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Spatial Debilities:  
Slow Life and Carceral  
Capitalism in Palestine

Palestinian artist Khaled Jarrar's performance piece *Blood for Sale* took place on New York City's Wall Street in October 2018, during a week when the US stock exchange/market took one of its worst tumbles since the financial crisis of 2008. In this piece, the prices of fifty vials of Jarrar's blood were tied to the share prices of the fifteen top-ranked US defense contractors. In the performance, Jarrar held a large trunk supported by a shoulder sling, with the vials displayed behind a glass window in the trunk, like shop wares.<sup>1</sup> For the duration of one week, during the traditional Wall Street market hours, Monday through Friday from 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Jarrar announced "Blood for Sale!" to curious and startled passers-by.

Not far from Zuccotti Park's Occupy Wall Street, on native land and the burial grounds of black slaves, Jarrar's enactment of the quantification of disaster capitalism literalizes the question of the worth of life, of life itself as a commodity, through the worth of human blood. This brilliant conceptualization of the value of Palestinian life asks passers-by to evaluate whether a vial of Palestinian blood is worth the price of one share of stock in Smith and Wesson, for example, first valued at \$19.48 when he started his performance

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piece. Jarrar is focused on the abstraction of human life and the logics of market commodification in deeply material and immediate ways. To audience members who would rather donate money because they are reluctant to hand-carry a ten-millimeter vial of his blood, he said: “As Americans, you pay taxes for the war machine—your government is a war machine. . . . Believe me, there is some blood on your hands” (quoted in Weber 2018). This performance also resonates with blood quantum rules, initially a system that the federal government imposed on Native American tribes in an effort to limit their citizenship. While Jarrar wished to draw attention to the myriad forms of global violence carried out by the military-industrial complex, often focusing on the Middle East, especially Yemen, he related that there was pause when he brought up Israel: “You get some sympathy. But when it comes to Israel, a few of them changed their face and just left” (quoted in Weber 2018). Jarrar’s performance brings to the fore the fact that we can entertain a liberal critique of the global violence of the military-industrial complex only by erasing the value of Palestinian blood, by forgetting how much global networks of militarization depend on the literal shedding of Palestinian blood. In other words, his performance makes the price of global violence visible *as* Palestinian people, bodies, and blood.

Jarrar’s clever project has stayed with me because of the strong resonance with my own work on maiming in Palestine and for the way it captures the ambivalence surrounding the value of Palestinian life. As I argue in *The Right to Maim* (Puar 2017), the production of variegated and uneven metrics of bodily capacity and debility in Palestine is neither incidental nor the unfortunate effect of collateral damage but is intrinsic to the functioning of settler-colonial occupation. The latter part of this book looks at the deliberate production of injury—that is, the maiming of existence—in Palestine by Israeli forces. While this section of the book focuses predominantly on the 2014 war on Gaza, it also amalgamates significant yet preliminary data from the West Bank during the first and second intifadas.<sup>2</sup> There is so much data collected over decades for the purposes of political advocacy and humanitarian funding that is yet to be gathered and synthesized. That is to say, we have only begun to comprehend the deep history—the “historical accumulation” (Seikaly 2016)—of maiming in Palestine; these evolving archives are scattered, discontinuous, and sprawling.

The subterranean practice of maiming, often hidden by the sensational focus on civilian deaths, was on full display during the Great March of Return protests in Gaza, which began on March 30, 2018, during which the US mainstream media prominently focused, for the first time (as far as I can

assess), on the undeniable spectacle of shooting to maim. Coverage from the *Washington Post* and the *Los Angeles Times*, as well as numerous progressive media such as Democracy Now and reports from Doctors without Borders, Human Rights Watch, and other human rights organizations, queried the thousands of below-the-knee injuries sustained from snipers targeting protestors, noting high rates of amputation due not only to the severity of injuries but also to the lack of minimal health care supplies and facilities and the denial of patient transport to medical facilities in the West Bank. The targeting of journalists and medics was also a focus of this reportage. Reaching its peak on May 15, 2018, with newspapers juxtaposing pictures of Ivanka Trump's visit to Jerusalem with scenes from Gaza of protestors being shot, this shift in media attention is worthy of comment in no small part because during the 2014 siege of Gaza the number of injuries was always reported as an addendum to civilian deaths, commonly referred to as "collateral damage."

The media focus on injured protestors may also be because, as Rashid Khalidi (2018) explains, in the history of Israeli rule of Palestine, the unabashed unleashing of military force against a civilian population, where all protestors are considered terrorists and therefore targets for injury and death, was unprecedented (for discussion, see Erakat 2019: 200–205). Nevertheless, we can trace then defense minister Yitzak Rabin's notorious "broken bones" or "break their bones" policy from the first intifada to its technologically updated corollary in precision sniper targeting. The libidinal economy of picking off bodies one by one, a massacre by other means, generates an affective renewal of settler subjectivity. During the first year alone, as the Great March continued every Friday, tens of thousands of protestors were injured, more than seven thousand of them in the lower limbs. Many of those injured await amputations and other surgeries; many need multiple surgeries extending over at least two years; without adequate antibiotics during these delays, super viruses proliferate (Abu-Sitta and Puar 2019). In other words, there is the moment of injury, but there is also the life trajectory of a maiming, the progression of which, as Palestinian poet and human rights activist Jehan Bsesio (Abu-Sitta 2019) pointedly notes, "outlasts media cycles."

Collectively, these recent reports, as well as earlier ones, contribute to an overall sense of how the Israeli military modulated their tactics. Disabling protestors as a means of hindering resistance while still claiming a humanitarian stance of sparing and preserving life is an enactment of what Lisa Bhungalia (2019) calls a "performance of moral violence" by the Israel Defense Forces, which claims to be the "most moral army in the world." This toggling between the sovereign "right to kill" and the biopolitical project of "let live"

and “let die” is what I term “the right to maim” (Puar 2017). The right to maim, justified as moral because it doesn’t kill, is a mode of producing value from disposable bodies while all but ensuring a slow death. Maiming is also a tactical refusal of producing a victim-subject, an abnegation of access to the version of the “human” manifested by human rights discourses. The harrowing question of what is deliberate and what is accidental haunts this connection between injury and death. If in 2014, for example, the spectacle of more than two thousand civilian deaths reigned supreme while over ten thousand injuries were seemingly unremarkable, during the Great March we see a clear shift from maiming as incidental to maiming as intentional—sniper targeting allows for no pretense of the accidental. As a further manifestation of Rob Nixon’s (2013) theorization of slow violence, the right to maim foregrounds the economic and ideological productivity of maintaining a population in a state of perpetual injuring, what I have theorized as an underexamined “will not let die/will not make die” vector of biopolitics (Puar 2017). What this vector exposes is the liberal conceit at the heart of biopolitical thought, that “letting live” is always a gift, in contradistinction to the sovereign right to kill or “make die,” underscoring that death is not necessarily the ultimate assault on life.

Jarrar’s searing piece highlights, indeed mocks, the logics of the commodification of life that are driven not only by death—we know, of course, that the value of human life is commodified and unevenly valorized—but increasingly by the human will and capacity *not to die* and by the biopolitical state’s capacity to weaponize that determination to survive. In *Gore Capitalism*, Sayek Valencia (2018: 21) argues that “death has become the most profitable business in existence,” noting that “violence itself” (162) and the “destruction of the body becomes in itself the product or commodity” (20) within hyperconsumerist neoliberal capitalism. I would add to this argument that not only death but also the hinge between death and injury are part of a key calculus through which violence itself is a commodity and that these tortured and mutilated bodies are recycled for profit instead of being disposed of. It is therefore necessary to understand how biopolitical states weaponize the determination and capacity not to die in the face of the demand to die, another “most profitable business” (21). In the context of the extreme exploitation and ongoing biopolitical disaggregation of life chances, or the narrowing of the “make life” vector, we must ask not only what (your) life is worth and what (your) death is worth but also what (your) not-death is worth. This reformulation exposes at its core the liberal conceit of the supposed inherent value of life over death and the humanitarian and biopolitical alibis, fantasies, and excesses that are enacted in the name of such a conceit.

This query of what your not-death is worth can, in some sense, be tentatively mapped through fleshing out the relations between disaster capitalism and what prison abolitionist and scholar Jackie Wang (2018) calls “carceral capitalism.” The first formulation foregrounds the infrastructural and corporeal debilitation and the profit-making circuits that value and profit from an otherwise disposable population: here, the disaster is meant to be survived. The case of literal maiming in Gaza becomes part of a humanitarian economy of disaster capitalism that relies on spectacular forms of violence as the performative reiteration of the settler-colonial state and the value of Israeli lives as protected property. This is not to diminish protestors’ incredible corporeal fortitude in Gaza during the Great March of Return, only to ask how their risk is turned into value. Value realization is two pronged, as Nikhil Pal Singh (2014: 1097) explains, and neither mode depends on “whether they [in this case, the biopolitical state] derive pecuniary benefits from such a relation.” Following Singh on the public violence of policing, we could also say that disaster capitalism is driven by the “exemplary spectacles” that “tutor publics” (1097), not only in which bodies are expendable but also in which bodies are worth protecting. One of the most effective elements of disaster capitalism in the case of Gaza is that it shifts global attention from the vibrancy and epic magnitude of a liberation movement to the medical needs of an afflicted population (Abu Salim 2016). This spectacle of humanitarian crisis normalizes—indeed, tutors publics in the witnessing of—not killing, or not only killing but also maiming, effectively validating maiming as the (new? current? formerly submerged?) apex of sovereign power. It also communicates that Gazan bodies are valuable only as injured bodies.

If disaster capitalism relies on exemplary spectacles, carceral capitalism creates value through “quotidian surveillance” (Singh 2014: 1097) that unevenly valorizes and devalorizes space. Wang (2018) posits economies of debt and indebtedness as producing forms of spatial enclosure that do not rely on the spectacular but are, rather, achieved through temporal openings and foreclosures. To be clear, this frame does not obscure the many forms of carceral enclosure articulated within disciplinary modes of power: the prison, the checkpoint, the security wall. Historically, enclosure is understood as the privatization of land. But Wang extends the concept of enclosure to encompass time. Wang demonstrates that, insofar as debt economies create populations beholden to life terms and trajectories that severely circumscribe how time is or can be lived, mobility is policed through the use of debt as an apparatus of punishment that solicits time as the form of spatial enclosure. Some examples include administrative fee structures, exorbitant fines for late payments and missed court dates, student loans, and any number of

costs that accumulate and ground people at home or in certain areas for fear of being pulled over and subsequently arrested. What I understand from Wang's work is that the analytic of carceral capitalism does not privilege the spectacle-making capacities of disaster capitalism but focuses instead on what precedes disaster capitalism, what it leaves in its wake, and what it erases in order to accrue value within humanitarian terms. Wang elaborates the interplay between exploitation, which "must keep people alive in order to extract from them," and disposability, which "must confine and kill to maintain the current racial order" (80). We might otherwise mark this as the interplay between biopolitics and necropolitics.

The point here is that disaster capitalism is not forged in relation to the nondisaster but, rather, relies on the strictures of carceral capitalism, securing the unspectacular slow deaths, the disposability of those who will be left rather than recycled. What the disaster-carceral relation means for Palestine is that Gaza is the humanitarian rescue object par excellence while quotidian debilitation is unremarkable. Conditions continue to deteriorate in parts of the West Bank also, particularly in relatively spatially remote and confined refugee camps, some of which are the oldest in the world.<sup>3</sup> "Disaster," then, is a perverse recognition designated to some populations (and events) and withheld from others. I am interested in how disaster capitalism encircles a disposable population not only to extract and exploit from it but also to divert attention from the creation of other populations as disposable. That is to say, the mechanisms of disaster capitalism itself, in this case the "cycles of destruction" and reinvestiture in Gaza, the speed of which have accelerated in the last decade (Feldman 2016: 99; see also Roy 1999), can be used to obscure the conditions for the disposability of other populations, indeed, the very grounds of disposability in the wake of disaster. Gaza becomes the frontline for humanitarian intervention, which itself sustains Gazans as users and consumers rather than as laborers (the unemployment rate among men can be as high as 70 percent). A combined disaster-carceral analysis allows a rearticulation of what a disaster is and how we locate it (de-exceptionalizing Gaza, as one quick example, in relation to Kashmir). What lies outside the disaster that is producing equally if not more debilitating conditions than the disaster proper? It's not just that the construct of disaster binds our attention but that it works in concert with the slow death and abandonment of others. This is not to say that one situation is worse than the other but, rather, to note the overall structures of capitalism that establish, according to variables of crisis and systematization, such distinctions in the first place.

In what follows, I think through the disaster-carceral frame via two forms of value creation for disposable bodies: first, the production of differential disability mobilities; second, and relatedly, slow life as spatial enclosure.

### Differential Mobilities

On December 15, 2017, Ibrahim Abu Thurayeh was shot in the head and killed by the Israeli Defense Forces in Gaza. Protesting US president Donald Trump's December 4, 2017, announcement that the United States would be moving its embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, twenty-nine-year-old Abu Thurayeh was a wheelchair user and a double amputee (Maza 2017). His legs were amputated in 2008 when he was shot by an Israeli helicopter while at a rally at the Gazan border when he replaced an Israeli flag with a Palestinian flag (Maza 2017). Images of Abu Thurayeh, a well-known freedom fighter in Gaza, unarmed on the front lines of protest while upright on two amputated thighs, went viral and generated a media spectacle.

Moral outrage accrues quickly to the injuring of disabled protestors, unwittingly producing them as benign entities unable to resist and agitate. In fact, I suggest it accrues more quickly to that spectacle than to the actual fact of protestors being targeted for injury in the first place. Underpinning these ableist renderings of outrage is the simple fact that able-bodied resisters face the disability to come, face becoming disabled, existing in a field of debilitation where the euphemism for an injury that is unable to heal is the term *permanent disability*. There often seems to be less interest in the production of the very disabled body, for whom moral outrage is reserved, or in the role of this production in maintaining settler-colonial occupation. This asymmetry evokes a simple question: How do we square the contradictions between disability rights platforms and the right to maim?

In summary, this uneven expression of moral outrage ironically obscures how the disabled body comes to be in the first place. The life history of Abu Thurayeh represents this very intersection of the targeting to disable (shooting eyes, arms, knees) and targeting the disabled, the injuring and killing of the disabled by Israel Defense Force soldiers that happens not infrequently.<sup>4</sup> What this intersection suggests is that disability is always a proximate state of becoming. The disability to come, the unceasing production of disability that haunts many sectors of the Palestinian population, derives from the experience of many decades of resisting the occupation that can likely eventuate in debilitation if not in death. Very different from the disability to come from aging and senescence, this always imminent “turning into,”

from the able body to the disabled body, produces a range of proximate, graded capacities and debilities rather than a self/other model of ability and disability.

A corollary facet of this relational proximity to disability—what I call being “in debility’s position” (Puar 2017, xiv)—is reflected in one of the prime carceral logics of the occupation, the production of what Celeste Langan (2001) calls “mobility disability.” Her starting point for theorizing mobility disability is from Rousseau’s ([1762] 1973: 58) *Social Contract*:

Every free action is produced by two causes working together: one is mental, namely the volition that determines the act; the other is physical, namely the power that carries the act out. When I walk towards something, it is necessary that I should will to go there and that my feet should carry me there. If a paralytic wills to run and an active man doesn’t, they will both stay where they are.

Rewording the terms *paralytic* and *active*, Langan (2001: 459) remarks on Rousseau’s conviction of the similar stasis of the “cripple who wants to run and the able-bodied man who doesn’t.” She writes: “To think about mobility disability is to think about norms of speed and ranges of motion; perhaps also of desired ends. . . . To consider those constraints is to notice how the built environment—social practices and material infrastructures—can create mobility disabilities that diminish the difference between the ‘cripple’ and the ambulatory person who may well wish to move.”

Bringing together two different sets of scholarly literatures on mobility in Palestine allows a sketching of the contours of these differences and how they might be diminished. While the centrality of mobility restriction to the occupation has been eloquently elaborated by many researchers, these studies referentially default to a presumed able body that has the potential of mobility and suffers its subsequent hindering primarily through infrastructural, architectural, and administrative apparatuses of surveillance, containment, and restriction. Unwittingly reinforcing mobility disability as an individual condition rather than a generalized social condition of movement modulation as a form of collective punishment, this otherwise illuminating scholarship does not examine the varied modalities through which many have the logic of containing mobility literalized on their bodies in the form of impairment (Kotef 2015). Inversely, emergent research and policy literatures on disability in Palestine have largely focused on homebound populations and promoting access to work, education, and integration (Eide 2006; Jarar 2009; Palestinian Central Bureau of Statistics and Ministry of Social Affairs 2011). Defaulting to an implicit assumption that these forms of access



are available to other Palestinian populations, this work projects homebound persons against an able-bodied Palestinian population through disability human rights empowerment frames, bypassing the complex forms of enclosure and obstacles to mobility that many if not most Palestinian sectors of society have to navigate (Abu Nahleh 2009; Al Qaddi 2003). This fissure maintains the global universalism and relevance of such frames and rationalizes the acquiescence of international actors to Israeli rule. In other words, global disability human rights frames predominate in part by obscuring these connections between those demarcated as disabled and the overall sphere of debility within which the “ambulatory,” to return to Langan’s language, are unable to move.<sup>5</sup>

The diminished difference that Langan highlights is intrinsic to the carceral state as a continuum that grounds bodies through spatial confinement.<sup>6</sup> The production of mobility impairment across populations, across a disabled/nondisabled binary, is a form of collective punishment for all Palestinians.<sup>7</sup> What is the relationship of those who have what is typically referred to as “mobility disabilities” to the gradation of mobility impairment that affects Palestinian mobility generally, regardless of abled or disabled bodily categorization? Reflecting an evolving and convivial notion of disability, by framing differential mobilities as a form of collective punishment we can potentially envision and create new lines of solidarity that link entities through gradations of debilitation rather than sedimenting the self/other binarization that the categorization of disability relies on. It is also the basis on which framings of disability that maintain self-other identity positions are destabilized and the potentiating conduit through which deeper solidarities can be fostered that eclipse “ally” formations perpetuated by disability rights frames of recognition. Seriously thinking through this “diminished difference” is an important entry point into the process of decolonizing disability.

Langan’s notion of mobility disabilities marks how debilitating infrastructures turn able bodies into a range of disabled bodies. This gradation is embedded within the logic of the occupation, hinging not on a division between Israelis, who can move, in relation to Palestinians, who cannot, but rather, on an intricate apparatus of differential yet proximate mobility capacities, such that each body has a slightly different status than the one next to it. This highlights the “careful distribution of differential privileges and punishments” (Li 2016: 193), for example, between those living in 48 (the term for the settler-colonial state of Israel), Gaza, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the diaspora/s. If, as Langan claims, “mobility disability is . . . about norms of speed and ranges of motion,” then the polarization neither

between the mobility of the Israeli and the immobility of the Palestinian nor between the able-bodied Palestinian and the homebound mobility-disabled Palestinian can sustain analytic pressure. If speed and pace measure the extent, the quality, the amount, the severity of disability mobility, then mobility needs to be thought of differentially. As a foregone capacity of able bodies, speed, “range(s) of motion,” and their calibration, that is, the creation of different kinds and types of speeds and motion, are all forms of social control.

What is the materialization of this modulation of speed and motion? And to return to Langan briefly one last time, what are its “desired ends”? If the speed and range of motion of bodies are enabled and inhibited differentially, mobility is the personal property of the body, a possession of the self. This production of mobility through Enlightenment framings of possessive individualism is leveraged to create discord, distrust, and envy, as no one body moves in the same way as the body next to it. As Toufic Haddad (2016: 110) describes, the post-Oslo technology of “closure” was intended to fragment the West Bank, class relations, and individuals. Glimpses of what one body cannot do in relation to what another can are prolifically available. Freezing the movement of Palestinians is not the apex of a splintering occupation. Rather, it is the constellation of potential mobilities that condition the consciousness of mobility disability in Palestine. Whether or not there is explicit intent to create a panoply of mobility disabilities is not my concern here. Rather, I am interested in the cumulative effects of the experience of various forms of (im)mobility.

If differential mobility alters what disability is, especially in relation to global human rights regimes propagating disability as a protected and potentially empowered status (Ben-Moshe et al. 2007; Jaffee 2016), are different lines of solidarity created through the breaking down of the nondisabled/disabled binary, solidarity that foregrounds the collective punishment of immobilization through and beyond the identification of the body that is disabled? How are not only disability but also mobility redefined, and new forms created, in a context of extreme confinement where mobility is unevenly being held hostage? What kinds of work-arounds that stem from subaltern capacities to innovate are enacted to craft livable forms of movement, to subvert constraints on movement, to challenge altogether what movement is (see Rai 2019)?

In the context of Palestine, the external constraints that engender mobility disabilities include varied obstacles to and modulations of movement of all kinds: checkpoints (Tawil-Souri 2011); administrative bureaucratic apparatuses that stall and foreclose travel, mobility for work, development and entre-

preneurial ventures, and the capacity to move and change residences—baroque processes to apply for permits to travel and build, absence of public services such as postal delivery, lack of bill payment infrastructures (Ophir et al. 2009; Tawil-Souri 2011, 2012; Berda 2017); the manipulated production and destruction of landscape and transport infrastructure, such as highways, tunnels, and forms of vertical space—including yet another layer of verticality via bandwidth regulation and withholding and the airscapes populated by drones—that partition circuits of movement (Weizman 2002, 2012); the withholding of temporal modernity through the terms of an indefinite political detente; practices of repetitive incarceration that affect not only Palestinian men but also kin relations; the literal production of mobility disabilities through the targeting of knees, eyes, and other body parts that will likely render a body homebound; and finally, what I turn to now, the withholding of temporal modernity through denial of resolution, suspension in the space of the indefinite, and the production of mobility disabilities via the temporal registers of slow life.

### Slow Life

“Space is a political plastic,” observes Israeli architect and social theorist Eyal Weizman (2017: 187); “the minute you understand space as a political plastic, there is no difference between construction and destruction. It is simply the reorganization of space.” This reorganization of space in Palestine happens with considerable speed on the scale of the quotidian, and this speed is often inverse to the deep longevity of the form it is violating: informal checkpoints appear and disappear, disrupting and rerouting transit between home and work; settlement building is authorized and initiated with rapidity; house demolitions destroy the evidence of generations of family life in a day; olive trees that have been on the land for decades are quickly plundered and maligned—this list could go on. But one cannot escape the reality that life in Palestine is, in contrast to these forms of destruction, slowed down, is a version of slow life.

The idea of slow death focuses on the relation to death but does not adequately theorize the *slow* aspect of slow death. In fact, slow death itself is literalized as the slowing down of life, in this case of Palestinian life. Temporalities of slowness are manifest to Palestinians in the West Bank, where it can easily take hours to travel one or two dozen kilometers. Israel systematically slows down the movement of Palestinians, their commerce, and their products with permanent as well as sporadic “flying” checkpoints (many

within the West Bank itself), roadblocks, the apartheid wall, electronic fencing, and segregated roads and highways. Palestine itself becomes simultaneously bigger—because it takes so long to get anywhere—and smaller, as transit becomes arduous beyond necessary paths in this world of Areas A, B, and C, where it is so difficult to travel between areas without permits and identifications. Movement is suffocated. Distance is stretched and manipulated to create an entire population with mobility impairments. And yet space is shrunken, as people are held in place, rarely able to move far. Unlike accelerationist theorizations of space-time compression and the annihilation of space by time, the increased spatial disparity is not remedied with temporal simultaneity.<sup>8</sup> Rather, this simultaneity is withheld. Time itself is held hostage.

This is the slow aspect of slow death: slow death can entail a really slow life, too, a life that demands constant calibration of different speeds and the relation of speed to space. The occupation works in part by titrating control over temporality: by foreclosing or suspending access to speed, the immediacy of forms of contact, and the space-time compression so coveted in modernity and crucial to the circulation of goods, ideas, and bodies. This asphyxiatory control society shifts from a narrative of increasing speed to forms of algorithmic, parallel, distributed, and networked time. It works through suspensions between connectivity and modes of slow attenuation, in direct contrast to the always-connected ideal, whereby, as Seb Franklin (2015: 84) explains, “immobility, fixity, and disconnection from channels of communication appear aberrant or pathological and thus lead to expulsion from circuits of representation and exclusion.” Palestinians in the West Bank live in the temporal instability of the indefinite, with suspension driving arbitrariness and uncertainty, thereby deprived not only of the future but also of the thick potentiality of the present that leads to open futures. The suspended state of the indefinite, of waiting and waiting (it) out, wreaks multigenerational psychological and physical havoc. The uncertainty of the indefinite is countered only by the certainty of a dictated future. Time thus is the meter of power; it is one form that physical enclosure takes on. The cordoning of time through space contributes to an overall “lack of jurisdiction over the function of one’s own senses” (Schuller 2018: 74) endemic to the operation of colonial rule, as well as a sense of being “stranded in time” (Lagerquist 2008). If biopolitics functions in part through the “racialization of temporality,” this process entails several modes of temporal differentiation: withholding futurity, making impossible anything but a slowed (down) life, and immobilizing the body “within the past of civilization itself” (Schuller 2018: 58), thereby putting under duress ascriptions of the past, the present, and the future.

Palestinian studies scholar Julie Peteet (2008) calls the extraction of nonlabor time “stealing time”:

Time has thus become another commodity, like land and water, which Israel expropriates from the population in the occupied Palestinian territories. In the wake of the 1967 occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, native time was appropriated for the extraction of labor. Since then, Israel has weaned itself from Palestinian labor by turning to the global labor market, but has continued to steal Palestinian time through myriad tactics of enforced waiting.

In this description, we are alerted to an oscillation from the laboring body as a source of value extraction that leads to the depletion of available nonlabor time, what has been theorized as living labor, to the extraction of time as a commodity that secures the value of the occupation for the Israeli state. In the first instance of living labor, one well familiar to us, the extraction of time attempts to produce a depleted and therefore compliant population so beholden to the logistics of the everyday that forms of connectivity, communing, and collective resistance are thwarted. The extraction of time functions as the transfer of “vital energy” or “the substance of activity that produces life” (Vora 2015: 3) from colonized to colonizer, from global South to global North (we can perhaps consider “Israel/Palestine” a North/South relation), an extraction that recapitulates a long colonial history of mining bodies for their potentiality.

However, the second mode of extraction, the extraction of time *as* a commodity, challenges theories of affective labor that circumscribe affect as an attribute of the laboring body and that understand affective labor to be immaterial, intellectual, emotional, communicative, and immeasurable. By contrast, Patricia Clough et al. (2007: 62) focus on affect as the transfer and circulation of potentialities not only between bodies but also between scales of matter, that is, at subindividual levels. They explain the abstraction of the laborers’ affect to what they call “affect-itself”: “Capital [is] setting out a domain for the investment in and an accumulation of affect by abstracting human affect to affect-itself: it is affect-itself that labors, not only the body of the laborer taken as an [self-enclosed] autopoietic organism.” As a material form, as matter, affect-itself is abstracted from the actual performance of an individual body; in fact, it is located as emanating not from any one body but, rather, from collectivities of subindividual capacities. Affect-itself labors to reorganize intensities, corporeal energies, and the atmospherics of occupation. Affect is therefore not only something that is exchanged and transmitted between bodies but also an object of control as well as a mode

of controlling. Affect-itself is not bound to the increasingly deployed tautology, commonly attributed to Spinoza, that affect is “the capacity to affect and be affected” (Massumi 1990). Biopolitics is the work of rupturing the presumed reciprocity of affect, manifesting what I have elsewhere called the “geopolitics of racial ontology” (Puar 2017: 55). Within the fantasized reciprocity of this formulation, the scene in which the affected body can also with equal force be affecting, is where the work of biopolitical sorting and population management thrives. What is crucial for thinking about affect-itself is that the denial, withholding, and asymmetrical redistribution of affect is a form of subjugation, hence laboring in the service of occupation. Between Clough et al.’s (2007) intervention regarding scales and the inhumanism of matter—an inhumanism that would also include land, ecosystems, and the biopolitics of life and nonlife (Povinelli 2016)—and the withholding of affective multidirectionality as a productive force of exploitation, the concept of affective labor is considerably complicated. Affective labor might more accurately be thought of as the laboring of affect, laboring in the service of creating and re-creating spatial and temporal orientations of corporeality.

How, therefore, is value extracted from slowness? Let’s take as one example the role of checkpoints. Rema Hammami (2015: 4–5) writes,

Checkpoints generally do not function to stop Palestinian mobility in toto . . . [or] to routinize Palestinian movement. . . . This network of permeability . . . operates . . . to make the everyday experience of mobility arbitrary, chaotic, and uncertain. . . . Rather than an effect, this constant state of uncertainty is the very logic of Israeli sovereign violence that checkpoints instantiate, as well as produce.

This “constant state of uncertainty” is the crucible of the carceral logics of differential mobilities and the circumscribing of time through space. Checkpoints ensure one is never sure of reaching work on time. Fear of not getting to work then adds to the labor of getting to work; the checkpoints affectively expand labor time as well as produce an intensification of time. The fear of not reaching work on time produces migration patterns that then clear the land for more illegal settlements. One is never not at work, but not in the way that theories of immaterial labor proclaim, via the blurring of boundaries between the office and beyond. Rather, this is about the expansion of material labor beyond the contours of the laboring body and its output. While the checkpoints inhibit bodies from doing and expand the time required for productive labor, the constant state of uncertainty is the work of affect, the reshaping of senses of time and space, of movement itself. As Franklin (2015: 26) argues, this expansion of material labor beyond the laboring body entails

two things: the “discretization of the labor process” fractalizes differing bodily potentials, the parts of which are more available for “perpetual monetization” than the whole of the laboring body, and this perpetual monetization is a process of valorization not bracketed to “those hours nominally set aside . . . as labor time.” Bodies in line at checkpoints contribute to the profit of the occupation not only because their nonlabor is completely tied up in the reproduction of their labor time but also because this division disappears through the fractalizing of the emotive, cognitive, physiological capacities of bodies toward the perceptual fields and sensorium of being occupied and the constant modulation of horizons of movement. It’s not just that bodies are too tired to resist but that the experience of the “constant state of uncertainty” becomes the condition of being, much like Hammami’s incisive point about uncertainty being not the effect but the logic of the checkpoints. It is not slowness itself that is held hostage by capitalism, for indeed, speed is capture as much as slowness is capture. Rather, the endless calibration of relations between speed and slowness are part of the weaponization of temporality.

In the context of Palestine, where the checkpoint-crossing body increasingly labors to simply labor and is also extracted from affectively, time is stolen from the laboring body, expanding the time of the laboring, and also extracting what I will call, following Clough et al. (2007), “time-itself.” In making this analogy between affect-itself and time-itself, I note that, while Peteet’s (2008) stealing time marks the hours of the day that are lost to laboring in order to labor, a modality of extraction that attempts to inscribe limits, time-itself works on the level of the sensorium, comporting corporeality, soliciting psychic scrambling of what movement is, what mobility is, what the relation of space to movement to time is.

Time-itself is simultaneously the “body” or the form of matter that is laboring and also an affective commodity produced not only by the occupied but also by the occupation itself and therefore part of the profit—not so much the pecuniary aspect but the valuation—of the occupation. Time-itself, then, is “generalized matter” that does not hew to the “bounded-ness of the human body” or the “body-as-organism” that is a “closed system” (Clough et al. 2007: 65, 62). Thus, labor power is located not only in the laboring body but also in multiple scales of matter, one of which is affect-itself, differentiated within the body as “perceptive states, drives, and desires” (Franklin 2015: 19) that inform not the individual but the dividual. In other words—and this is a supposition—perhaps the most valuable extraction from each individual Palestinian body is not labor nor even labor time but time-itself—indeed, the time of the dividual. The production of dividuals is a metric-generating mode that does not so much dissemble the body or assume that its parts

form a composite as it isolates subindividual and paraindividual capacities. Dividualization is one of the more oblique forms—that is to say, one less driven by spectacular maiming—of the valuation of (Palestinian) life.

These disruptions in the surety of claims about immaterial labor, affective labor, the laboring body, and “living labor” are indeed a reminder, as the recent work of Neferti X. M. Tadiar (2012) so potently demonstrates, that “life itself,” another concept under duress in Palestine (but hardly only in Palestine), is at best unevenly valorized and that the modality of value extraction is tactical, unstable, and shifting. Theories of immaterial labor direct us to how the distinction between work and nonwork time, that is, between home and the office, is increasingly blurred through technologies and social medias that solicit our presence continuously. But these theories presume such a divide between labor and nonlabor time exists in the first place, reflecting a geopolitical exceptionalism that does not comprehend the forms of collective punishment enacted in withholding connectivity, simultaneity, and temporal legibility and legitimacy. As Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1985) reminded us decades ago in her thunderous piece “Scattered Speculations on the Question of Value,” the concept of immaterial labor is predicated on submerged and underacknowledged stratifications, ones that not only unsettle the assumed privilege of “having a work day” but also map the relations between the information technology worker and those populations consigned to sanding down the waste of discarded motherboards. Yes, in Palestine as in so many other places, one is never not at work—but not quite in the way that theories of immaterial labor propose.

### **A Mass of Entanglements**

Slow life, or positioning the disenfranchised as “slow,” is an old technology of colonial rule and an older still designation of animacy, such that, for example, bodies with cognitive disabilities are often relegated to the inhuman (Chen 2012; Pickens 2019). Slowness, however, is not always inevitably captured as sheer debilitation. While a variety of “slow” movements have cropped up in recent decades to counter and shelter from the sheer force of speed in modernity, we learn less from those who have the privilege of taking it easy and more from the innovations of subaltern populations. In Palestine, what mobility is and how it is valued are always shifting. In his 2012 film titled *Infiltrators*, Jarrar focuses on the porosity of the apartheid wall. Images show Palestinians scaling certain junctures of the cement structure at night, at risk of being apprehended, even shot. The most moving scenes are of relatives meeting and passing notes and photos through very small



gaps and crevices sought out in the fraught architecture of the wall. The tenderness of these interactions, listening for clues that signal presence on the other side, the carefully folded paper gingerly inserted into a gap, in hopes that it reaches its recipient—these intimacies reflect the collectivization of slow life (see also Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018). The value of connectivity is beyond the totalization of the occupation, and the spectrum of mobility disabilities inspires radically different (different from global North human rights models) notions of access, accommodation, and even ableism. An access map, commonly crowd-sourced, takes on a different valence in Palestine, where border crossings, checkpoints, and banned highways create the most obstacles to mobility for most of the population. Mental diagrams are commonly created and continually revised by taxi and bus drivers registering in real time, via social media, personal communications, and news on the radio, openings and closures of roads, delays at checkpoints, and the sites of violent encounters with Israeli forces and settlers. Navigations of mobility are inseparable from political mobilizations, in this case public transport as a form of resistant mobilization (see Griffen 2015; Sadik 2011). In the 1960s, 1970s, and 1980s the Gazan short story, developed as craft and as export, was produced in the unlikely confines of the siege. Handwritten and “smuggled out of the strip” for typing and, ideally, publication, the Gazan short story reflects the innovation of form that emerges not from the European writerly emphasis on time and solitude but from the conviviality of blockade and dense proximity (Abu Saif 2014: ix–x).

Slowness in these and many other instances indexes neither the foreclosure of modernity nor the debilitation of or obstacles to connection. Attending to the collectivization of temporalities neither overdetermines the saturation of technologies of temporal control nor partakes in exhortations of resiliency and survivorship that might then subsume questions of decolonization and justice. Presuming a totalizing, inescapable reach of modalities of control societies does the work of control; it is not politically useful to hyperbolize how and what control can control nor to sanguinely elevate that which is perceived to escape control. Pivoting attention from collective punishment toward the potential solidarities across differential mobilities is one such important example. Slow life beyond and below capture can be fruitfully thought of as a carapace of movement, stillness, and encounter with the quotidian rhythms of bodily comportment, capacity, and debility that shape and reshape the living of time. That is, slow life might encompass how time is spent not only in relation to the administrative units of carceral capitalism but affectively as “a mass of entanglements” (Barad 2018) wherein we find potentialities for considering how time is relived and remade.

## Notes

- 1 For video of this piece, see Open Source Gallery Facebook Page, [www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2212514832369678&ref=watch\\_permalink](http://www.facebook.com/watch/live/?v=2212514832369678&ref=watch_permalink).
- 2 The relationship of injury to death has been, during many periods of the occupation, an explicitly tactical one (Andoni and Tolan 2001; Barrow-Friedman 2016; Blumenthal 2014; Hass 2016; Helweg-Larsen et al. 2004; Reinhart 2002). I draw together this archive of maiming from the following human rights organizations: Al-Haq, Amnesty International, the Al-Mezan Center for Human Rights, Doctors without Borders, the Palestinian Red Crescent Society, the United Nations, the BADIL Resource Center for Palestinian Residency and Refugee Rights, the Gaza Community Mental Health Program, the UN Relief and Works Agency, the Palestine Human Rights Information Center, the West Bank Database Project, Harvard University's FXB Center for Health and Human Rights, and Physicians for Human Rights.
- 3 My observations are based on research in the West Bank during the summer of 2018. I visited the health, rehabilitation, and disability centers of nine refugee camps and spoke with health practitioners and workers in nongovernmental organizations.
- 4 Although there are various journalistic articles, medical assessments, and reports from nongovernmental organizations (Hardigan 2016), documentation of the targeting of disabled Palestinians remains to be collected.
- 5 For scholarship generated by medical practitioners examining the general overall deteriorating health conditions of Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, see Graff 1993, Qato 2004, and Qlalweh, Duraidi, and Bronnum-Hansen 2012. This work emphasizes collective population debilitation that presents serious challenges to any generic notion of able-bodiedness but likewise complicates disability as a category of either diagnosis or identity.
- 6 As another example of this diminished difference, public health experts in Palestine claim that percentages of children diagnosed with mental illness have been inflated for several decades. While a wide population of youth present with symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder, these symptoms are embedded in a broader traumatized landscape of the occupation rather than isolated events of trauma that lead to medicalization. The overdiagnosis of post-traumatic stress disorder and mental illnesses—and thus a pathologization of the social suffering of occupied people—therefore eclipses the political problem of the occupation. Addressing the effects of settler colonialism through a redistribution of the disabled/nondisabled binary, thereby opening up new populations for medical treatment, collapses the terrain of generalized debilitation experienced by an occupied population into the more legible, and thus from a humanitarian and rights-based perspective more “manageable,” binarization of ability and disability (Rabaia, Saleh, and Giacaman 2014).
- 7 Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation 2010; Bethlehem Arab Society for Rehabilitation, interview by the author, January 10 2016, Bethlehem, Palestine.
- 8 Accelerationism claims that the demise of capitalism can be accelerated through its own acceleration, as a force or momentum that eventually outruns itself, hoodwinks its own logic, in essence a homeopathic or pharmakon poison-is-the-cure type of making it worse so that it gets better, a trading in of present justice for future utopia. Palestine is indeed one place where we can see capitalism accelerating, not necessarily through

speed but through the withholding of speed as a primary quality enabling capacitation within and alongside capitalism. As the purported opposite of speed, slowness not only is an anathema to capitalism but also exemplifies an aspect of capitalism at its most accelerated. Its withholding deepens the exploitative capacities of capitalism due to its stranglehold on temporality. Relatedly, in the imaginary of the accelerationists, the unevenness of lived acceleration seems unthought. The ramifications of Palestine as the location of sacrifice for the greater global good merely restates the necessity of extreme exploitation often located “elsewhere” as the laboratory for the constant mangling of speed, pace, and duration.

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