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Robert Spencer

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Ecocriticism in the colonial present: the politics of dwelling in Raja Shehadeh's *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*

ROBERT SPENCER

[N]ature doesn't acknowledge frontiers. Neither can ecology.
(Nadine Gordimer, *Half a Life*)¹

I

'In 2004', according to the Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, 'on a number of occasions, Palestinian and Jewish citizens demonstrated jointly against the government's plan to extend Highway no. 6, bisecting Israel from north to south, into the green lungs of the country.'² This inclusive protest against the Trans-Israel Highway is just one of a number of examples of cooperation between Jewish and Arab citizens of Israel aimed at safeguarding their vulnerable environment. It is noteworthy that Arab citizens undertook this joint action without forgetting their compatriots in exile and under occupation and without disregarding the collective memory of the *nakba* of 1948 and their consequent dispossession. In other words, this was environmental action undertaken in full consciousness of the history of colonial domination that brought about the proposed thoroughfare as well as of the corporate interests behind its construction. Nonetheless, it was inspired not by defensive or territorial sentiment but by an open-armed recognition of different peoples' shared inhabitation of—in addition to their mutual dependence *on*—the natural world. The purpose of this essay is to show that environmentalism requires such inclusive perspectives. It must be fully conscious of a history of colonial domination that has brought about appalling human and environmental exploitation and it must entail a rejection of exclusionary attachments to particular territories. My aim is to dissociate environmental literary criticism (usually termed ecocriticism) from the restrictive loyalties contained in or at least implied by the rhetoric of 'dwelling' favoured by American ecocritics in the wilderness tradition and especially by the influential British ecocritic Jonathan Bate. The argument is

intended as a contribution to recent forecasts of a possible rapprochement or at least convergence between the respective preoccupations of ecocriticism and postcolonial studies.³ The two disciplines find common cause, first, when they indict ongoing forms of colonialism for inflicting human and environmental destruction and, second, when they go on to contrast colonialism's divisions and hierarchies with more inclusive forms of attachment.

My claim is that an effective ecocriticism must reject some of the characteristic emphases that have distinguished the field until now; moreover, that these flawed or misleading emphases are the result of the field's unfortunate affiliation with the philosophy of Martin Heidegger and its neglect of other, more fruitful antecedents such as the Marxist tradition. Close scrutiny of Theodor Adorno's famous critique of Heidegger's philosophy will I hope serve to exemplify the usefulness of this alternative lineage. My qualms about, for example, Bate's definition of ecocriticism or what he calls 'ecopoetics'⁴ include my conviction that, as Marxists have maintained, the environment is not imperilled by technology but by capitalism and by capitalism's deployment of technology in the service of exploitation. Nor is ecocriticism's proper subject the 'alienation' of 'Western man', as though Westerners alone are preoccupied with the ecological crisis and as though those who hail from outside 'the West' are somehow closer to nature or suffer less from its despoliation. Moreover, works of literature are certainly not ecologically valuable and constructive because they encourage the Heideggerian rhetoric of 'dwelling' and 'home' to which Bate in particular and ecocriticism in general frequently resort but because, to the contrary, many works of literature point us towards the global dimensions of the ecological crisis and towards the similarly global nature of the solutions required to counteract it.⁵

I will therefore conclude with a brief consideration of Raja Shehadeh's 2007 book *Palestinian Walks*. An intensely elegiac, even at times consciously lugubrious evocation of environmental loss, Shehadeh's memoir documents its author's rambles over several decades through a landscape that is rapidly being transformed by Israeli bulldozers and both diminished and circumscribed by the checkpoints, roads and unsightly housing estates of Israeli settlers. Shehadeh is a Palestinian lawyer, diarist and human rights activist who has spent many years appealing against land expropriation orders in Israeli courts. Apart from respectful reviews of his work in the *Journal of Palestine Studies* he is a writer who has received very little, if any, sustained critical attention, at least in comparison with better known Palestinian writers such as Sahar Khalifeh, Ghassan Kanafani and Mahmoud Darwish.⁶ My choice of his book is dictated not just by my conviction that it provides an instructive portrayal of the human and environmental damage inflicted by colonial occupation or that it explores an environmental ethic that transcends a restrictive or defensive attachment to a particular territory. The analysis which concludes this essay is also an attempt to respond to numerous postcolonial scholars' calls for their discipline to concern itself much more closely with what Derek Gregory has called the 'colonial present'.⁷ Shehadeh places himself in a growing company of distinguished intellectuals when he

characterizes the situation in Israel/Palestine as colonial: both in terms of the occupation itself, which is motivated by the quest for resources and land as well as by national and religious messianism, and in terms of Israel's perceived usefulness in furthering US interests in the region.⁸ As we shall see, the protection of what Shehadeh's subtitle calls this 'vanishing landscape' depends, as he realizes, as his book reveals, and as Pappé's anecdote implies, not on the assertion of exclusive rights over territories. Rather, it can be ensured only by an awareness of the links between colonial occupation and ecological calamity, by the difficult and, to say the least, arduous recognition of our joint or common dependence on the natural world, and therefore by the cultivation of the post-national thoughts and allegiances that Shehadeh's book tentatively invokes. Ecological crisis is no respecter of borders; neither should be our response.

II

Before embarking on a close reading of *Palestinian Walks* I would like to spell out in more detail the drawbacks of the Heideggerian approach to ecocriticism by looking at the exemplary analysis of Heidegger's philosophy by Theodor Adorno, one of the Marxist tradition's most original and sophisticated theorists.⁹ In both the first section of his philosophical masterpiece *Negative Dialectics* and in the more acerbic *The Jargon of Authenticity*, Adorno subjects Heidegger's philosophy to a biting critique.¹⁰ On the philosophical level Heidegger had, he argued, failed to overcome the duality between subject and object that characterizes German idealist philosophy. Heidegger's whole philosophy is a complicated effort to think its way back before the bifurcation of human subjectivity from Being. Alienation from nature, the belief that the world can be forcibly disclosed through ideas and concepts, as well as a mania for the domination of the earth, and the general 'rootlessness of Western thought',¹¹ all of which was quite unknown to the pre-Socratics and the Germanic Middle Ages, are the baneful products of this severance. Forgotten in the works of Plato and Hegel was humankind's original synergy with a mysteriously 'unconcealed' Being untouched by technology and unmolested by the impertinence of conceptual thinking. Being is supposed by Heidegger's philosophy to be beyond subject and object but he either describes it with metaphors of 'earthiness' and 'rootedness' that imply it is something solid and identifiable and therefore an object like any other or he declares that Being cannot be conceived or described with concepts, in which case Being becomes a meaningless invocation.

More importantly, Adorno objects to what he characterizes as a 'jargon of authenticity' peddled by Heidegger and his epigones in the years after the Second World War. Heidegger invokes some mysterious Being that has repaired the destructive schism between people and things. But reckless chatter about fullness and reconciliation props up an alienating social and economic order that must be torn down if the desire for these things is to be satisfied. Like advertising, the jargon seeks to conjure and make present a

fulfilment that is not in its power to bestow: 'it transforms a bad empirical reality into transcendence'.¹² For Adorno, by contrast, philosophical writing, from its explicit theses right down to the deliberately exhibited insufficiencies of its concepts, must confess the disjunction between its own meagre powers and the state of reconciliation which it craves. Its aim is to make clear the absence of a fulfilment that cannot be conjured by incantations, along with the perennial truth that such a state could only be brought about by political action: '[t]he ontological need can no more guarantee its object than the agony of the starving assures them of food.'¹³

Given what Adorno sees as the revival in the shape of the Federal Republic of an alienated and class-divided society that had proved no obstacle to the worst crimes in human history and that might even portend their repetition, the jargon is, frankly, unseemly; it encourages its practitioners and their acolytes to shield their eyes from the recent catastrophe. In the course of a scathing polemic Adorno quotes one O F Bollnow's review of Werner Bergengruen's volume of poetry *Die Heile Welt* of 1950. Bollnow notes

'that in poetry, above all in the lyric of the last years, after all the experiences of dread, a new feeling, of affirmation of being, is beginning to make its appearance, a joyful and thankful harmony with the very existence of man, as it is; a harmony of the world as it confronts man [...] "What came from pain was only transient. And my ear heard nothing but songs of praise"' [...] Bergengruen's volume [Adorno points out] is only a few years closer to us than the time when Jews who had not been completely killed by the gas were thrown living into the fire, where they regained consciousness and screamed. The poet, who can certainly not be criticized for cheap optimism, and the philosophically minded pedagogue who evaluates him, heard nothing but songs of praise.¹⁴

The obligation to remember the abominations of the recent past, a responsibility that entails looking into and putting right the society that set them in motion, is betrayed by philosophy when it drowns out heinous crimes with euphemisms and glib talk of rebirths and fresh starts. It is not so much the substance of Heidegger's philosophy that Adorno rejects therefore, though the attempt to gesture beyond alienation to some unsullied Being strikes him as misconceived and an inevitable failure, as that philosophy's dishonest rhetoric. 'The shepherds live unseen and far beyond the wasteland of the ravaged earth', Heidegger opined in 1946, as though the rustic virtues had emerged unscathed from the infernos of recent memory!¹⁵

The jargon is for Adorno a distraction from a necessary confrontation with the undiminished realities of suffering and injustice. Heidegger is of course correct to bemoan our alienation from the natural world but he pins the blame not on capitalism, which uses technology in the service of exploitation, but on technology itself.¹⁶ Heidegger pictures a non-technological society as the alternative to the aggressive 'enframing' of nature; hence the prattle about the Black Forest, the affected and neologistic style, the weighty peasant wisdom and the plough and pitchfork metaphors. If the Marxists are to be believed, however, technology should not be renounced; for as Raymond

Williams has argued, technology has brought indispensable gains to working people.¹⁷ David Harvey points out that a blanket rejection of technology would make impossible the innovations required to forestall the ecological crisis, including, most obviously, the development of renewable sources of energy.¹⁸ Instead, technology should be made to serve rather than exploit humanity and nature. ‘Marxism of technology, once it has been well thought out, is no philanthropy for maltreated metals’, according to the idiosyncratic conjectures of the utopian Marxist Ernst Bloch, ‘but rather the end of the naïve application of the standpoint of the exploiter and animal tamer to nature’.¹⁹ Heidegger advocates the renunciation of technology not its utilization for the purposes of emancipation. He wants to go back to some pre-modern idyll.

The jargon sells short the philosophical and political ideal of reconciliation by painting it in terms inherited from an age of nationalist enthusiasm.²⁰

Thus we ask now: even if the old rootedness is being lost in this age, may not a new ground and foundation be granted again to man, a foundation and ground out of which man’s nature and all his works can flourish in a new way even in the atomic age?²¹

Like nationalism, the jargon ‘calms the constantly festering suspicion of uprootedness’²² with soothing refrains. Far from transcending the status quo, ‘Heidegger’s self-righteous ideology of splendid homeliness’²³ prolongs the passion for rootedness and race at the heart of fascism. Like any jargon, this one serves the purpose of excluding those who do not know how to use it. It inducts its practitioners into an elect, offers them shelter and distinguishes them from outsiders: ‘people wear it in their buttonholes’, says Adorno, ‘in place of the currently disreputable party badge’.²⁴ Quite apart from Heidegger’s membership of the Nazi Party and his tenure as Rector of the University of Freiburg at the outset of the Third Reich, his philosophy itself breathes the air of National Socialism.²⁵ With its disdain for individualism, democracy and political liberalism, as well as its totalizing rejection of reason and technology, not to mention its idiom of rootedness and what Richard Wolin has called its ‘linguistic authoritarianism’²⁶ (whereby ideas are explicated not through philosophical argumentation but through the accumulation of vague phrases and sonorous neologisms), Heidegger’s thought is in the final analysis, as Adorno told a Frankfurt student newspaper in 1963, ‘fascist right down to its innermost components’.²⁷

But for Adorno the craving for ‘shelteredness’ should certainly not be contrasted with an ideal of homelessness. It expresses a real need for protection from avoidable anxieties and therefore constitutes an oblique protest against the status quo. However, that craving must be satisfied through practical reforms that put an end to the real causes of terror and insecurity. To impute the idea of shelteredness and therefore to imagine that shelteredness can be achieved here and now without the practical super-session or even acknowledgement of the shortcomings of the current social and economic set-up is to distort the idea so grievously that it begins to

resemble the aggression, fanaticism and domination from which one sought shelter in the first place.

It leaves its trace in the violation of the word: the reminiscence of what is hedged-in and safely bordered remains joined to that element of short-sighted particularity which out of itself renews the evil against which no one is sheltered. Home will only come to be when it has freed itself from such particularity, when home has negated itself as universal. The feeling of shelteredness makes itself at home with itself, and offers a holiday resort in place of life.²⁸

Precipitately affirmed, the dream of home makes common cause with the ideology of ‘blood and soil’ and with the sentiments of those who in spite of everything still wish to fence off a fatherland amidst the general injustice. It is a short step, in other words, from talk about homelands to sinister bluster about ‘the spiritual mission of the German people’.²⁹ For Adorno, by contrast, what he calls in his book on Mahler ‘contented homeland peace, healed of the pain of frontiers’,³⁰ could only be brought about through the emancipation of all and therefore through the radical negation of the conflicts, insecurities and alienations that bedevil the world as it stands. The idea of home must, as he puts it, be freed of particularity and universalized. In his *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno refers to this state as ‘a liberated humanity, free especially of nationalism’.³¹ For Adorno ‘there is no longer any homeland other than a world in which no one would be cast out any more, the world of a genuinely emancipated humanity’.³² General and thoroughgoing rather than partial emancipation—a sense of solidarity and obligation that encompasses all the world’s members and not merely the population of a particular territory and that therefore offers a substantive alternative to the status quo—constitutes the only responsible ideal for philosophical and critical work.

I am not saying that ecocritics like Bate who make approving use of Heidegger’s philosophy are fascistic; obviously, they are not. On the contrary, Bate is commendably sensitive to the way in which ideas of nature have been employed to justify colonialism as well as to the reactionary nostalgia of the Third Reich.³³ I am, however, saying that Bate’s employment of Heideggerian jargon is incongruous when placed alongside insights such as these. He resorts frequently to the rhetoric of ‘rootedness’ (p 13), ‘dwelling’ (p 42), ‘belonging’ (p 18) and nativity (p 19). He even refers approvingly to what he calls the ‘cottageyness’ of William Wordsworth (p 206) and criticizes modernist poets for being ‘deracinated’ in contrast with ‘bioregionally grounded poets’ such as Basil Bunting (p 234). Blindness to the political implications of Heidegger’s emphasis on roots and dwelling has not helped ecocriticism to shape its normative ideals in a way that is adequately distinguished from the rhetoric of belonging that characterises a certain reactionary ecological approach. Because he articulates his understanding of the form of ‘dwelling’ made possible by poetry in terms lifted more or less unmodified from Heidegger, Bate does not explain exactly how ‘love of the land may be differentiated from institutionalized patriotism’.³⁴ Too little effort has been made to place critical distance between ecocriticism and a

philosophy which Bate presents as resembling Heidegger's 'peasant farmhouse in the Black Forest' gathering 'the fourfold of mortals, gods, earth and heaven into its still site in simple oneness'³⁵ ('without the print even blushing', as Adorno says of an equally pompous effusion in Heidegger's *Being and Time*³⁶).

Notwithstanding the philosophical subtlety with which it is elucidated in Heidegger's work and the strenuous efforts that Bate has made to distinguish it from chauvinism and parochialism, the idea and idiom of 'dwelling' are freighted unavoidably with such connotations, which inevitably appeal to those who lack such subtlety and are not prepared to make such efforts: 'Heidegger's own language', as Adorno remarks, is 'more critical of him than the most malevolent critic'.³⁷ The resort to a Heideggerian jargon in Bate's work has less to do with any dubious political sympathies on his part (though he does frequently assert the need to move from 'red' to 'green'³⁸ and he uses the word 'cosmopolitan' only in a pejorative sense³⁹) than with the lack of any alternative philosophical and political tradition that might allow us to articulate both the objectives of the field and the consequences of particular readings in a more progressive way. My claim is that this lack is perceived rather than actual, for it is the Marxist tradition not the Heideggerian one that allows us to put into words the progressive forms of vision to which ecocritical readings can give rise. The goal of ecocriticism is not contained in the tainted idiom of dwelling, which ignores the centrality of capitalism and, whether we intend this or not, recalls right wing ideals of the *volk* and the *Vaterland*. It was captured most effectively in Adorno's image of peace 'among men as well as between men and their Other. Peace is the state of distinctness without domination, with the distinct participating in each other.'⁴⁰

III

Palestinian Walks contemplates and explores the inauguration of such relationships between antipathetic communities and between those communities and nature. It is a record of two kinds of journey or, since journey implies something more purposeful and regimented than the rambles undertaken by the author, two kinds of movement. The first are Shehadeh's seven walks through the shrinking countryside around Ramallah, Jericho and other West Bank towns. The second are his ruminations on the forces and agents that threaten this environment. Each episode recounts an extemporaneous walk that leads us through a similarly digressive discussion of a pertinent theme or idea. Shehadeh begins *Palestinian Walks* by expressing his hope that the book does not resemble the unsympathetic and uncomprehending portrayals of Palestine penned in the past by travellers and cartographers. Their work, he writes, has aided colonial domination by misdescribing and even vilifying the land and its inhabitants.⁴¹ Though Shehadeh flatters himself that his relationship to the land is more immediate than this and is not experienced through a distorting veil of words, his work is nonetheless preoccupied with the refracting power of language.⁴² *Palestinian Walks* is,

indisputably, a work of literature. These are imperfect recollections conveyed along the porous channels of the author's memory. Furthermore, the book is described from Shehadeh's openly subjective point of view. The recipient of Britain's Orwell Prize for political writing in 2008, it is written in English and its audience is predominantly 'Western' (though the Palestinian prime minister Salam Fayyad has promised to arrange for the book's translation into Arabic⁴³). Shehadeh's milieu is hardly unfamiliar to Western audiences but it is, all the same, one that is fought over by rival narratives and interpretations and is therefore to some extent, as he acknowledges, obscured as much as it is clarified by the conventional descriptions offered up by the media, pundits and spokespeople.

Despite being presented to us by its accolade as a political book, therefore, *Palestinian Walks* should also be seen and analysed as a literary text, one that calls its readers' attention to the relationship between the words on the page and the land they appear to describe. The book is a veritable device for contesting preconceptions: in its equable tone (which is a rejoinder to the stereotype of Palestinian fanaticism), its unconventional emphasis on the ecological destruction wrought by Israeli colonization, its stress on Palestinians' disregarded attachment to the land, and the way it uses each meandering walk to amble no less circuitously around received ideas about the region in order to peruse them from alternative points of view. The book's very title is a surprising affirmation, an apparent oxymoron given the widespread association of Palestinians not with contemplative rambles but with urban slums and terrorist violence: '“Arabs don't walk”', expostulates the incredulous young settler whom Shehadeh encounters on his penultimate stroll.⁴⁴ Of course, the difficulties and struggles to which this book points are political ones susceptible to political solutions. But by approaching Shehadeh's book as a literary text one becomes acutely receptive to its insight that the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis in the Occupied Territories is as much linguistic as it is political. Both sides are seeking to define, classify and identify the land, and by so doing to claim and take possession of it. Crucially, however, the book's literary quality also emphasizes the tenuousness of those claims. It is as unsure about the accuracy and force of its language as its author is unobtrusive and respectful in his relationship with the landscape through which he carefully picks his way. It does not enter the tented field in which rival narratives vie for possession of the land. The book's ironic and self-reflective tone, the manifest diffidence of its narrator, its dramatic immediacy, the way that it renders details and fragments of the landscape instead of subjecting the land to a commanding or systematic vision, indeed the diffuse nature of these 'notes', which ramble and digress like Shehadeh himself, all eschew at the level of narrative form the aggressive and acquisitive practices that *Palestinian Walks* denounces at the level of its content.

Close to half a million Jewish settlers have been established in the West Bank since the election of the first Likud government in the late 1970s. This process has accelerated dramatically since the signing of the Oslo Accords in 1993, of which Shehadeh was an early opponent.⁴⁵ The damage to the

environment has been wrought by a state that claims, wrongly it seems, a superior love of the land and that, famously, has justified its own existence partly through a professed ability ‘to make the desert bloom’ by rescuing the land from the supposed neglect of its previous inhabitants. His task, as Shehadeh describes it, is to bear witness to the human and, what is too rarely acknowledged, environmental toll exacted by this prodigious transplantation of people and infrastructure. Accompanied occasionally by his wife and others but more often, like Rousseau, a solitary as well as unmethodical walker, Shehadeh’s usual companions are his reveries and his beloved springs, hillocks, escarpments, ruins, olive groves and, most memorably, *wadis* covered in wild cyclamens and asphodels, all of which seemingly perdurable features of the landscape exist, alas, increasingly only in his memory. Shehadeh’s anguish at the physical defilement of the land around Ramallah is profound. Israel, aided by capital infusions from the US and the connivance of other Western states, is able ‘to make the “desert” bloom with concrete and neon lights’.⁴⁶

Shehadeh’s work is almost preternaturally aware of space. Colonial power for Shehadeh is inseparable from confinement: from the policing and surveillance of space as well as the forcible restriction of movement.⁴⁷ There has been a great deal of recent theoretical work on the construction of space, much of it derived from thinkers such as Foucault, Deleuze and de Certeau. Yet in thinking through the representation of space in Shehadeh’s book I have found David Harvey’s theory of ‘historical-geographical materialism’ far more useful than any of these approaches, not least because of its conscious indebtedness to Henri Lefebvre’s pioneering Marxist work on the social production and control of space.⁴⁸ Harvey’s work, as Edward Soja explains, is an attempt ‘to connect spatial form with social process, and thereby to combine human geography with class analysis’.⁴⁹ Of course, capitalism has a crucial temporal dimension, unfolding over time and entailing command over rates of turnover as well as over labour time and the extraction of surplus value. But space and particularly its colonization is also, according to Lefebvre, one of the spheres in which capital accumulation takes place and in which capitalism therefore reconstitutes itself. Appropriate to capitalism is the production of certain kinds of space that facilitate profit-making: the organization of movement, the creation of a world market, the concentration of labour in large towns, the efficient circulation of commodities, and so on. Capitalism, which seeks out new markets, raw materials and cheaper labour in order to perpetuate itself, entails the colonization of space and in particular, as Frantz Fanon recognized, its division and allotment. ‘The colonial world’, according to Fanon, ‘is a world divided into compartments’.⁵⁰ Space for Lefebvre is socially produced; it ‘also serves as a tool of thought and of action [and] in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power [...] [A]s such, it escapes in part from those who would make use of it.’⁵¹ Lefebvre’s and Harvey’s work therefore emphasizes something that is occasionally neglected by the other theorists just mentioned: the prevalence of conflicts over space. Space is the arena in which power is imposed but it is also where that power is

resisted and countered by a radical reconstruction of spatial relations along the lines suggested by the title of Harvey's *Spaces of Hope*:⁵² 'new social relationships call for a new space, and vice versa'.⁵³ Space, in other words, could be changed from a hierarchical and segregated entity into one that facilitates movement and communication in order to complement a social and economic order which is based similarly on interaction rather than conflict or division.

Cities are the principal focus of Harvey's analysis of the segregation and privatization of space by class power and of the countervailing processes whereby coalitions of resistance, in the subtitle of Mike Davis's study of the 'Latinization' of the US urban landscape, 'reinvent the city'.⁵⁴ Though he regrets that Jerusalem's Old City is now an unsightly conurbation 'full of obstructions, walls and ugly blocks',⁵⁵ Shehadeh's concern is with the broader processes by which space is segregated by colonial power. One way of applying Harvey's method to the Palestinian context might be via Eyal Weizman's *Hollow Land*, which is an account of how Israel's control and transformation of the Occupied Territories have been facilitated by an extraordinarily meticulous as well as systematic attention to the construction of space on the part of architects, urban planners and military strategists.⁵⁶ Weizman details the complex spatial mechanisms by which the Palestinians are enclosed, observed and fragmented, and their movements policed and impeded. He describes the design of settlements by Israeli architects as offensive citadels, legal tactics for land seizure, the reconstruction of Jerusalem's Jewish Quarter since 1967 as an ethnically homogeneous gated neighbourhood, the refinement of weapons technologies and tactics by the army and air force, in addition to purportedly innocuous but actually profoundly and surreptitiously political details such as the cladding of new buildings in the suburbs of Jerusalem. What all these intricate spatial practices entail for Weizman is the imposition of an elastic but increasingly imporous frontier between two peoples which acts as both a system of colonial control and a means of separation. He calls this process the 'fractalization and fragmentation of the terrain into an archipelago of enmity and alienation'.⁵⁷

A new way of imagining space has been put into action in the Occupied Territories. While walls and other barriers have partitioned the populations, the fact that these peoples overlap and intersect has necessitated the development of a three-dimensional network of underpasses, bridges, tunnels and 'security corridors' of a bewildering and almost Byzantine complexity. But this Escher-like system of barriers and passageways demonstrates the opposite of what it wishes to prove: not the separateness of these two peoples but their inescapable intertwinement and their shared inhabitation of the same space.⁵⁸ Weizman calls this, in the title of his chapter on the Israeli wall in the West Bank, 'the impossible politics of separation'. What this fact portends is a further reimagining of space that acknowledges the impossibility and of course the undesirability of partitioning space along the lines demanded by colonial power and therefore reconceptualizes space as a means of interaction and dialogue, even of connection and recognition. Shehadeh's

book explores the intellectual and moral effort required to contemplate such a solution. His love of the hills round Ramallah is palpable and very moving. But that love seldom expresses itself in selfish or provincial, let alone chauvinistic terms. On the contrary, it is expressed for Shehadeh as it was for his forebears by embarking on a *sarha*, which he describes as a sort of directionless peregrination that allows one to transgress the usual restrictions of time and place and that releases one for a time from the frustrations of everyday life.⁵⁹ A *sarha* is—or rather, since Shehadeh now finds it so difficult to escape Ramallah’s confines, *was*—‘expansive, open-ended and uncontrolled’.⁶⁰ Interestingly, the word is derived, he tells us, from the verb used to describe the grazing of cattle and therefore it denotes both an expansive and reciprocal relationship with the other communities and regions through which the walker moves as well as with the land itself.⁶¹

To be sure, Shehadeh sees the landscape in terms the Palestinians usually use to describe themselves: as something fixed, lasting and indomitable.⁶² The prevalent characterization of the land in Shehadeh’s book with images of resilience and permanence is a symptom of (as well as a protest against) the fact that what Edward Said called ‘the stability of geography and the continuity of land’ has disappeared from the lives of Palestinians.⁶³ In other words, the achievement of a fixed and self-governing territory, with all the legal and political security that such an entity brings in train, is of pressing importance. But by seeking to articulate the political aspirations of the Palestinians in non-exclusionary terms Shehadeh’s book’s vision goes beyond the orthodox two-state solution to the Israel–Palestine conflict, which involves full Israeli withdrawal from Gaza and the West Bank as well as recognition of Israel within its pre-1967 borders. Two central facts—that many Palestinians remain citizens of Israel and the Oslo Accords did nothing to forestall the building of settlements on occupied territory—mean that the creation of a Palestinian state is now totally unfeasible. The only alternative is the one-state solution: a secular community without civil distinctions embracing the present inhabitants of Israel and the Occupied Territories plus those members of the Palestinian diaspora (the refugees and their descendants) who wish to return.⁶⁴ Shehadeh’s book’s dissatisfaction with chauvinistic forms of belonging and its restless eschewal of stasis and confinement gesture towards such an ideal: an inclusive and non-hierarchical community.⁶⁵

Something similar can be said of the non-hierarchical relationship with nature envisioned by the book. Not the worship of nature, a sort of pantheistic outlook that frequently tempts Shehadeh but which he ultimately rejects, but a sensitive inhabitation of nature constitutes the ecological ideal which animates his reveries. All ecological concern stresses the value and integrity of non-human species and ecosystems. But *Palestinian Walks* highlights something that certain ecological movements, such as deep ecology, sometimes overlook: nature’s mediatedness or, put differently, the unavoidable reality of humankind’s transformation of nature and of its inhabitation and stewardship of the planet.⁶⁶ Deep ecology responds to the reification of humanity with the reification of nature. This worship of non-human nature

reproduces what Adorno calls ‘the crude antithesis’⁶⁷ of humanity and nature that it protests against in the first place. The ideal sought by those seriously interested in putting a stop to the despoliation of nature is not the veneration of a landscape untouched by human beings or from which human beings have been barred. In the remarkable section on ‘natural beauty’ in his *Aesthetic Theory* Adorno confesses his dislike of ‘nature that has not been pacified by human cultivation, nature over which no human hand has passed’.⁶⁸ Not the antipathy of humanity and nature but the former’s careful stewardship of the latter is the only legitimate ideal that can be pursued by those of us reluctant to replace affection for human beings with the worship of nature.

Shehadeh is therefore distressed by the reversion of much of the land of the West Bank to a wild and uncared for condition after many of its protectors have been compelled by force or penury into exile. On his rambles through the stony hills Shehadeh’s feet frequently strike dead vines and cross derelict plots. He bemoans ‘the abandonment of these hills to the forces of nature’⁶⁹ and muses as he walks on his forebears’ sensitive inhabitation of the land. It was not scarred by straight highways that convey settlers as quickly as possible to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv. Rather, the roads followed the land’s contours. Villages were placed in the cool and sheltered valleys rather than on exposed hilltops where the new settlements stand guard like forts (or rather *as* forts since, as Weizman shows, belligerent supervision of the Palestinians was one of the functions envisaged by the settlements’ architects and by the generals and politicians who oversaw their construction⁷⁰). On his early rambles Shehadeh encounters neither hills flattened to facilitate the passage of motor vehicles nor impassable crags unaffected by human presence. Instead he traverses cultivated slopes of gradually descending terraces where olive trees and vineyards are planted: ‘In this way my ancestors reclaimed the wild, possessed and domesticated it, making it their own.’⁷¹

Nature is not seen as something pristine and external to human society, therefore; on the contrary, the landscape of the West Bank has been thoroughly worked over and is now to a large extent the product of human transformation. Shehadeh’s book does not respond to Israel’s damaging incursions with a resentful commemoration of some lost Eden, though admittedly his tone is at times wistful and forlorn at the loss of what he describes as a ‘veritable paradise’.⁷² On the contrary, Palestine is memorialized not as a pristine wilderness but as an indubitably peopled landscape.⁷³ Shehadeh’s is a homage to a beleaguered but beautiful little patch of earth, which has been both worked and fought over during centuries of unbroken human settlement: not a backwater but a place with a history and with a complex social, cultural and economic presence. In other words, the ecosystem bears and cannot be expected to stop bearing the marks of human action. The dream of a return to pristine nature, by contrast, is morally and politically dubious. By enacting a flight from history it recalls the cult of the wilderness. Shehadeh relates an encounter with a Bedouin family evicted from land that has been expropriated and turned into a nature reserve.⁷⁴ The Israeli Nature and National Parks Protection Authority, he tells us, now ‘controls a region subdued and sapped of its former vibrancy’.⁷⁵ It manages large parts

of the West Bank, much of which has been depopulated in order to allow settlers to enjoy their leisure time undisturbed by the bothersome spectacle of the Bedouins' eviction and disinheritance.

The environmental historian William Cronon reminds us of those national parks and game reserves in which all signs of indigenous peoples' prior habitation have been erased and the population removed, like the Bedouins recalled by Shehadeh, to reservations and slums. It was no accident, for example, that the movement to set aside national parks of supposedly untamed wilderness in the United States followed the last Indian wars. The dream of unspoilt nature is for Cronon profoundly inhuman and in any case unfeasible.

If we allow ourselves to believe that nature, to be true, must also be wild, then our very presence in nature represents its fall. The place where we are is the place where nature is not. If this is so—if by definition wilderness leaves no place for human beings, save perhaps as contemplative sojourners enjoying their leisurely reverie in God's natural cathedral—then also by definition it can offer no solution to the environmental and other problems that confront us. To the extent that we celebrate wilderness as the measure with which we judge civilization, we reproduce the dualism that sets humanity and nature at opposite poles.⁷⁶

We cannot escape our responsibility for the ecological crisis or wipe the slate clean of our millennia-long interaction with nature without doing violence to the environment and ourselves. Nature worship either envisages nature as a sanctuary, in which case patches of nature are fenced off amidst general despoliation, or it sees unspoilt nature as preferable to human tenancy, in which case it becomes complicit in the eviction and dispossession of the people (all of us, in the final analysis) who, come what may, must continue to live amidst nature; hence the association between nature worship and the most inhuman political ideologies. So that the biosphere can rebalance itself, the 'anti-humanist' philosopher John Gray looks forward with disconcerting equanimity to a cull by ecological catastrophe or war of what the environmentalist James Lovelock has dubbed the 'plague of people'.⁷⁷ In its vision of sensitive and inclusive habitation Shehadeh's book sketches an alternative to this way of thinking.

Shehadeh is evidently an intelligent and urbane man, his narrative thoughtful and measured. Indeed, he is almost as exasperated with the incompetence and venality of the new Palestinian elites as he is with the cruelty and insolence of the Israeli occupiers. Of course he resents the Israelis' aggression but admits that he rarely encounters the settlers and, indeed, looks upon them as travellers and administrators have traditionally looked upon the Arabs: as a homogeneous mass. Yet the penultimate journey leads to a discomfiting encounter that prompts Shehadeh to reflect on his views and that, more significantly, induces his readers to make out an alternative to segregation, mistrust and incomprehension. Shehadeh begins the chapter by recounting the dispiriting political context of these last walks: Israel's invasion of Ramallah in 2002, Olmert's so-called Convergence Plan to annex Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the increasingly intrusive checkpoints,

the construction of new settlements and the growing ghettoization of Palestinian life. Nonetheless he is determined to enjoy the wet and therefore unusually beautiful spring of 2006. In the course of his walk Shehadeh happens delightedly upon a green valley with a brook running through it and is even more amazed to find there a young Israeli settler perched on a rock smoking a water pipe and enjoying the tranquillity. In a neat reversal Shehadeh behaves, though he does not himself remark on the comparison, like a colonial cartographer when he tries not to look at this figure in order to enjoy the scene. But he is forced to acknowledge the settler's presence when the young man passes him the hat he has dropped while fording the brook.

The conversation that ensues is hardly a meeting of minds. Both men plainly see the other as an enemy and a threat and both are ignorant of the details of the other's life. Not only does Shehadeh suspect that the Israeli wants him gone so that he can enjoy his smoke alone, but their dialogue is distorted by their uncertainty about whether to converse in English or Hebrew and by the younger man's superior power, symbolized by the gun slung casually over his shoulder. Once a dialogue has been struck up Shehadeh forces himself on his interlocutor's attention and confronts him angrily with the claims and viewpoint of an Arab from Ramallah. Meanwhile the Israeli is eager to parrot what Shehadeh sees as the myths and self-justifications of the settlers' worldview. Their exchange thus breaks down due to each man's failure to see the world from the perspective of the other. All they can agree on is the peacefulness and beauty of the land, which both call home and where both have lived since childhood. Indeed they have the same name for the *wadi* and the spring, although they pronounce them differently.

That this shared regard for the welfare of the land is an inkling and even a possible basis for reconciliation is emphasized by the Israeli's offer to Shehadeh to share his pipe. For Shehadeh it is opiated hashish that triggers a nostalgic vision of 'the land before it became so tortured and distorted'.⁷⁸ For the reader, however, an image of reconciliation in the future is conjured by this ephemeral tableau of two men sitting together, talking frankly and listening to the water trickling between the rocks (a scene that is initiated, significantly, by the dominant party). Interestingly, their love for the land is unspoken and experiential; it has nothing in common with the distanced, possessive, largely symbolic and even 'pornographic' quality that Shehadeh elsewhere associates with settler movements such as Gush Emunim.⁷⁹ How, Shehadeh wonders, could these two short-lived companions reconcile their mutual love of the hills? '[D]espite the myths that make up his world-view, how could I claim that my love of these hills cancels out his? And what would this recognition mean to both our future and that of our respective countries?'⁸⁰ The encounter with the young Israeli permits a kind of reverie or thought experiment. This indecisive and, as Shehadeh puts it, 'troubled' finale is hardly a happy or even auspicious one. But their meeting at all is at least a recognition of the other side's perhaps surprising and unwelcome but nonetheless undeniable *presence* as well as an indication of how inextricably intertwined the lives of Israelis and Palestinians have become. The existence of the other can no longer be gainsaid, as Shehadeh notes (p 191). This fact of

interpenetration is perhaps waiting to be turned by the book's readers into the value of communication and mutuality.

Not a treatise then, but, like its unmentioned precursor, Rousseau's *Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, a kind of *künstlerroman* that chronicles the successive variations of its author's mindset. Shehadeh frequently rambles in both senses of the word, walking freely and pondering digressively. But a discernible narrative emerges to structure his reflections. Shehadeh moves from anguished nostalgia to a very tentative contemplation of a sort of mutuality or reciprocity as a model for his relationship with the land as well as his relationship with the land's new occupants. As in Rousseau's *Reveries*, the theme of solitude is prominent, though here the narrator's isolation is eventually counteracted by the prospect of human companionship and community with the natural world. *Palestinian Walks* charts the irrevocable changes inflicted on the landscape of the West Bank in parallel with the self-examinations and even personal crises in the life and mind of a peripatetic storyteller. Writing is presented here as a remedy for anger and hopelessness (p 171) and even as a kind of torchlight that allows the author and especially his readers to see through the gloom and envision solutions to the problems described. 'But', Shehadeh adds, 'it was only honest and daring writing that would be able to penetrate the depths that enveloped and paralysed me now' (p 155). The alterations of the land are bemoaned but also withstood and comprehended before the new reality of settlement is faced. The latter poses difficult but unavoidable questions about recognition, questions that Shehadeh does not ask the young settler and which the latter may or may not have contemplated but which Shehadeh mulls over and which he poses to his readers.

IV

My purpose has been to contest Bate's as well as Bruce Foltz's Heideggerian contention that the idea of dwelling 'constitutes the possibility for a genuine environmental ethic'.⁸¹ The defence of territories and 'bioregions' is politically dubious. For a start, the celebration of place uncomfortably resembles (and often leads to) a jingoistic defence of one's territory against the criticisms and incursions of ostensible 'outsiders'. Moreover, the environmental crisis is inseparable from the global systems of capitalism and colonialism and cannot be tackled within a national framework. If it is not to exhaust itself in pressing for piecemeal reforms and local improvements then the environmental movement requires transnational perspectives and alliances. 'Ecocriticism, however', as Lawrence Buell has pointed out, 'has tended to favor literary texts oriented toward comparatively local or regional levels of place-attachment.'⁸² My claim is that texts like Shehadeh's, which concern themselves with the environment in the context of an ongoing history of colonial domination, make available and compelling an environmental ethic that rejects the idea of dwelling and instead embraces a more far-reaching, even cosmopolitan sensibility. They are incitements to the kind of 'provocative transnational thinking' for which Rob Nixon has called.⁸³ Our most valuable precursor is therefore the Marxist thinker forced to flee from Nazism (for

whom 'dwelling, in the proper sense, is now impossible' and for whom 'it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home'⁸⁴), not the contemporary who persisted in Nazism's midst and aftermath to hold forth about rootedness and dwelling. 'Does not the flourishing of any genuine work', asks Heidegger, 'depend upon its roots in a native soil?'⁸⁵ The answer, unequivocally, is no.

Our attention as ecocritics needs to be focused, therefore, less on the ways in which works of literature encourage an attachment to particular places in the manner that, say, Wordsworth's verse encourages an attachment to the lakes and fells, than on the ways in which many works explore locality in the contexts of an ongoing history of colonialism and neo-colonialism which are destroying the conditions of human life on earth. Our challenge is to reconcile our attachments to particular places with an awareness of our no less pressing moral and political responsibility for other places and ultimately to the planet itself, which after all is the level at which effective environmental action must take place. I am referring here not to glib celebrations of a new borderless globe (for economic globalization usually entails the intensification of divisions) but to extemporaneous, experiential and unofficial forms of solidarity between peoples and cultures that might, conceivably, portend a lasting alternative to the divisions and inequalities that currently structure the planet. Shehadeh places before us a mindset that is all at once acutely reflective, peripatetic, and suspicious of restrictive loyalties, but that is also concerned very closely with a concrete struggle against colonial power. To this end he is, finally, possessive of what Edward Said, glossing and extending Isaac Deutscher's concept of the 'non-Jewish Jew',⁸⁶ called the 'wandering, unresolved, cosmopolitan consciousness of someone who is both inside and outside his or her community'.⁸⁷ A convenient slogan in this context would be Naomi Klein's call to 'reclaim the commons':⁸⁸ in other words, to resist and reverse the privatization, commodification and segregation of communal spaces (town squares, streets, schools, universities, essential services, the environment) by colonial and corporate power so that they might function instead as mediums of communication, dialogue and democratic participation: that is, as instances of what geographers call 'spatial justice'.⁸⁹

Palestinian Walks reveals itself to be more literary chronicle than political tract above all in its refusal to reach a partisan or trouble-free conclusion. It lends support to Roland Barthes's contention that literature is the question minus the answer.⁹⁰ The book's final walks chronicle Shehadeh's disconsolate, truncated hikes through valleys polluted by sewage and littered with debris from the construction of hilltop settlements. He gazes forlornly at the 'ecological disaster'⁹¹ of the Dead Sea, declining by about a metre every year because of the diversion of the River Jordan and the extraction of water by Israeli and Jordanian factories. In many cases Shehadeh is now trespassing on land that has been fenced off by its new owners, that is policed by young religious zealots, and that, in one case, has been reserved for target practice by the new Palestinian security forces. Moreover, his rapprochement with the Israeli settler is at best tentative and impermanent. It takes place against the background of their unresolved political quarrel and amidst the sound of distant, unidentified gunfire. It is also the penultimate not the final episode of

the book, which ends not with this hopeful but even so rather awkward and unpromising image of reconciliation but with an episode in which Shehadeh and a foreign companion seek to pick their way through a valley bordered with settlement roads and high-rise apartments, while trying to evade the threatening attentions of two young Palestinian militants who are policing the area. They too, it seems, are deaf to Shehadeh's insistence on the contemplation of beauty in the midst of suffering and political failure. The sun is setting in the final paragraph but the limestone rocks are bathed with muted light and nightfall has not yet arrived. There is symbolic hope, certainly, in this last-ditch alleviation of the gloom but an angry and exasperated author does not share it. He will not return any time soon to this valley from which even his compatriots would deny him access, and he is sceptical about whether 'this damned conflict'⁹² will end in his lifetime.

The book's denouement is neither naive nor glib. The reader is deprived of obvious grounds for optimism or consolation and thus denied any pretext for complacency. Visions of fraternity, of the revolutionary reproduction of social and environmental space, or even of pleasure taken in the spectacle of natural beauty must not be allowed to substitute themselves for the most hard-headed scrutiny of the historical record: of what has been done and continues to be done to the Palestinians by the Israeli state. The inconclusive image of natural beauty glowing briefly before it is enveloped by the twilight or, if one insists on a symbolic reading, by the shadow of violence is matched in Shehadeh's book by the comparable uncertainty of the author's voice. That voice balances Shehadeh's frequent nostalgia and pessimism against what it might not be too optimistic to describe as the tentative mutuality of the wary interlocutors depicted in the second last scene. Though by the end of the book the physical movement takes place on a shrunken canvas circumscribed by encroaching Israeli settlements, the intellectual movement by contrast is far more extensive and even propitious. The 'imagined *Sarha*' referred to in the penultimate chapter's title takes place not between the pages of the book, which of course has no power to effect reconciliation, or yet between the two communities, which are still vying murderously with each other. It names a potential transcendence of barriers between peoples as a precondition of protecting the vanishing land they inhabit.

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Notes

¹ Nadine Gordimer, *Get a Life*, London: Bloomsbury, 2005, p 20.

² Ilan Pappé, *A History of Modern Palestine: One Land, Two Peoples*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, p 293.

- ³ I am referring in particular to Graham Huggan and Helen Tiffin, 'Green Postcolonialism', *Interventions*, 9(1), 2007, pp 1–11; Graham Huggan, 'Postcolonial Ecocriticism and the Limits of Green Romanticism', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 45, 2009, pp 3–14; Pablo Mukherjee, 'Surfing the Second Waves: Amitav Ghosh's Tide Country', *New Formations*, 59, 2006, pp 144–157; Rob Nixon, 'Environmentalism and Postcolonialism', in Ania Loomba, Suvir Kaul, Matti Bunzl, Antoinette Burton and Jed Esty (eds), *Postcolonial Studies and Beyond*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006, pp 233–251; Richard Watts, 'Towards an Ecocritical Postcolonialism: Val Plumwood's *Environmental Culture* in Dialogue with Patrick Chamoiseau', *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, 44, 2008, pp 251–261; and Robert Young, "'Dangerous and Wrong": Shell, Intervention and the Politics of Transnational Companies', *Interventions*, 1(3), 1999, pp 439–464, and *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003.
- ⁴ Jonathan Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, London: Picador, 2000, p ix.
- ⁵ One of my purposes here is to contest judgements like that of Espen Hammer, for whom 'the Marxist tradition has notoriously failed to take ecological issues into account'. Espen Hammer, *Adorno and the Political*, London: Routledge, 2006, p 172. In his introduction to *The Green Studies Reader* Laurence Coupe states that for both the right and the left 'the means of production must always be developed, no matter what the cost'. 'General Introduction', in Laurence Coupe (ed), *The Green Studies Reader: From Romanticism to Ecocriticism*, London: Routledge, pp 1–8, p 4. Suzie O'Brien complains that in 'both its Marxist and capitalist incarnations' 'history works to assimilate diverse cultures and spiritual traditions into a homogeneous code at the same time as it naturalizes uneven economic development according to a linear narrative of civilization'. 'Survival Strategies for Global Times: The Desert Walk for Biodiversity, Health and Heritage', *Interventions*, 9(1), 2007, pp 83–98, p 88.
- ⁶ See Gregory Orlafea's enthusiastic review: 'Review of *Palestinian Walks*', *Journal of Palestine Studies*, 38, 2008, p 85.
- ⁷ Derek Gregory, *The Colonial Present: Afghanistan, Palestine, and Iraq*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2004. See also Neil Lazarus, 'Postcolonial Studies After the Invasion of Iraq', *New Formations*, 59, 2006, pp 10–22; Benita Parry, *Postcolonial Studies: A Materialist Critique*, London: Routledge, 2004; and E San Juan Jr, 'Globalized Terror and the Postcolonial Sublime: Questions for Subaltern Militants', in Revathi Krishnaswamy and John C Hawley (eds), *The Postcolonial and the Global*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008, pp 157–165.
- ⁸ Analyses of Israel's status as a colonial power include Bashir Abu-Manneh, 'Israel in US Empire', *New Formations*, 59, 2006, pp 34–51; Noam Chomsky, *The Fateful Triangle: The United States, Israel, and the Palestinians*, London: Pluto, 1999, and 'Introduction', in Roane Carey (ed), *The New Intifada: Resisting Israel's Apartheid*, London: Verso, 2001; Haim Hanegbi, Moshe Machover and Akiva Orr, 'The Class Nature of Israeli Society', *New Left Review*, 65, 1971, 3–26; Baruch Kimmerling, *Politicide: The Real Legacy of Ariel Sharon*, London: Verso, 2003, and *Zionism and Territory: The Socio-Territorial Dimensions of Zionist Politics*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1983; Maxime Rodinson, *Israel: A Colonial-Settler State?* New York: Pathfinder, 1983; and Edward W Said, *The Question of Palestine* (1979), New York: Vintage, 1992.
- ⁹ Although Adorno's critique of Heidegger's philosophy is especially pertinent given the latter's exorbitant influence in contemporary ecocriticism, any number of Marxist thinkers could have been used to demonstrate the centrality of ecological concerns in the Marxist tradition, including Marx and Engels themselves (see John Bellamy Foster, *Marx's Ecology: Materialism and Nature*, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000; Ted Benton, 'Engels and the Politics of Nature', in Christopher J Arthur (ed), *Engels Today: A Centenary Appreciation*, London: Macmillan, 1996, pp 67–93; and Alfred Schmidt, *The Concept of Nature in Marx*, London: New Left Books, 1971); William Morris; eco-socialists such as David Pepper (*Eco-Socialism: From Deep Ecology to Social Justice*, London: Routledge, 1993) and Rudolf Bahro (*The Alternative in Eastern Europe*, David Fernbach (trans), London: New Left Books, 1978, and *Socialism and Survival (Articles, Essays and Talks 1979–1982)*, London: Heretic Books, 1982); the philosophy and aesthetics of the Frankfurt School (Herbert Marcuse, 'Nature and Revolution', in *Counterrevolution and Revolt*, London: Allen Lane, 1972, pp 59–78; Heinz Paetzold, 'Adorno's Notion of Natural Beauty: A Reconsideration', in Tom Huhn and Lambert Zuidervaart (eds), *The Semblance of Subjectivity: Essays in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1999; and Steven Vogel, *Against Nature: The Concept of Nature in Critical Theory*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1996); the geographer David Harvey (*Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); the socialist historian E P Thompson (*Persons and Polemics*, London: Merlin, 1994, and *William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary*, Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 1994); Joan Martinez Alier on 'the environmentalism of the poor' (Joan Martinez-Alier, "'Environmental Justice" (Local and Global)', in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds), *Cultures of Globalization*, Durham,

- NC: Duke University Press, 1998, pp 312–326); and the Welsh socialist and cultural theorist Raymond Williams (*The Country and the City*, London: Hogarth Press, 1985, and *Towards 2000*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1985). This tradition is so sustained, rich and diverse that unfamiliarity with it seems either wilful or perverse.
- ¹⁰ There are undoubtedly, as Fred Dallmayr and lately Samir Gandesha have observed, many similarities between Adorno's philosophy and that of Heidegger: most notably their assiduous critiques of idealist philosophy and of instrumental definitions of rationality. See Fred Dallmayr, 'Adorno and Heidegger', *Diacritics*, 19(3–4), 1989, pp 82–100; and Samir Gandesha, 'Leaving Home: On Adorno and Heidegger', in Thomas Huhn (ed), *The Cambridge Companion to Adorno*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006, pp 101–128. 'But', as Adorno remarked in a different context, 'the decisive differences between philosophers have always consisted in nuances; what is most bitterly irreconcilable is that which is similar but which thrives on different centres.' Theodor W Adorno, 'A Portrait of Walter Benjamin', in *Prisms*, Samuel and Shierry Weber (trans), London: Neville Spearman, 1967, pp 229–241, p 231. In this case the different centres are Adorno's hostility to nationalism and capitalism and Heidegger's less nuanced and in my view mistaken aversion to technology, which leads him into a kind of reactionary nostalgia for settlement and belonging.
 - ¹¹ Martin Heidegger, 'The Origin of the Work of Art', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (trans), New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp 15–87, p 23.
 - ¹² Theodor W Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity* (1964), Knut Tarnowski and Frederic Will (trans), London: Routledge, 2003, p 95.
 - ¹³ Theodor W Adorno, *Negative Dialectics* (1966), E B Ashton (trans), London: Routledge, 1996, p 65.
 - ¹⁴ Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p 18.
 - ¹⁵ Martin Heidegger, *The End of Philosophy*, Joan Stambaugh (trans), New York: Harper & Row, 1973, p 109.
 - ¹⁶ The belief that it is technology *per se* and not particular uses of it that is leading humankind towards perdition and therefore that virtually all feats of human making bar poetic creation and peasant crafts are to be deprecated leads Heidegger to venture the most crass misjudgements such as that agriculture's 'motorised food industry' is 'in essence the same as the manufacturing of corpses in gas chambers and extermination camps, the same as the starving of nations, the same as the manufacture of hydrogen bombs'. Cited in Julian Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997, p 172.
 - ¹⁷ Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, London: Verso, 1989, p 10.
 - ¹⁸ David Harvey, 'What's Green and Makes the Environment Go Round?' in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds), *Cultures of Globalization*, Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1998, pp 327–345.
 - ¹⁹ Ernst Bloch, *The Principle of Hope, Vol 2*, Neville Plaice, Stephen Plaice and Paul Knight (trans), Oxford: Blackwell, 1986, p 695.
 - ²⁰ One of Heidegger's most striking meditations on the idea of 'dwelling' is his essay 'Building, Dwelling, Thinking', in *Poetry, Language, Thought*, Albert Hofstadter (trans), New York: Harper & Row, 1971, pp 143–162.
 - ²¹ Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, John M Anderson and E Hans Freud, New York: Harper & Row, 1969, p 53.
 - ²² Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p 13.
 - ²³ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p 121.
 - ²⁴ Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p 15.
 - ²⁵ Hugo Ott's biography is the best account of the connections between Heidegger's philosophy and his political career: *Martin Heidegger: A Political Life*, New York: Fontana, 1994.
 - ²⁶ Richard Wolin, "'Over the Line": Reflections on Heidegger and National Socialism', in Richard Wolin (ed), *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993, pp 1–22, p 16.
 - ²⁷ Theodor W Adorno, cited in Young, *Heidegger, Philosophy, Nazism*, p 54.
 - ²⁸ Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p 20.
 - ²⁹ Martin Heidegger, 'The Self-Assertion of the German University', Lisa Harries (trans), in Günther Neske and Emil Kettering (eds), *Martin Heidegger and National Socialism*, New York: Paragon House, 1990, pp 3–14, p 10.
 - ³⁰ Theodor W Adorno, *Mahler: A Musical Physiognomy* (1971), Edmund Jephcott (trans), Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1992, p 44.
 - ³¹ Theodor W Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory* (1970), Gretel Adorno and Rolf Tiedemann (eds), Robert Hullot-Kentor (trans), London: Athlone, 1999, p 65.
 - ³² Theodor W Adorno, 'Heine the Wound', in *Notes to Literature, Vol 1*, Shierry Weber (trans), New York: Columbia University Press, 1991, pp 80–85, p 85.

- ³³ Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, pp 35–36. Until otherwise indicated, all references are to this work, and are given as page numbers in parentheses in the text.
- ³⁴ Jonathan Bate, *Romantic Ecology: Wordsworth and the Environmental Tradition*, London: Routledge, 1991, p 113.
- ³⁵ Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, p 262.
- ³⁶ Adorno, *The Jargon of Authenticity*, p 106.
- ³⁷ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p 77.
- ³⁸ Bate, *Romantic Ecology*, pp 8–9.
- ³⁹ Bate, *The Song of the Earth*, p 225.
- ⁴⁰ Theodor W Adorno, 'Subject and Object' (1969), in Andrew Arato and Eike Gebhardt (eds), *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, Oxford: Blackwell, 1978, pp 497–511, p 500.
- ⁴¹ Raja Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks: Notes on a Vanishing Landscape*, London: Profile, 2008, p xii.
- ⁴² Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p xiii.
- ⁴³ 'Raja Shehadeh Honoured by Palestinian National Authority', <http://www.theorwellprize.co.uk/the-award/winners-books/shehadehhonour.aspx> (last accessed 5 March 2009).
- ⁴⁴ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 193.
- ⁴⁵ See Raja Shehadeh, *From Occupation to Interim Accords: Israel and the Palestinian Territories*, The Hague: Kluwer Law International, 1997.
- ⁴⁶ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 114.
- ⁴⁷ Shehadeh's diaries from the period of the first Gulf War were entitled *The Sealed Room: Selections from the Diary of a Palestinian Living Under Israeli Occupation, September 1990–August 1991*, London: Quartet, 1992. He was convinced that the way the Palestinians and the Israelis insulated their homes against the threat of an attack by Saddam's chemical weapons was symbolic of the way '[w]e were sealing our hearts and minds and not reaching out to the other'. Raja Shehadeh, *When the Birds Stopped Singing: Life in Ramallah Under Siege*, South Royalton, VT: Steerforth Press, p 6. Space here is divided and segregated. The consequences are mutual distrust, incomprehension and conflict. In his diaries of the invasion of Ramallah in 2002 we find Shehadeh surrounded by Israeli tanks, pacing around his house and peering regretfully at the unreachable hills covered in wild flowers. 'Over the past nineteen months since the Intifada began my space has been constantly narrowing. First it became too dangerous to go for walks in the hills around Ramallah, then I stopped being able to drive to Israel, then driving between the Palestinian towns and villages was prohibited. Now I cannot even step outside the door of my house. The perimeters of my house are all that is left for me of Palestine that I can call my home, and even this is not secure.' Shehadeh, *When the Birds*, p 33.
- ⁴⁸ See David Harvey, *The Limits to Capital*, London: Verso, 1999, and *Spaces of Capital: Towards a Critical Geography*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2001.
- ⁴⁹ Edward W Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*, London: Verso, 1989, p 52.
- ⁵⁰ Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961), Constance Farrington (trans), Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990, p 29.
- ⁵¹ Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (1974), Donald Nicholson-Smith (trans), Oxford: Blackwell, 1991, p 26.
- ⁵² David Harvey, *Spaces of Hope*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2000.
- ⁵³ Lefebvre, *The Production of Space*, p 59.
- ⁵⁴ Mike Davis, *Magical Urbanism: Latinos Reinvent the US City*, London: Verso, 2000. See also David Harvey, *Paris, Capital of Modernity*, London: Routledge, 2005, and 'The Right to the City', *New Left Review*, 53, 2008, pp 23–40.
- ⁵⁵ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 105.
- ⁵⁶ On the relationship between Israeli architecture and the state's territorial expansionism see also Eyal Weizman and Rafi Segal, *A Civilian Occupation: The Politics of Israeli Architecture*, London: Verso, 2003.
- ⁵⁷ Eyal Weizman, *Hollow Land: Israel's Architecture of Occupation*, London: Verso, 2007, p 155.
- ⁵⁸ Weizman, *Hollow Land*, p 182.
- ⁵⁹ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 2.
- ⁶⁰ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 4.
- ⁶¹ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 2.
- ⁶² Indeed his work is acutely though implicitly conscious that the craving for uncircumscribed space is qualified in the Palestinian case by the fact that marginalized peoples like the Palestinians are not usually exemplars of a cosmopolitan transcendence of the nation state because they do not yet have a nation state to transcend.

- ⁶³ 'The stability of geography and the continuity of land—these have completely disappeared from my life and the life of all Palestinians. If we are not stopped at borders, or herded into new camps, or denied reentry and residence, or barred from travel from one place to another, more of our land is taken, our lives are interfered with arbitrarily, our voices are prevented from reaching each other, our identity is confined to frightened little islands in an inhospitable environment of superior military force sanitized by the clinical jargon of pure administration [...] Continuity for *them*, the dominant population; discontinuity for *us*, the dispossessed and dispersed.' Edward W Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives*, London: Vintage, 1993, pp 19–20.
- ⁶⁴ See Edward W Said, 'The Only Alternative', in *From Oslo to Iraq and the Roadmap*, London: Bloomsbury, 2004, pp 48–51, and 'Truth and Reconciliation', in *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After*, London: Granta, 2000, pp 312–321. Another advocate of the one-state solution is Tony Judt, 'Israel: The Alternative', *New York Review of Books*, 23 October 2003, <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/16671> (last accessed 27 February 2009).
- ⁶⁵ Shehadeh is by no means the first Palestinian intellectual to characterize the Palestinians' aspirations in inclusive and cosmopolitan terms. '[A]lone among the inhabitants of Palestine, the Palestinian people has spoken of its national destiny collectively in terms accommodating the fundamental rights of others. The Palestinian people—which has had its society destroyed by a movement claiming to achieve national liberation, paradoxically, in the form of settler colonialism—wishes no negative form of self-determination or liberation for itself. Its bitter national experience has bred in it a respect for civil and human rights abrogated by others. The Palestinian vision therefore is predicated upon democracy and justice, upon dignity and community.' Edward W Said, Ibrahim Abu-Lughod, Janet L Abu-Lughod, Muhammad Hallaj and Elia Zureik, 'A Profile of the Palestinian People', in Edward W Said and Christopher Hitchens (eds), *Blaming the Victims: Spurious Scholarship and the Palestinian Question*, London: Verso, 2001, pp 235–296, p 292.
- ⁶⁶ An interesting introduction to deep ecology is George Sessions's *Deep Ecology for the 21st Century*, Boston: Shambhala, 1995.
- ⁶⁷ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p 68.
- ⁶⁸ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p 68. Twenty years earlier the refugee from the nature-worshipping Third Reich used an identical figure to stress his aversion to the American landscape, which, with its shortage of arable land and its uncultivated woods, seemed to him to be too distant from a human presence. The roads, like the people, do not care for the landscape, which in turn has no edifying effect on those who pass through it. 'These are always inserted directly in the landscape, and the more impressively smooth and broad they are, the more unrelated and violent their gleaming track appears against its wild, overgrown surroundings. They are expressionless. Just as they know no marks of foot or wheel, no soft paths along their edges as a transition to the vegetation, no trails leading off into the valley, so they are without the mild, soothing, un-angular quality of things that have felt the touch of hands or their immediate implements. It is as if no-one had ever passed their hand over the landscape's hair. It is uncomfortable and comfortless.' Theodor W Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from Damaged Life* (1951), E F N Jephcott (trans), London: Verso, 1978, p 48.
- ⁶⁹ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 45.
- ⁷⁰ Weizman, *Hollow Land*, pp 87–108.
- ⁷¹ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 11.
- ⁷² Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 10.
- ⁷³ See Norman Finkelstein's refutation of the racist canard that Palestine was a 'land without a people for a people without a land': *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*, London: Verso, 1995, pp 21–50.
- ⁷⁴ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 146.
- ⁷⁵ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 143.
- ⁷⁶ William Cronon, 'The Trouble with Wilderness; or, Getting Back to the Wrong Nature', in William Cronon (ed), *Uncommon Ground: Rethinking the Human Place in Nature*, New York: W W Norton, 1995, pp 69–90, pp 80–81.
- ⁷⁷ John Gray, *Straw Dogs: Thoughts on Human and Other Animals*, London: Granta, 2002.
- ⁷⁸ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 202.
- ⁷⁹ Raja Shehadeh, *The Third Way: A Journal of Life in the West Bank*, London: Quartet, 1982, pp 84–89.
- ⁸⁰ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, pp xix–xx. Until otherwise indicated, all references are to this work, and are given as page numbers in parentheses in the text.
- ⁸¹ Bruce V Foltz, *Inhabiting the Earth: Heidegger, Environmental Ethics, and the Metaphysics of Nature*, Atlantic Highlands, NJ: Humanities Press, 1995, p 170.

- ⁸² Lawrence Buell, *The Future of Environmental Criticism: Environmental Crisis and Literary Imagination*, Oxford: Blackwell, 2005, p 68.
- ⁸³ Nixon, 'Environmentalism and Postcolonialism', p 242.
- ⁸⁴ Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, pp 38–39.
- ⁸⁵ Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, p 47.
- ⁸⁶ Isaac Deutscher, *The Non-Jewish Jew*, Tamara Deutscher (ed), London: Oxford University Press, 1968.
- ⁸⁷ Edward W Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, London: Verso, 2003, p 53.
- ⁸⁸ Naomi Klein, 'Reclaiming the Commons', in Tom Mertes (ed), *A Movement of Movements: Is Another World Really Possible?* London: Verso, 2004, pp 219–229.
- ⁸⁹ See David Harvey, *Social Justice and the City*, London: Edward Arnold, 1973; and Don Mitchell, *The Right to the City: Social Justice and the Fight for Public Space*, New York: Guilford Press, 1973.
- ⁹⁰ Roland Barthes, 'The Last Word on Robbe-Grillet?' in *Critical Essays*, Richard Howard (trans), Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1972, pp 197–204, p 202.
- ⁹¹ Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 124.
- ⁹² Shehadeh, *Palestinian Walks*, p 215.