.

This institutional change, in turn, reshaped the English countryside after 1750 with an estimated 200,000 miles of stone walls, fences and hedgerows, rendering much of the landscape unrecognizable compared to what it had been.²⁵ Promoters of enclosure built these barriers not only to demarcate their enlarged holdings. They inscribed the landscape with these barriers to restrict access to what was formerly an open system of land cultivation with free movement across the landscape and rights to use land as a common resource.²⁶ For small-scale tenant farmers who had exploited the open landscape to access common land, these barriers compromised their tenure by placing common land necessary for subsistence physically as well as legally off limits to them.²⁷

What eventually prevailed in this landlord’s revolution was a landscape of enclosed large-scale farms reflecting the virtues of individual rights to property and a rejection of common rights to land. Yet, there was resistance to this process. In what were at times spirited protests, commoners targeted for destruction the most visible element of enclosure, the barriers demarcating the enclosed farms that prevented free access on the landscape.²⁸ In the end, however, these protests did not reverse enclosure. Whatever apprehensions estate owners might have had in abrogating customary rights to common land in order to enclose the landscape, a potent new legal philosophy and public discourse legitimized their actions, even in the face of opposition. If any more justification was needed, however, it could be said, as Locke had written of private property, that God had intended it so.

The imagined geography of “Manifest Destiny”

In North America, a broadly parallel story of imagination and power was taking shape on the landscape, motivated by the same ideological discourse about land improvement, and entitlement to “empty” land. Instead of estate owners and commoners as protagonists, however, North America witnessed a longstanding series of encounters between Anglo-American colonists and Indians over the shape of the landscape. Yet, despite differences in actor groups, the parallels in the two cases are not coincidence. Establishing sovereignty upon Indian land was intimately connected with both the discourse and practices of estate owners establishing dominium and control over land designated as unimproved and empty in the English countryside.²⁹

That English enclosures at home and colonization abroad share a common thread is reflected dramatically in the work of Locke in his discussion of North America’s Indians. In fact, much of his theorizing on the relationship between improvement, enclosure, and property ownership derives from his experience as Secretary to the proprietors of the Carolina Colony and his observations in that role about colonial North America.³⁰ Locke actually built his argument about rights to land in the *Second Treatise* around a metaphorical protagonist—the “wild *Indian*” from America “who knows no inclosure” and who does not therefore admit to rights of possession over plots of the landscape.

Nevertheless, Locke was fully aware of Indian agriculture and was thus compelled to make an important qualification in his improvement-driven notion of rights to property in land in order to resolve the dilemma of how to justify British dominium in Indian country. He solved this dilemma by arguing that not all labor put into the earth is the same. God gave humans the gift of reason, Locke insisted, “to make use of it to the best advantage of life and convenience.” In focusing on Indian agriculture to illustrate this point, Locke emphasized how in America, a thousand acres of land “yield the needy and wretched inhabitants as many conveniences of life as ten acres of equally fertile land in Devonshire where the land is well cultivated.” Such differences enabled Locke to expand his notion of empty land or waste. While Locke had defined waste as land “that hath no improvement of Pasturage, Tillage, or Planting,” he also claimed that land *poorly* tended was likewise unimproved. In Locke’s view, commandments from both God and reason for humans to cultivate the earth to the fullest provided rights of possession to those who cultivated the earth in the most productive way.³¹ Planted unproductively without plows, America was for Locke akin to the uncultivated and unenclosed common land on the English manor considered waste and available for

improvement. These same principles, reasoned Locke, made land in America available for improvement as well.

In England where Locke's ideas about property rights were part of well-established lineage in the common law, English colonists were already putting into practice his arguments about land lying in waste. In anticipating what would become part of Locke's labor and improvement-driven notion of property, early colonists such as John Winthrop, the first Governor of New England, argued forcefully that Indian country was akin to waste. Indians possessed no property, Winthrop insisted, because "they inclose noe land." If Indians were left with sufficient land, Winthrop reasoned, "we may lawfully take the rest."³² Consequently, as early as Winthrop, English colonists were re-imagining the Indian landscape as something to be possessed.

This notion of a landscape available for appropriation was also taking shape in cartographic representations in which maps emerged as instruments in promoting an invented *vacuum domicilium* in North America as well as projecting an imagined Anglicized geography on that empty space. One of the most formidable tools in this cartographic process of appropriation was the eradication of existing Indian place names and the re-naming of places on maps with English names.³³ Indeed, naming a place anew is akin to an act of taking possession, much like other rituals of appropriating land such as raising a flag or planting a cross. At the same time, eradicating a place name on a map is an equally potent act of dispossession, rendering a place and its people unseen. A poignant example of this phenomenon was the 1616 map of New England created by John Smith, who had already earned notoriety as a cartographer with his 1609 map of Virginia. In replacing the Indian name of *Norumbega* with the moniker of "New England," Smith illustrated how early colonial maps were important instruments not only in inventing an Anglicized landscape but in projecting Indian dispossession. In presenting his map to King Charles, Smith emphasized how it should please the King "to change their Barbarous names," for names that were "English."³⁴ In this way, early English maps were part of a broader discourse and campaign designed to make Indians invisible in their own land. While this process was uneven – not all English maps of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries completely eliminated references to Indian geography – the general tendency in colonial mapping was a gradual process of erasing traces of the Indian landscape.

If by renaming places colonial maps became instruments of an imagined English geography, these maps also projected an English identity onto the landscape by reproducing English notions of property onto the land. By the late seventeenth century, colonial maps depicting the subdivision and bounding of Indian territories, such as John Butcher's 1697 representation of the division of land around the town of Dorchester,

Massachusetts, emphasized the geometric regularity of property lines grafted onto the landscape.³⁵ Butcher's was indeed an English geography of property imposed upon the landscape – with nary a trace of Indian presence on that land.

As the former British colonists emerged victorious in forging a nation-state independent from Britain, ideologues in the early period of state-building succeeded in fusing the notion of an empty wilderness with a newer idea of a teleological, if not divine mission of settling North America and civilizing the continent through the practices of colonizing and improving land. Even prior to independence, Benjamin Franklin had already described a "destiny" for Americans to fill up territory to the West, while by 1801 Thomas Jefferson was echoing similar messianic visions imagining how Americans settlers would eventually populate the continent forcing Native Americans to assimilate.³⁶ Perhaps the most explicit recognition of a divine role in American colonization came from John Quincy Adams who in 1811 observed how the "whole continent of North America appeared destined by Divine Providence to be peopled by one *nation*."³⁷ In these assessments, colonists and their political leaders reconceived the landscape of North America as a westward-expanding grid of property owners, intent on cultivating and thus improving the land.

One of the most illustrative representations of this outlook that was both a reflection of an imagined geography and an instrument for diffusing this imagined vision more widely to the public was the 1816 *Map of the United States* created by John Melish.³⁸ In his map, Melish, rather than transcribing the boundaries of the still-young republic, projected what he imagined and idealized the territory of the United States to be. "The map so constructed," wrote Melish, "shows at a glance the whole extent of the territory of the United States, from sea to sea; and in tracing the probable expansion of the human [i.e. white] race from east to west, the mind finds an agreeable resting place on its western limits." Seemingly benign, the map created by Melish echoed the spirit of destiny expressed by Franklin, Jefferson, and Adams, providing a picture not of the United States as it was, but as it would become; a territory in which Indian Removal emerged as the basis of a nation stretching, as Melish predicted, from the Atlantic to the Pacific.

By the early nineteenth century, American settlers and their government backers, inspired by the idea that the open landscapes used by Amerindians were destined to be subdivided into individually owned plots of ground, grafted a radically different property regime onto the American geography. Spearheading this project was an institution proliferating across the land – the fenced-off and enclosed family homestead. Initially appearing in New England, the enclosed and fenced homestead farms expanded westward as the landscape became redrawn into a more

linear grid of property. At the same time, the proliferation of homesteads was accompanied by the spread of government land offices whose role was to register and map the property lines newly inscribed on the landscape.³⁹ By reshaping wilderness and grasslands into an enclosed landscape of “seemingly endless miles of fences,” the grid of property created by these settlers encroached upon, and undermined, the key institutions of Amerindian society, the mobile hunting village and the more sedentary agrarian village, both of which were dependent on an open and accessible landscape.⁴⁰ Thus, the homestead not only anchored a different property regime to the landscape. It enlarged the zones of trespass on the land, forcing the Indian population into ever-smaller territorial spaces for circulation and survival. Remade by a set of cartographic, legal, and architectural elements, the landscape was now governed by a new system of stewardship and sovereignty redefining ownership, use, and circulation on the land. In one significant difference with England, however, where the shift in sovereignty and stewardship on land derived from class differences, the catalyst for this shift on the American landscape appeared cast in the color of skin. It was *white*.

In this way, ideas about rights to empty land reinforced by notions of destiny supported an imagined geography of North America and a westward march of colonists who anchored themselves to the landscape in a grid of enclosed and fenced homesteads and assumed the role of stewards on the land. This process of remapping and reorganizing the landscape was institutionalized with the Indian Removal Act of 1830 that legitimized the transfer of Indians into a shrinking geography of Indian Reservations. Much like enclosure opponents in England, Indians resisted this process of forced dispossession and relocation, although they did not reverse the westward march of colonization. For most of the nineteenth century, homesteaders, supported by U.S. army troops, provided the advance guard for seizing Indian land, convinced in the way that early American political leaders had emphasized that God had intended the land of North America for them to improve, enclose, and appropriate.

“This is *our* land”: imagining and remaking Palestine

In 1984, the celebrated Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish and two co-authors published a collection of their poetry in a bilingual English/Arabic edition entitled *Victims of a Map*.⁴¹ The opening selection in this provocatively titled anthology is a poem by Darwish, “The Earth is Closing on Us.” Two images emerge forcefully in these two titles as metaphors of a Palestinian narrative. Represented in these two titles is the imagery of a shrinking landscape, and the silent power of a map. The shrinking

landscape and the “map” to which Darwish refers have their origins in a set of encounters between European Jews seeking an escape from anti-Semitism, and the non-Jewish Muslim and Christian population of Palestine. In the prelude to these encounters, a segment of the European Jewish population advocated a “return to Zion” to combat anti-Semitism, complementing this aspiration with an embrace of nineteenth-century state building as the practical remedy for liberation from anti-Jewish prejudice. What emerged from this fusion of a return to the homeland and the idea of the nation-state was a largely secular ideology to overcome anti-Semitic persecution but one with religious overtones.⁴² Central to this ideology was also an invented notion of Palestine as a land poorly developed which European Jews could improve. It is this ideology – *Zionism* – that provided European Jews with an imagined geography of the Palestinian landscape as well as the inspiration to remake this territory into a Jewish state.

The modern origins of Zionism and the imagined geography at its core date from the work of Theodor Herzl (1896) and his visionary text of a state homeland for the Jewish people.⁴³ For Herzl, the Jewish people constituted a cultural grouping equal to other cultures already possessing states of their own. Jewish statehood, however, had a morally legitimate aim far more compelling than the nationalist aspirations of other groups – to overcome anti-Semitism. Nevertheless, Herzl argued his case for Jewish statehood in Palestine almost entirely upon the metaphor of modernization, characterizing Palestine as a landscape poorly cultivated and justifying the project of state building on the basis of the Jewish population improving the land. In addition, with the exception of one brief reference in the book’s second chapter to the “native population,” the author of *The Jewish State* makes no mention of Palestine’s existing inhabitants, a deliberate omission since he, along with subsequent Zionists, were well aware of the area’s Arab population.⁴⁴ For Herzl, the relative emptiness of the land, coupled with the moral legitimacy of Jewish aspirations to statehood, conferred upon Zionists a right to the land of Palestine. In this way, the Zionism of Herzl invented a geography of Palestine based on images of vacancy, and ideas about the right to settle and improve an underdeveloped land.

This vision of Jewish entitlement to the Palestinian landscape, however, benefited from an additional element of imagination within Jewish culture – that Palestine *belonged* to the Jewish people. Two claims reinforced this notion of entitlement. On the one hand, Zionists, both before but especially after Herzl, made concerted efforts to recast Palestine as an area of historically uninterrupted Jewish presence with the aim of refashioning it in the Jewish collective memory into a different territorial entity – that of *Eretz Israel*.⁴⁵ In this way, if Palestine was historically Jewish, its makeover as a Jewish state had a logical, if not justifiable foundation. The

second claim, though of more dubious pedigree, was in certain ways more formidable as an element in an imagined landscape. According to this claim, the land of Palestine belonged to the Jewish people by virtue of God's supposed covenant with Abraham. For Zionists with a belief in such a claim, the notion of Palestine belonging to the Jewish people by word of God established an almost unassailable basis for restoring Palestine as a Jewish place. Emboldened by these beliefs, both secular and religious, Jews in the aftermath of Herzl migrated to Palestine as settlers, intent on transforming it into a landscape of "Hebrew Land" with an economy worked by "Hebrew Labor."⁴⁶ Inspired by notions of state-building to achieve Jewish emancipation, and influenced by an imagined vision of the land as Jewish, Zionist settlers set about improving what they interpreted as a virgin landscape and "making it bloom."

In the late 1920s, leaders of the Zionist movement sought a new instrument for promoting these aims of settlement and state building. As part of this campaign, the institutional arm for Jewish land purchases in Palestine, the Jewish National Fund (JNF), commissioned a series of maps aimed at disseminating a very specific representation of Palestine primarily to world Jews but also to the world at large. In these maps, Palestine was cast as "*Eretz Yisrael*" and represented as an area of *Jewish* settlements in an otherwise empty geographical space depicted on the map in white, without any indication of an Arab presence or even of neighboring Arab Territories. In 1934, the JNF decided to use one of these maps on the most recognizable symbol of the Zionist effort to purchase land in Palestine and promote Jewish settlement there, the celebrated "Blue Box."⁴⁷ As a means of widespread circulation for an imagined vision of territory, the map on the Blue Box carried two critical arguments. One the one hand, the map, through omission, rendered Palestinians as absentees on the land where they lived. At the same time, the map communicated an unmistakable message about the land of Palestine and its people. Palestine was Jewish land.⁴⁸

Nevertheless, a gap persisted separating the Zionist imagination of the landscape represented in these maps, from what Zionists actually confronted — Palestinian presence on the land. What would eventually emerge as the dominant perspective within Zionism for resolving this contradiction was the idea of *transferring* the Palestinian population to make way for Jewish statehood.⁴⁹ In this regard, the figure of David Ben-Gurion played a pivotal role. Initially reluctant to entertain the idea of forcibly removing Arabs from Palestine, Ben-Gurion by the late 1930s emerged among a cadre of Zionist leaders willing to consider expulsion of Palestinians in order to realize Jewish sovereignty on Palestinian land.⁵⁰ As conceived by Ben-Gurion, however, transfer would be an extraordinary measure dependent on a thoroughgoing crisis such as war. Indeed, the war of 1947-48 enabled the Jewish community in Palestine to implement

this policy when the newly-created state of Israel decided to prohibit the 750,000 refugees, who had fled or were expelled during the conflict, to return to their homes and property inside Israel. Nevertheless, as the fledgling state would discover, clearing the landscape entirely of Palestinians proved elusive even in the extraordinary circumstances of the 1947-48 War. Extraordinary transfer had therefore to be complemented with a more durable and longstanding element for remaking the landscape. That element would be the Jewish *settlement*, which was essentially the realization of the central idea represented in the maps on the Blue Box.

While prior to the 1947-48 War Jewish settlement had been essential to the realization of an imagined Jewish landscape, after 1948 settlements assumed the decisive role inside the new state for Jewish redemption of Palestinian land. The new state created a set of legal institutions for seizing abandoned Arab property (as well as land belonging to Arab villages inside Israel that were not abandoned), and reallocating it for new Jewish settlements in a process that essentially legalized dispossession.⁵¹ On this legal foundation over 700 Jewish settlements were built amid the ruins of the roughly 600 Arab villages abandoned after their inhabitants fled or were expelled following the 1948 War. As landscape architecture, these settlements created an environment inside Israel vastly different from what had been built by Palestinians.⁵² Whereas Palestinian agrarian towns were typically built at the base of, or stepping up to the numerous hills on the landscape, Jewish settlements were constructed on the hilltops themselves, altering the spatial pattern of urban development. Furthermore, where Palestinian towns still survived inside Israel, such as Sakhnin, Jewish towns were built on adjoining hilltops on land formerly belonging to these Palestinian towns, thereby surrounding Palestinian urban centers with Jewish settlements. Finally, Jewish settlement altered the patterns of cultivation and flora on the landscape itself, replacing a landscape dominated by olive cultivation with a tree planting program promoted since the early years of the JNF, marked by the proliferation of conifers that surrounded newly-built Jewish towns.⁵³ In this way, law and the architectural form of settlement served as instruments for enclosing what was an Arab landscape within an ever-expanding grid of Jewish land while transforming the physical nature of the landscape itself.

This very same combination of legal and architectural power exemplified in settlements that remade the landscape inside Israel was also decisive in enclosing and remaking the landscape in Occupied Palestine. Conceived as policy after 1967, settlements of Israeli Jews in Occupied Palestine have proliferated on the Palestinian landscape, enabled by a "legal" process for registering land in Palestine as Israeli "state land" and reallocating it for settlement construction.⁵⁴ This process draws from Ottoman Land Law (1858), which enabled Ottoman rulers in Palestine to

take control of land considered uncultivated (empty) in order to promote cultivation that could then be taxed, but the law also entitled Palestinian peasant *fellahin* to rights of secure tenancy on land that they did cultivate. The Israeli Occupation Administration, however, has used the law quite differently from its Ottoman predecessors, choosing to enforce only the first provision on state confiscation of empty land while ignoring the second and thus enabling individual control of cultivated land. Through this selective interpretation of Ottoman Land law Israel has sought to evade the appearance of overt confiscation of private Palestinian land in favor of a “legal” process enabling the state to assume control over so-called uncultivated land so that it can be reallocated for the so-called higher and better use of settlement. The spatial target for this law has been the “uncultivated” hilltops of the West Bank.

Reflecting this approach to the law, Ron Nahman, Mayor of the Israeli settlement of Ariel explains: “When we built Ariel, we never took one square inch of land from anybody.” In language echoing the improvement and property rights discourse of the early modern period, Nahman goes on to emphasize: “This land didn’t belong to anyone. It was empty. Look at these hilltops. They [Palestinians] don’t plant! They don’t cultivate.”⁵⁵ Although Israel has utilized this legal framework to avoid appearances of seizing private land, it has nevertheless failed, even by its own standards, to protect Palestinian property rights. At least 40 percent of the land currently occupied by Israeli settlements in the West Bank is private Palestinian property that was seized illegally and reallocated for settlement construction.⁵⁶ The case of Mohammad of Marda is typical. In 1978, Mohammed lost 20 *dunums* of land cultivated with olive trees when the first buildings of Ariel were being constructed and another 15 *dunums* in 1985 when the settlement expanded. As Mohammed explains it, “this was theft.”⁵⁷ The aggregate result has been a gradual transfer of land from the stewardship of Palestinians to Israeli control (Figure 1).

While law and architecture embodied in settlements in Occupied Palestine are the primary instruments for appropriating Palestinian land, they are also central in a process of disabling the cultural artifacts anchoring Palestinians to the landscape. Where settlements are built, or where existing settlements have expanded, they have invariably uprooted and destroyed what is arguably the defining symbol of Palestinian presence and stewardship on the landscape, the olive tree. Such was the fate of Tawfiq of Jayyous when contractors working for the nearby settlement of Zufim uprooted and destroyed 300 of his olive trees because these trees stood on land coveted by the settlement for expansion. As a result, Tawfiq is no longer a farmer, having lost what rooted him to the land.⁵⁸ In such cases, numbering in the hundreds if not more, the uprooting of olive trees is not only an assault on material life. It is a form of cultural aggression



Figure 1 Enclosing towns: Israeli settlement of Ariel (above), towering over the Palestinian town of Marda (below). Photograph by author.

aimed at eradicating those elements of material culture that enable Palestinians to imagine their place on the landscape.

If settlements in Occupied Palestine are decisive in seizing land and reorganizing stewardship on the landscape, they also anchor a system of elements enclosing Palestinian territory into spatially partitioned zones of immobility and trespass. While the settlement is primary in this reconfiguration of boundaries on the landscape, the most visible and perhaps dramatic element in this geography of immobility and trespass is an architectural one, the *Wall*.⁵⁹ As a physical impediment to mobility and circulation on the landscape, the Wall has arguably its most profound impact in preventing Palestinian farmers from accessing their farmland. As a physical barrier, however, the Wall works in conjunction with the legal instrument of a permit system that allows—and disallows—Palestinian farmers to cross gates in the barrier to get to their land. In Jayyous where the Wall has separated almost all the farmers from their fields, most farmers are denied permits. “Right now, less than 33 percent of the families in Jayyous have permits to go through the gate to get their fields” explains Abdul-Latif, a hydrologist from the town. “They stay at home, their trees and crops decline, they lose their incomes, and the local economy becomes impoverished.”⁶⁰

While the Wall, as an instrument of immobility visibly undermines Palestinian farmers, its logic of trespass plays a less well understood role in creating economic *dead zones*, spaces of commercial and industrial depression that compromise the Palestinian economy. Proliferating throughout the West Bank, the dead zone emerges as a space where the Wall and the 60-80 meter “seam” around it come into direct proximity with commercial establishments, extinguishing the economic life of such businesses while imbuing the area nearby with a depressed, abandoned character. A clear example of this phenomenon is the Jerusalem-Hebron Road at the western entrance to Bethlehem. Near this location, Isam, the owner of Albandek Marble and Stone, describes how the Wall, 40 meters from his facility, is destroying his livelihood (Figures 2 and 3). “It is completely dead here,” he explains. “There is no traffic, no people, no transport, no *business*. Customers who used to visit our factory do not come anymore because they either cannot come here, or they are afraid to come....Where the Wall comes, it makes dead areas.”⁶¹

By seizing and reallocating land, by fragmenting the landscape, and by immobilizing populations in geographies of trespass, the system of settlement in Occupied Palestine has weakened Palestinian land stewardship and the patterns of socio-economic life anchored to that system, while elevating a competing vision of stewardship and sovereignty on the land. Ultimately, this culture of enclosure imposed on Palestinian territory represents continuity with territorial themes of settlement inside Israel as



Figure 2. Economic Dead Zone: Albandek Marble and Stone (center right) confronted by the Wall in Bethlehem. Photograph by author.



Figure 3. Enclosed: The Wall surrounding Bethlehem. Photograph by author.

well as continuity with settlement in the pre-state period. There is, in effect, a longstanding pattern in what Zionists imagined on the Palestinian landscape beginning in the late nineteenth century; what they built on the landscape during the British Mandate; what they constructed inside Israel following the formation of the state; and their policy of settlement in Occupied Palestine today. At the core of this imagined geography was the belief cultivated within the Zionist movement of Palestine as *Hebrew Land*. The historical geography of Palestine since the advent of Zionism in the late nineteenth century attests to the power of the Zionist imagination and the thoroughness of its program for remaking—“Judaizing”—this territory.⁶² In the late nineteenth century Palestine was a territory overwhelmingly Arab in character with a population 96 percent Arab Muslim and Christian. Today, a Jewish state of Israel encompasses 78 percent of historic Palestinian territory while the process of enclosure advances in the Territories occupied by this state such that Palestinians now occupy roughly 10 percent of their historic homeland.

Much like their subaltern counterparts in England and the U.S., Palestinians have resisted enclosure, targeting the symbol most visible of the enclosure process around them, the Wall. Despite these protests, however, a landscape formerly Palestinian in character has succumbed gradually if at times dramatically to a geography in which the dominant patterns of stewardship, as well as the practices of material life and culture on the land are Jewish. In this way, an imagined vision has become part of a landscape closing around those whom Darwish called “victims of a map.”

Discussion

Although in the poem of Darwish the protagonists are implicitly Zionists and Palestinians, his verse is also legible as a metaphor of a broader story. Maps serve patrons and create victims across time in different geographical environments.⁶³ “Enclosure Landscapes” reinterprets the experience of Palestinians as victims of a map by revealing how the re-ordering of the Palestinian landscape conforms to a more generalized territorial practice.

The argument in this article is that deliberately fragmented Palestinian geography reveals a recurrent pattern of power in which groups seeking territory re-imagine the territorial landscapes they covet as a prelude to taking possession of them and remaking them. Using the imaginative geography of Edward Said as a theoretical platform and enlisting comparison as a method, this article has framed the outlines of this pattern in which groups with territorial ambitions enroll three primary instruments—maps, law, and architecture—to seize control and reorder the land they covet. This process of re-imagining territory and remaking it

through maps, law, and the built environment has resulted in outcomes on the landscape of particular type—enclosure landscapes. The Palestinian landscape is part of this comparative story about enclosing land. This comparative focus on enclosure is what imbues the Palestinian landscape with a broader set of meanings by situating it alongside similar cases as part of a more enduring narrative about imagination, power, and territorial space. Consequently, one of the primary contributions of this study has been to theorize the outlines of a model for the process of enclosing land while revealing the ways in which the Palestinian case is part of this broader enclosure lineage.

At the same time, the comparison in this study is more than a sterile exercise at uncovering symmetries between past and present. Framing the Palestinian geography comparatively with enclosure landscapes of the past recasts the political meaning of what is occurring on the Palestinian landscape today. Promoters of enclosure in Palestine spare no words in claiming that what is occurring there is a response to an extraordinary set of concerns unique to time and place and dealing with issues of “security.” The symmetries between the Palestinian landscape and the other two cases, however, suggest that the motivation for the enclosure of Palestinian territory derives not only from specific circumstances, but also from deeper and more longstanding impulses deriving from the process of imagination, the exercise of power, and the remaking of space. Zionists, in effect, emerge in this study little different from other groups with territorial ambitions. Motivated by a discourse of rights to land, Zionists, English estate owners, and American colonialists all re-imagine(d) how the landscape can be reconfigured to fit their vision of entitlement, and deploy specific technologies of force to remake the land.

One of the problems left relatively under-theorized by Said that this article seeks to address are the sources of inspiration for the imaginative geographies that he insists are the precursors to the seizure and re-making of land. There are arguably tensions in Said’s work between what he argues are the ideological and discursive motivations for empire, and their materialist roots. “To think about distant places, to colonize them, to populate or depopulate them: all of this occurs on, about, or because of land,” Said emphasizes. “The actual geographical possession of land is what empire in the final analysis is all about.”⁶⁴ Nevertheless, Said was far from insisting upon a simple materialist taproot to explain the motivation for the seizure of territory. With an intellectual debt to Gramsci, Said constructed a theoretical approach to empire focusing on the interplay between the material and the discursive. At the same time, however, his primary contribution to theory in geography was in elevating the ideological and discursive influences on groups with territorial ambitions in their campaigns for territory. This article continues this theme in

identifying two discursive sources in particular for imagining land differently. One is the longstanding discourse on land improvement and property rights that manifested forcefully in all three cases. The other is the discourse of maps. These two discourses helped English estate owners, American settlers, and Israeli Zionists to conceive of land in a certain way as a prelude to taking possession of it.

Admittedly, the Palestinian landscape is often equated with the phenomenon of colonialism and the dispossession of indigenous populations by force. This article embraces such characterization but in focusing on enclosure landscapes takes the idea of colonialism in a new and different direction. While it is common knowledge that what occurred on the U.S. landscape between settlers and Indians was a form of colonialism and dispossession, what is less well understood is the common lineage connecting the enclosures in England to Anglo-American colonization in North America.⁶⁵ As the English were perfecting a discourse and set of instruments for the seizure of common land at home, they were using this same improvement and property rights discourse, and the same instruments of maps, law, and the built environment, to seize Indian land in Virginia, New England, and beyond. Consequently, this article has used enclosure as a more fundamental way of understanding colonialism itself and the processes of imagination, power, and dispossession at the core of this phenomenon. With its comparative emphasis, this article shows of how the invention and re-mapping of territorial landscapes conformed to the aims of modern power holders with territorial ambitions, from English estate owners, to American homesteaders, to Israeli Zionists. All of these groups dispossessed others by re-imagining their place on the landscape and in the end made themselves masters and stewards on the land.

Acknowledgements

The author would like to thank the Palestinian American Research Center (PARC) for support in conducting the fieldwork for this article and the comments of reviewers and the editor.

Notes

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59. I use the designation "Wall" following the protocol of the International Court of Justice.

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