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ELLA SHOHAT, *On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements: Selected Writings* (London: Pluto Press, 2017). Pp. 464 pages. $115.00 cloth, $28.00 paper, $28.00 e-book. ISBN 9780745399508.

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On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements is, in many ways, an archive of the labor Ella Shohat has undertaken to theorize the multiple kinds of displacements that accompany partition. In this collection of essays, talks, and interviews, she constructs meaningful parallels between dislocated Arab-Jews and displaced Palestinians with the establishment of the Israeli state in 1948; however, she does so *not* to collapse differences between them, but to point to the multiple violences that animate life in the wake of occupation and exile.

The collection catalogs decades of Shohat's thinking (the earliest essay was penned in 1982) and makes a case for the continuing relevance of placing the Arab-Jew, Palestine, displacement, and diaspora within the same analytic frame. It draws us into a world of scholarship, conferences, and intellectual production crafted in symposia, across dinner tables, and while crossing streets. The author describes, for example, her participation in the historic summer 1989 meeting of Mizrahim and Palestinians in Toledo (200–22), but also devotes narrative space to recounting a conversation with Edward Said on the streets of Manhattan. Shohat relates that when she joked that Said should start wearing a bulletproof vest in the wake of threats to his life, he paused and gestured to his beautifully tailored suit—the kind he was so known for—as if to ask: Where would it possibly go (199)? Moments like these pepper the text, inviting the reader into the kind of analyses—and the friendships forged in struggle—that have unfolded over many years, via many collaborations across disciplinary and geographic borders.

Shohat's writing on the erasure of the Arab-Jew appears in this volume alongside and in relation to her critique of Jewish History,

written in the singular, with a capital H. Jewish History, Shohat argues, fails to account for the multiplicity of Jewish *histories* by focusing solely on European Jews, cleaving Arab-Jews from the Arab world in order to rationalize and justify Zionist discourse. Shohat's words bely claims that sever Arab from Jew, as do the images and ephemera accompanying many of the essays. There are images of the Iraqi-issued *laissez-passer* of Shohat's parents, of Shohat's mother, smiling, on a roof in Baghdad in 1947, evidencing the nostalgia that was foreclosed to them in 1948 (79–81); there are images of the displaced Yemeni Jews arriving in Israel alongside stories of their children being stolen from them and sold for adoption to Ashkenazi families (115). There are also images of Mizrahi Black Panther meetings and demonstrations decrying the racism that structured Israeli society and continued to oppress Palestinians, and images of those demonstrations being violently policed (120). There are images of Shohat alongside Mira Eliezer and Tikva Levi as panelists announcing their split from the women's movement, demanding an anti-racist feminist movement that doesn't ask them to renounce their Arabic names and sever their ties to Palestinians. There are also the images that Shohat paints with her words: Shohat as a child, scolded by teachers for speaking Arabic and, in turn, scolding her parents for the same; Shohat as a child, helpful and obedient, telling an Israeli soldier where her uncle is, and then running for the cover of a backyard fig tree, feeling hot tears of shame, learning the difference between translator and traitor, and negotiating the newly acquired knowledge that, to the state, her family was the enemy (122–28).

On the Arab-Jew, Palestine, and Other Displacements archives both Shohat's own work and debates across postcolonial studies, and analyzes how those debates have traveled, metamorphosed, and shape-shifted in different contexts. She describes the arrival of postcolonial theory in 1990s Israel and the subsequent celebration of Homi Bhabha's hybridity over Edward Said's "rigid" analysis of colonial relations. For Shohat, this arrival was the advent of a "post without a past" (318), a valorization of postcolonial theory without any reckoning with anti-colonial thought: an embrace of Homi Bhabha without ever reading Frantz Fanon, who both Said and Bhabha saw as both an influence and interlocutor. Shohat clearly demarcates the logics of denial and refusal that animate this celebration, an embrace of the *post*colonial that allows for a hollow multiculturalism, premised on the idea that colonialism can be relegated to the past, a contention that simultaneously serves as an alibi for decolonization.

One crucial move that this volume makes is a refusal to fetishize the "new." In academia, where graduate students are too often trained to enumerate their "interventions" by eviscerating the thinkers who came before them, Shohat refuses to move "past" Orientalism as a framework for understanding colonial state practice and the actors who facilitate it: from artists, to intellectuals, to state officials. Indeed, she writes, "For those of us engaged in the ongoing project of deconstructing the essentialist paradigms undergirding knowledge production about 'the Middle East' (or about any other geography), the critical dissection of Orientalism seems to be an unfinished task" (20). Shohat models *engagement* as a pedagogical and intellectual praxis: in her eulogy to Said, and her case for the renewed relevance of his work, she continues to carve out a space to honor the courage of scholars of Palestine who critique Orientalism despite escalating right-wing attacks on their work.

The specter of blacklisting and Campus Watch haunts this work: from the half-joking need for bulletproof vests, to Shohat's own recounting of attacks on her scholarship, to articles, films, and op-eds pulled because of Palestinian content, to the demand for "balance" to Palestinian claims, campus climates that protect Zionism and traffic in Orientalism are thriving. Yet, so is work on Palestine, Mizrahi studies, and comparative colonial studies that includes Palestine/Israel in its orbit—and this in spite of the many ways in which we are all incentivized to not do this work. Shohat, as one thinker who has continually brought these questions to the fore, reminds junior scholars like myself that there is both space and need for this work in the academy. Equally important to Shohat is disrupting the specious, politically expedient claim that academia is not part of the "real world": "If the academy is so irrelevant," she asks, "why is it so often under fire?" (384)—a key question for those of us who study the material effects of violence at the site of knowledge production and those of us who are equally committed to the anti-colonial work that can happen in the classroom.

Shohat also squarely positions the question of partition as a feminist inquiry. She not only traces the gendered colonial logics that structure land as "virgin" and lying in wait to be tilled, but also brings to her writing a feminist ethos that indicts simultaneously the material and discursive violence of colonialism, racism, and sexism. She also provides histories of fissures in feminist organizing around the question of Palestine, noting her own withdrawal from women's organizations in Israel that refused to examine their Orientalism or

think intersectionally. She argues that the question of the Arab-Jew should not be "partitioned off" as an Israeli issue (14), asking her reader to consider the multiple relationships that have historically existed between racism, Orientalism, and feminism and to understand Mizrahi feminism as a "part of a global multicultural feminist project" (90). As Audre Lorde asked her audience at the Second Sex Conference in 1979 who was watching their children to allow them to do their feminist theorizing,[1] Shohat asked Ashkenazi feminists to think about the Palestinian and Mizrahi women cleaning their houses, watching their children, and making their clothes, whose labor made their "feminism" possible (92). As she did in *Talking Visions: Multicultural Feminism in a Transnational Age* (1995), here too she positions the critique of Eurocentrism as central to feminism writ large (381).

This collection also makes a case for the sustained importance of cultural studies, both within and outside of Middle East studies. Just as she did in *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (1989), Shohat here takes the political uses of representational practice seriously, not only to enumerate the contours of Zionist discourse as it is valorized in film, but also to trace Palestinian memory as generative, nurtured, and capable of charting visions of alternative futures. In this, she points to the political value of nostalgia; as an Iraqi Jew raised in Israel and conditioned to erase the hyphen between Arab and Jew, she theorizes the place and space of nostalgia as capable of mourning a past denied to her by Zionism *and* she theorizes Palestinian nostalgia as not only anti-colonial but decolonial: capable of charting a decolonized future for Palestine/Israel. Shohat's work in many ways anticipates what Palestinian Brooklyn-based filmmaker Nadia Awad has called a "nostalgia for the future."[2]

All told, this volume is an archive: it is an archive of Ella Shohat's refusal to flee from contradiction, a description she attaches to diasporic and post–Third Worldist films from the 1980s and 1990s but could well be attached to her own work (277). It is a collection of over thirty-five years of thinking with and through the question of Palestine alongside the colonial knowledge production that has structured "Arab" and "Jew" as two mutually exclusive categories, one belonging to "the East" and one belonging to "the West." Instead, Shohat has carefully labored to show, these categories not only fail to describe the people who populate them but also continue to uphold the assumption that only Israel can provide Arab-Jews with safety and community—an assumption that ignores long and layered histories of Arab-Jews sharing space, language, land, food, music, and cultural objects with

other Arabs, in Muslim spaces, and in contexts of multiple belongings. The stakes of this argument, both implicit and explicit, point to the possibility of return for Palestinian refugees and a future of shared, radically multicultural space in Palestine/Israel that refuses the racist and Orientalist logics of partition. For this reason, this text should be required reading for scholars working at the intersection of critical refugee studies, comparative colonial studies, and feminist studies, a necessary text for those scholars who write to mourn that which we are told is not grievable and who write imagine the possibility of an otherwise.

NOTES

[1]"The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," comments at "The Personal Is Political" panel at the Second Sex Conference on 29 October 1979, in Cherrie Moraga and Gloria Anzaldúa, *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (Berkeley, CA: Third Woman Press, 2002), 106–9.

[2] Nadia Awad, "Nostalgia for the Future," *New Inquiry*, 22 March 2015, https://thenewinquiry.com/nostalgia-for-the-future/.