Arab American University

Faculty of Graduate Studies

Museumification of Palestine: Ayn Hawd, Haifa as a Case Study.

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This thesis was submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master's degree in Conflict Resolution

Aug /2025

Thesis Approval

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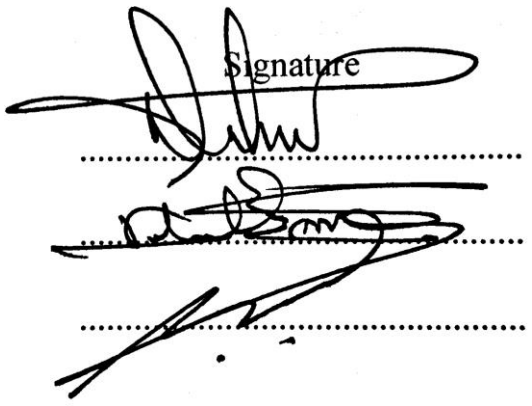

Declaration

I, the undersigned, declare that I submitted the thesis entitled:

Museumification of Palestine: Ayn Hawd, Haifa as a case study.

I hereby declare that this thesis represents my own work which has been done after registration for the MA degree of Conflict Resolution at the Arab American University, and has not been previously included in a thesis or dissertation submitted to this or any other institution for a degree, diploma or other qualifications.

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Dedication

For my mother Taghreed - whose essence weaves through these pages like a delicate thread of wisdom and warmth. Her spirit, a beacon in my scholarly journey, imbues this work with love and resilience. This achievement, reflects her enduring grace, and cherished legacy. To her memory—my guiding light — my pia mater.

Acknowledgments

In these dark times — marked by the gravest losses and trauma for Palestinians since 1947/49, and pervasive fears and uncertainty gripping every aspect of Palestinian life — accurate information becomes a beacon. Through this work, I hope to contribute, even modestly, to the preservation of Palestinian presence, history, and memory — especially in a moment when erasure feels relentless.

Within this context, I am deeply indebted to those who guided and supported me. First and foremost, my profound gratitude goes to my supervisor**,** Dr. Nahed Habiballah, for her unwavering guidance, patience, and thoughtful feedback. She has taught me passion, devotion, and thoroughness — qualities essential for a true researcher. Her mentorship has been a cornerstone of this work.

I also extend sincere thanks to my defense committee: Dr. Dalal Iriqat**,** whose encouragement and guidance have been invaluable, and Dr. Ihab Bseiso**,** who made me think of my work in new perspectives. My heartfelt appreciation goes to the lecturers of the Conflict Resolution Program, whose generosity in sharing knowledge enriched my understanding. Their openness to discussion, supervision, and constructive dialogue shaped the very contours of this thesis.

To my family — my unwavering support system — I owe more than words can capture. Special thanks to my parents, Mazin & Taghreed, my brothers Mahmoud & Musab, my sister Mariam, and my husband Saif, whose love and belief in me anchored this journey. I am also grateful to my dear friends, whose encouragement and motivation carried me through.

Finally, I carry within me the quiet strength of a presence no longer visible, yet profoundly felt. To the memory of my mother, Taghreed — her wisdom shaped my thinking, her warmth steadied my path, and her grace continues to guide me. This work bears her imprint in ways words cannot fully capture.

Abstract

In the contemporary discourse on the Palestinian-Israeli conflict, the concept of museumification provides a critical framework for understanding how the subtle mechanisms of erasure, appropriation, and the construction of settler-colonial sovereignty operate through cultural and spacial means. This thesis explores museumification as a discursive and spatial strategy that transforms Palestinian presence into curated absence, thereby consolidating Zionist settler-colonial claims of continuity and legitimacy. Within this process, the preservation and recontextualization of ruins become a means of transforming sites of dispossession into symbols of national identity and cultural authority.

At the heart of this study is the case of Ayn Hawd, located south of Haifa, which exemplifies how a formerly inhabited Palestinian village was physically preserved yet culturally and symbolically redefined through Israeli narratives and artistic interventions. Following its appropriation in the early 1950s, Ayn Hawd was converted into the Israeli artists' colony Ein Hod, where Palestinian homes and communal spaces were repurposed for cultural and touristic consumption while their original histories were systematically obscured. This act of rebranding exemplifies how the process of museumification commodifies the traces of Palestinian life, detaching them from lived memory and embedding them within the aesthetic and ideological framework of the settler state.

Such practices reveal the broader settler-colonial logic of aesthetic domination, wherein strategies like art washing sanitize and naturalize the realities of displacement. The thesis argues that the museumification of Palestinian villages functions simultaneously as a mechanism of symbolic control and as a cultural technology for fabricating sovereignty. Through the focused analysis of Ayn Hawd, it demonstrates how spatial restructuring, aesthetic re-inscription, and heritage

manipulation converge to erase Palestinian presence while consolidating the ideological and visual foundations of Zionist settler-colonial power. Yet, the persistence of Palestinian memory and attachment underscores the instability of this colonial order, revealing museumification itself as a contested terrain of visibility, belonging, and resistance.

Keywords: Settler Colonial and Indigenous Studies, Sociology of Knowledge, Museology, Collective memory, Art-washing.

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1 Chapter One: Introduction: Ayn Hawd

This thesis examines the intertwined histories of Ayn Hawd (renamed Ein Hod) and Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah, two villages located in the Haifa district of northern Palestine, within the borders of the state established in 1948. The study focuses specifically on this Palestinian community inside Israel, often referred to as the "'48 Palestinians", those who remained within the new state's boundaries after the Nakba and became Palestinian citizens of Israel. By concentrating on this context, the research highlights a form of settler colonialism that operates not through military occupation, as in the West Bank or the Gaza Strip, but through legal, cultural, and spatial mechanisms that regulate the everyday lives, memories, and landscapes of Indigenous Palestinians who remain within the settler state.

The premise of this paper contends with Amahl Bishara's "Crossing a Line" difficulty of naming Palestinians as a monocultural body of people. What this is underscoring is a refusal to "naturalize unity" highlighting a thread of Palestinian multiplicity that transcends the nation-state project logics as the only frame of belonging; Ayn Hawd is a vehicle to approach this overlapping dynamic of the dispossessed internally and externally. For Bishara, Palestinians inside the 1948 territories and those in the West Bank as well as those in the diaspora inhabit different legal and political structures, yet remain bound by shared dispossession and interdependent political projects that is always different. Rather than a singular sovereign national voice, she foregrounds a constellation of situated, embodied, and affective Palestinian voices whose connections persist across legal, geographic, and epistemic boundaries, beyond the erasure of ontology. This multivocality rooted in partial connection and difference, unsettles the nation-state's demand for a cohesive sovereignty and instead pivots to a more expansive political formation of Sumud, solidarity and relationality rather than territory. (Bishara, 2022)

Adopting this framework gestures toward a networked politic of refusal, care, and resistance that reimagines Palestinian belonging beyond the constraints of enforced fragmentation and beyond the imagined unity of the state. Ayn Hawd exemplifies these dynamics: a Palestinian village that survived physical destruction yet was subjected to symbolic and cultural transformation under Israeli nation-building policies.

Ayn Hawd, nestled on the western slopes of Mount Carmel overlooking the Mediterranean coastal plain south of Haifa, epitomizes the layered histories and lived realities of Palestine in 1948 and after. Like more than 530 other Palestinian villages ethnically cleansed during the Nakba, Ayn Hawd's nine hundred residents - primarily from the Abu al-Hayja family - were forcibly expelled and became refugees overnight. Some of them sought refuge nearby, where they rebuilt a "temporary" refugee village that would eventually become Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah (the "new" Ayn Hawd), maintaining both name and memory as a form of cultural persistence and resistance. This interplay of the disposed who are originally from Ayn Hawd geographically scattered inside mainland Israel today, 1948 Arabs, and in refugee camps outside Palestine draws on multiplicity for these different experiences refusing to flatten them as a monolith.

The fate of Ayn Hawd must also be situated within the larger devastation of Palestinian villages in 1948. Different researchers and institutions give varying figures for the number of villages destroyed or depopulated, reflecting the immense scale of dispossession. The Palestinian news agency Wafa estimates 413 villages, while the Palestine page of As-Safir records 451. Benny Morris lists 369 depopulated villages, while the online archive Palestine Remembered affirms that the number exceeds 430. Salman Abu Sitta, in his Atlas of Palestine 1917–1966, documents 530 villages and towns, and Walid Khalidi in All That Remains identifies 418 villages, a number based on rigorous archival research and fieldwork. Khalidi's figure excludes Bedouin encampments and

semi-permanent hamlets, applying a strict definition of "village" as a community with permanent structures and a recognized identity. Taken together, these sources highlight the enormity of the Nakba: hundreds of villages erased, renamed, or transformed, their inhabitants scattered across refugee camps and diaspora communities.

Ayn Hawd stands out among them precisely because it is one of the only Palestinian villages emptied and depopulated but exceptionally not destroyed during the creation of the state of Israel. Of the 418 depopulated villages listed by Khalidi, 292 were totally demolished, 90 largely demolished, and only 7 survived physically intact but were taken over by Israeli settlers. These seven include Tarbikha (Acre), Ayn Hawd, Balad al-Shaykh and al-Tira (Haifa), al-Safiriyya (Jaffa), and Ayn Karim and al-Maliha (Jerusalem). In 1953, under the influence of the Zurich-based Dadaist artist Marcel Janco, Ayn Hawd was reimagined as the Israeli artist colony Ein Hod. This transformation repurposed Palestinian homes into galleries, studios, and tourist venues, reconfiguring the terrain, architecture, and memory as Israeli cultural capital. In this process, art became complicit with erasure - through omission, alienation, and aesthetic transformation - masking the trauma of displacement behind the façade of creativity and heritage.

Today, the unique and hybrid relationship between the two 'Ayn Hawd/Ein Hod villages reveal profound ironies. The first, the original Palestinian Ayn Hawd, was transformed into the Jewish artist colony "Ein Hod" in 1953 and is now occupied by Israeli sculptors and artists. It has flourished as a tourist destination, while the Palestinian Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah remained unrecognized and deemed illegal for decades, denied basic infrastructure and services. The second, and newly established Ayn Hawd, became anything but temporary; it stands as a living refuge for Palestinians uprooted from their colonized village. Although finally recognized in 2004, this

recognition came with a restrictive master plan that limited both the community's growth and its Palestinian identity.

Revealingly, the two villages are less than two kilometers apart yet remain divided by profoundly different legal and cultural realities. This dual existence exposes the complex dynamics of memory, identity, and dispossession: one village aestheticized and commodified as heritage, the other marginalized and administratively constrained, yet persisting as a living community and symbol of resilience. Ayn Hawd therefore provides a critical lens through which to study the mechanisms of settler colonialism within 1948 Palestine - not as a project limited to territorial conquest, but as a sustained system of cultural, spatial, and symbolic domination. It is a site where Palestinian memory collides with Israeli reinvention, where the persistence of community resists narrative erasure inscribed on the landscape, and where the politics of space, art, and heritage intersect with the lived experience of a displaced people.

1.1 Thesis Question and Arguments

The main question this thesis will answer is: "**How does the process of museumification serve to erase Palestinian presence while constructing Zionist settler-colonial sovereignty in Ayn Hawd?**". To answer the main question, the following sub-questions will be addressed: How is the reappropriation of Palestinian ruins into lived spaces a reflection of a broader settler-colonial practice of settlement? How does museumification function as a form of symbolic domination and elimination in the context of Palestinian displacement? How does "art washing" obscure histories of dispossession and conceal a systemic approach to reappropriation? How does a nation fabricate a continuous presence and a narrative of sovereignty through the manipulation of ruins and politically charged aesthetics?

In this paper, I interrogate the concept of museumification, where Palestinian spaces are frozen, aestheticized, and recontextualized into sanitized displays - stripped of their living histories and instrumentalized to serve a dominant Israeli narrative.

To answer the thesis question and sub-questions, I rely on the case study within the qualitative research approach, as it allows for an in-depth exploration of the complex cultural and spatial dynamics surrounding heritage, identity, and power. There are two methods of research within the qualitative approach: case comparison and case study. The case study represents an intensive examination of one unit that aims to generate conclusions applicable to a broader context. It provides a specific way of defining, analyzing, and interpreting conditions to uncover the causal relationships between variables. Within the case study, multiple analytical strategies—including historical reconstruction, interpretive analysis, and critical theory - are integrated to reveal both the material and symbolic dimensions of transformation.

This study conceptualizes Zionism as a specific form of settler colonialism, characterized by both material practices of land appropriation and symbolic mechanisms of cultural replacement; consequently, the case of Ayn Hawd / Ein Hod is analyzed within this framework to reveal how aesthetic and heritage processes sustain and naturalize settler sovereignty.

Through detailed examination of one key site, the study draws broader insights into processes of erasure, rebranding, and memory construction. By synthesizing interdisciplinary perspectives, the methodology provides a holistic understanding of how heritage and narrative are shaped within the context of settler colonialism.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

This dissertation builds upon readings of settler colonial theory from Palestinian scholars and connects it to a wider scope of Marxist theory, for these struggles are intrenched in the

movement of capital and war machine as well as the destruction of the biopolitical. Scholars including Patrick Wolfe, Lorenzo Veracini, and Rashid Khalidi, extending their analysis beyond the physical dimensions of colonial control to examine the cultural and symbolic mechanisms of Palestinian erasure. Central to this framework is Wolfe's concept of the "**logic of elimination**," which identifies settler colonialism not as a historical event but as an ongoing structure that seeks the complete replacement of indigenous populations through multiple, interconnected strategies of reaching a threshold of capacity of complete uprootedness.

To extend this framework further, the symbolic register of elimination is that of the production of debility, as theorized by Jasbir Puar in ***The Right to Maim***. Puar argues that Israel supplements its sovereign "right to kill" with a calculated "right to maim," targeting Palestinian bodies and land not for outright death but for sustained injury that renders them permanently incapacitated yet still positioned as threats. Through which bodies are managed, contained, and rendered less-than-capable while remaining politically intelligible as both disabled and disposable. By linking the logics of elimination and beyond, we see that settler colonialism does not merely seek the disappearance of Indigenous people but also the production of bodies suspended between life and death, capacity and incapacitation, an ongoing structure of domination that recalibrates its tactics as it approaches, exceeds, and redefines the limits of eliminatory violence. (Puar, 2017)

While classical settler colonial analysis has primarily focused on territorial appropriation and demographic displacement, this study argues that cultural appropriation, and symbolic transformation in Ayn Hawd operate as sophisticated instruments of elimination that work through what I term "museumification" and "art-washing." Museumification refers to the process by which Palestinian spaces are transformed into static cultural artifacts, effectively freezing indigenous life and memory in a controlled, depoliticized form. This process renders Palestinian presence as

historical rather than contemporary, creating what Lorenzo Veracini describes as the temporal displacement characteristic of settler colonial project. Museumification and art-washing operate as two interlinked arms of elimination within the settler colonial project.

Art-washing, meanwhile, functions as the aesthetic reappropriation of these museumified spaces, transforming sites of displacement into venues of cultural production that obscure their colonial origins. This dual mechanism operates through what Michel Foucault theorized as the exercise of power over both bodies and subjectivities, creating new forms of what Herbert Marcuse termed “repressive tolerance”—the incorporation of resistance within dominant structures that ultimately neutralizes its transformative potential.

Drawing on Fredric Jameson’s analysis of cultural logic under late capitalism and Guy Debord’s theory of spectacle, this framework demonstrates how aesthetic representations in Ayn Hawd function not merely as cultural expressions but as vehicles for territorial control and the commodification of Palestinian heritage. These processes work in tandem to fabricate a form of sovereignty that masks ongoing colonial relations while presenting the transformation of indigenous space as cultural preservation and artistic innovation.

The settler colonialism framework is essential to accurately analyzing the ongoing processes of cultural erasure, land appropriation, and the systemic marginalization of Palestinians within the Zionist project. This framework positions settler colonialism as a structure rather than a historical event—a persistent and adaptive system that operates through what Wolfe terms the "logic of elimination." This logic emphasizes the removal and replacement of Indigenous populations rather than solely their exploitation, fundamentally reshaping the social, cultural, and

political landscape to privilege settlers. The framework's focus on the structural and ongoing nature of settler colonialism makes it particularly apt for understanding the Israeli-Palestinian context.

Scholars such as Nadia Abu El-Haj reinterpreted Zionism through the framework of settler colonialism, emphasizing its structural characteristics rather than viewing it solely as a nationalist movement. From its early stages, Zionism adopted colonial rhetoric and strategies, evident in Theodor Herzl's correspondence with British imperialist Cecil Rhodes, where Zionism was presented as part of the broader colonial enterprise. The establishment of institutions like the "Colonial Trust Company" and the "Department of Colonization" further illustrates how the Zionist movement was institutionally grounded in colonial ideology. Distinct from extractive colonialism, which sought to exploit resources, Zionist settler colonialism aimed to establish a permanent Jewish presence and exclusive sovereignty in Palestine. (El-Haj, 2002)

The events of the 1948 Nakba highlight the operational logic of settler colonialism, particularly its drive for elimination. During this period, Zionist militias forcibly displaced over 700,000 Palestinians, demolished hundreds of villages, and laid the legal foundation for the ongoing confiscation of Palestinian land. This restructuring of space and demography was not incidental but central to the goal of eliminating and mass movement of the indigenous population with a new settler society. In line with Patrick Wolfe's characterization, Zionism exemplifies how settler colonialism functions not as a one-time act but as an enduring structure—one that continues to displace and suppress Palestinian identity, presence, and political agency. (Wolfe, 2006)

Here, museumification in Ayn Hawd specifically, is a key focus of this thesis, operating as a cultural mechanism within the broader settler colonial structuret. This process involves restructuring and resculpting Palestinian spaces and history, turning them into fabricated artifacts

of settler narratives while silencing Palestinian claims to the land. Displaced villages, such as Ayn Hawd, are transformed into aestheticized relics of the past, commodified for tourism and redefined through Israeli narratives. By framing these spaces as remnants of a bygone era, museumification reinforces the Zionist claim to territorial legitimacy while marginalizing Palestinian resistance and agency. Ayn Hawd is a rich case study for examining and conceptualizing these practices of socio-spatial transformation.

This thesis situates museumification within the settler-colonial paradigm, aligning with Veracini's argument that settler colonialism is an ongoing process rather than a completed project. Heritage practices such as museumification naturalizing inequality by positioning Palestinians who remained within Israel's borders after 1948, those who became citizens yet were dispossessed of their lands, as historical artifacts rather than living communities, effectively justifying their continued marginalization. This dynamic underscores the adaptability of settler-colonial structures, wherein cultural tools are deployed to sustain settler privilege, aestheticize dispossession, and obscure ongoing reframing.

Instrumentalizing a settler colonial framework enables a reimagining of post realities, as Wolfe and Veracini suggest, the framework's strength lies in its ability to acknowledging the failure of settler colonialism to fully eliminate Indigenous populations. In the Palestinian context, this dynamic opens possibilities for reasserting memory, identity, and cultural heritage as acts of resistance. This thesis reveals the structural and adaptive mechanisms of Zionist settler colonialism using museumification specifically as it operates as a visual and mechanized tool of recrafting this elimination ideologically. The very existence of the original Palestinian village was denied through spatial transformation practices. These are part of the Israeli colonial-settler project, which

involved a massive spatial and demographic transformation of the authentic Palestinian villages and urban spaces. (Jabareen, 2015)

Makdisi (2010) speaks of "an endless process of covering over, removing, or managing a stubbornly persistent Palestinian presence". As Edward Said argues in The Politics of Dispossession (1994), the invariably violent displacement of people undertaken had an aim of forceful exclusion of the displaced people's actual and potential presence. The confiscated lands were transformed from state ownership to individual Jewish artists at zero expense to the latter: there was no land transaction cost. This situation represents perfectly how accumulation by dispossession may function financially: denied all value in its existing form and to its displaced inhabitants, it is given as void and "free" to the new ones. Though if it has value, including "aesthetically," to the new regime, it may be taken and put to new uses: in 1948, more than 400 Palestinian villages were destroyed (Khalidi, 1999), but some others were preserved for their architectural heritage and uniqueness as residue of a past era and untraceable artifacts.

In his book, Sacred Landscape, Meron Benvenisti (2000) claims that "the most obvious example of the preservation of an Arab village 'as an aesthetic gem' suitable for the accommodation of writers, painters, and other artists is that of Ayn Hawd, which was renamed Ein Hod." The reason, he avers, is that it was "too valuable to allow its destruction". The state was, accordingly, convinced by the artists to keep the village. This legal and formal maneuver is one of liberal economic policy and settler colonial mind, one that seeks to generate value in concealment or of the logics of addition to existing historic structures.

2 Chapter Two: Memory & History: Inception of Settler Colonialism in Palestine

The second chapter, titled "Memory & History: Inception of Settler Colonialism in Palestine," lays the foundation by expanding the concept of settler colonialism - a distinct form of colonialism that seeks not merely to exploit indigenous populations but to eliminate and replace them, effectively erasing their histories and identities to establish a new society for the colonizers. Beginning with the Nakba, the chapter dives into the framework of settler colonialism explains how the elimination of people and cultural identity operates as a colonial strategy; the erasure of Palestinian history and heritage, beginning with Plan Dalet and the systematic destruction of Palestinian villages.

2.1 The 1948 Nakba: A Foundational Moment of Erasure

A central mechanism in this process was Plan Dalet (Plan D), a military strategy formulated by the Zionist Haganah leadership in March 1948 as the British Mandate neared its end. Plan Dalet outlined a systematic campaign of territorial control through the depopulation and destruction of Palestinian villages and urban centers, ensuring a Jewish demographic majority in the future Israeli state. It sanctioned the forced expulsion, intimidation, and erasure of Palestinian communities through military operations, leading to mass displacement and laying the groundwork for what Palestinians term the Nakba (Catastrophe).

Historians such as Walid Khalidi (1988) and Ilan Pappé (2006) underscore that Plan Dalet was not merely a defensive military plan but a premeditated strategy of ethnic cleansing, designed to secure Jewish control over land by permanently uprooting its Palestinian inhabitants. Through a detailed analysis of archival evidence, Pappé explicitly frames Plan Dalet as the execution of a long-standing Zionist policy of forced displacement, while Khalidi meticulously documents the operational aspects of the plan, revealing how entire villages, including Ayn Hawd, were seized, depopulated, and later repurposed under new narratives.

Thus, Plan Dalet serves as a pivotal example of how settler colonialism in Palestine has historically relied on organized military and political strategies to dismantle Palestinian identity and historical memory. This chapter, therefore, positions Plan Dalet as a foundational moment in the ongoing process of settler colonial erasure, a process that continues through cultural mechanisms such as museumification and art-washing, which this thesis will further explore in the case of Ayn Hawd.

On March 10, 1948, Zionist leaders instigated a plan for the ethnic cleansing of Palestine. It was a Systematic plan to dismantle the Palestinian identity and historical memory. The Israeli Plan Dalet (plan D); is the main plan for a policy of racial cleansing, through which Israel aims to control as much of the Palestinian territory as possible, expel as many Palestinians as possible, and replace them with Israeli settlements and institutions. (Khalidi, 1988)

The plan was followed by a detailed description of the procedures for the systematic expulsion of the Palestinians from far-reaching areas of the country:

"These procedures were to be employed by forcibly evicting the people: large-scale intimidation; laying siege to and bombarding villages and population centres; setting fire to homes, properties, and goods; expulsion; demolition; and, finally, planting mines among the rubble to prevent any of the expelled inhabitants from returning. Ideologically, the Nakba was no aberration; it was planned well in advance." (Pappé, 2006, p. 6)

The human geography of Palestine as a whole was forcibly transformed. The Arab character of the cities was effaced by the destruction of large sections, including the spacious park in Jaffa and community centres in Jerusalem. This transformation was systematically driven by the desire to wipe out one nation's history and culture and replace it with a fabricated version of another, from which all traces of the indigenous population were elided. (Pappé, 2007)

The erasure of Palestinian identity and history is a foundational strategy of Israel's settler-colonial project. This process, which began in 1948 with the expulsion and dispossession of Palestinians, has manifested through the destruction of villages, the appropriation of cultural heritage, and the restructuring of historical narratives to serve the settler-colonial framework. The elimination of Palestinian presence from official records and the broader historical discourse has been a deliberate act of redefining the land and its past to legitimize Israeli claims.

Elias Sanbar, a distinguished Palestinian historian and writer, provides a critical perspective on this systematic erasure in his essay *Out of Place, Out of Time.* He highlights the moment in 1948 when Palestinian history and identity were deliberately erased from maps and historical records, replaced by narratives that denied Palestinian existence altogether. As Sanbar recalls, the newly established Israeli authorities declared: *"The Palestinian people does not exist."* From that point forward, Palestinians were referred to in ambiguous terms—as "refugees" or, for those who remained, as "Israeli Arabs"—a linguistic and political strategy that severed their connection to the land and erased their indigenous identity (Sanbar, 2001, p. 87). This process was not merely symbolic; it had profound material consequences, shaping the ways in which Palestinian history was recorded, discussed, and remembered.

This erasure extends beyond official documentation into broader cultural and historical narratives. Scholars such as Rashid Khalidi, Beshara Doumani, and Ahmad H. Sa'di have demonstrated how Al-Nakba (the catastrophe of 1948) became the central reference point for Palestinian collective memory and national identity (Doumani, 1992 ; Sa'di & Abu-Lughod, 2007). The loss of Palestinian historical and cultural artifacts, the destruction of archives, and the appropriation of heritage sites have all contributed to this process of dispossession at both the material and symbolic levels.

Edward Said's analysis in *Permission to Narrate* (1984) further reveals how this erasure is reinforced through discourse and narrative control. He argues that Western powers have enabled this silencing by legitimizing Israeli actions as acts of self-defense, even in cases of extreme violence, such as the bombardment of Beirut and the massacres at Sabra and Shatila. According to Said, this is achieved through layers of censorship—either by suppressing counter-narratives or framing Palestinian history as an exception rather than an integral part of the region's past. As he puts it, *"The counter-narrative in this case is the history and future of the Palestinians as they themselves see it"* (Said, 1984). This highlights a crucial aspect of settler-colonialism: it not only physically eliminates the indigenous population but also erases their history and denies them the right to narrate their own past.

This narrative suppression is directly connected to the Israeli state's manipulation of cultural heritage, particularly through the museumification of Palestinian spaces and the appropriation of Palestinian artifacts into Israeli national discourse. By controlling the representation of history—whether through archaeology, renaming spaces, or the destruction and selective preservation of cultural sites—Israel has sought to rewrite the historical landscape, reinforcing its settler-colonial claims while erasing Palestinian connections to the land. The destruction of Palestinian archives, photos, and historical records further exacerbates this process, making it difficult for Palestinians to reconstruct their own history.

Thus, the erasure of Palestinian history operates on multiple levels—through the destruction of physical spaces, the manipulation of cultural heritage, and the suppression of counter-narratives in global discourse. This underscores the importance of cultural heritage as a battleground in the fight for self-determination, where historical memory is not just a reflection of the past but a site of active resistance against the ongoing colonial project.

2.2 Erasing Memory: The Role of Demolition, Preservation & Museumification

This chapter aims to conceptualize the instrumentalization of artifacts to fabricate modern nation states and alter existing memories of Indigenous populations, it frames the Zionist project as one of denaturalization and reclassification. Following this initial upheaval, the subsequent decades saw a continuation of these efforts, particularly evident in the 1950s and 1960s, through the demolition of what remained of Palestinian villages. (Benvenisti, 2002, p.168) This act was not merely physical destruction but a calculated attempt to erase the Palestinian presence and the reminders of the refugee crisis that Israel sought to dismiss.

The act of demolition, whether aimed at eradicating or selectively preserving structures, plays a crucial role in shaping collective memory and contributes to historical amnesia within the context of settler colonialism. As Bevan, (2007) suggests, demolition is often a deliberate effort to erase the memories, history, and identity intricately connected to space through the built environment. However, while demolition frequently functions as erasure, it is not inherently or universally so; in some contexts, it may serve other purposes, such as urban renewal or infrastructural development. Groag, (2007, p. 33); and Rotbard, (2005, p. 15) highlight the role of preserved historical buildings in constructing collective memory and national narratives—structures that endure in the landscape are inherently bound to be remembered. This duality of destruction and preservation is central to the logic of settler colonialism, where the erasure of indigenous landmarks is paralleled by the selective retention of structures that reinforce a dominant collective memory.

In the broader context of settler colonialism, the demolition of ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages emerges as a deliberate strategy aimed at eliminating the cultural markers of the indigenous population. As Patrick Wolfe (2006) emphasizes, settler colonialism is a structure,

not an event, and operates through a logic of elimination that extends beyond physical violence to the erasure of indigenous presence. This practice reflects a national ideology that wages war not only against physical structures but also against the collective memory embedded within them. By "cleansing" the landscape of these cultural remnants, settler colonial powers seek to assert dominance and reshape the narrative of the land they occupy. This manipulation of collective memory is a fundamental aspect of nation-building, as elucidated by Halbwachs (1992) and Paasi (2000), where a hegemonic narrative selectively emphasizes certain past events while marginalizing others deemed disruptive or incongruent with the desired identity. Thus, the demolition of Palestinian villages serves not only as a physical act of destruction but also as a symbolic assertion of power and control over the collective memory of the land.

Israel has advanced the legitimation of its settler-colonial project through the destruction, erasure, expropriation, and appropriation of Palestinian cultural heritage. Beyond the loss of lives, property, villages, and urban centers during Al-Nakba, the immense catastrophe, Palestinian cultural landscapes have also been subject to systematic erasure. This process extends beyond physical destruction to the museumification of Palestinian spaces, where remnants of Palestinian presence are recontextualized to fit a hegemonic Israeli narrative. In cases where Palestinian villages were not demolished, their connection to Palestinian history has been severed through demographic and symbolic transformations, integrating them into Israeli society while obscuring their past. This strategy aligns with the settler-colonial logic of elimination, wherein erasure is achieved not only through destruction but also through controlled preservation that strips sites of their indigenous meaning. The transformation of Palestinian spaces is curated like museum policy, depoliticized and relinked to Israeli heritage functions reinforcing a settler claims to the land while obscuring its Palestinian past.

Settler colonialism is a complex process that involves various strategies to assert dominance and reshape the identities and histories of indigenous populations. The natural right to construct a nation state is fabricated and eclectically designed. The optics and aesthetics of this ideological domination are reclassifications of a legal and rhetorical category. One of grounded normativity, where the attunement of the existing natural and built environments is reshaped to disrupt pre-existing sovereignty or place making. It grounds past populations as domestic dependent nation with a grid of the built object, one that codifies the land in new methods without corresponding to geographic material agencies or histories.

In Palestine, these processes have been vividly illustrated through the events of Al-Nakba 1948, and the subsequent occupation of 1967. These actions were driven by Zionist ideology, aiming to establish a Jewish majority and control over the historical land of Palestine. The 2018 Israeli Nation-State Law further entrenches this principle, promoting Jewish settlements as a national value (B'Tselem, 2021). The theoretical underpinnings of settler colonialism and ethnic cleansing are affirmed by various scholars, such as Salamanca et al. (2012), who argue that contests for land often equate to contests for life itself. By examining these concepts through the lens of Palestine, this chapter delves into the profound implications of settler colonialism on the identity, memory, and cultural heritage of the Palestinian people.

2.3 Archaeology as a Tool of Narrative Control

Israeli archaeological practices have played a significant role in shaping historical narratives, particularly through the marginalization of Palestinian heritage during the mid-20th century. In the 1960s, numerous Arab villages were demolished under the guise of archaeological preservation. (Kadman, 2014) These efforts focused primarily on uncovering and maintaining

ancient sites, especially those associated with biblical and pre-Islamic civilizations, while structures tied to Palestinian and Arab history were often disregarded or deliberately destroyed. When Arab-built heritage was preserved, it was frequently stripped of its original context and reframed within a Zionist interpretive lens (Aharon, 2002; Benvenisti, 2000). This selective process reflects a broader settler-colonial approach in which erasure and appropriation of Indigenous heritage are mobilized to support territorial and ideological claims.

In addition to physical acts of destruction or neglect, archaeology also functioned as an ideological apparatus. Artifacts and ruins deemed significant were integrated into Israeli museums and cultural sites, promoting a curated narrative of uninterrupted Jewish historical presence. These sites became tools for reinforcing a national identity that privileges Israeli belonging, while simultaneously excluding and silencing Palestinian historical connections to the land. In this way, archaeology served not merely as a scientific endeavor, but as a powerful cultural instrument for legitimizing settlement and rewriting the historical landscape in favor of the settler-colonial project.

The appropriation and manipulation of Palestinian cultural heritage by the Israeli state is a key strategy within its settler-colonial project. Cultural appropriation, broadly defined as the adoption or recontextualization of elements from one culture by another—particularly in asymmetrical power dynamics—operates here as a means of legitimizing Israeli territorial claims while simultaneously erasing Palestinian historical presence. In the Palestinian context, this process manifests through the destruction, erasure, and repurposing of cultural heritage, as well as through the incorporation of Palestinian artifacts into Israeli narratives, often without proper attribution or acknowledgment of their origins.

One of the most significant ways this occurs is through Israeli cultural and heritage institutions, particularly museums, which play a central role in reshaping historical narratives. By curating Palestinian artifacts within an Israeli framework, these institutions participate in what scholars have termed “history theft” (Said, 1984; Khalidi, 1997), a process in which the historical and cultural symbols of an indigenous people are redefined, decontextualized, or outright erased to serve the agenda of the settler-colonial state. This goes beyond mere misrepresentation; it actively severs Palestinians from their own historical narrative, making it more difficult to sustain a collective cultural identity.

Additionally, Israel has imposed new spatial and temporal narratives onto the land, reconfiguring historical memory to align with the Zionist vision of a continuous Jewish presence while minimizing or obscuring Palestinian connections. This is evident not only in the destruction of Palestinian villages and historical sites but also in the deliberate suppression of Palestinian archival materials, photographs, and documents, resources that could otherwise serve as evidence of Palestinian historical continuity. The erasure of these historical markers contributes to what Patrick Wolfe (2006) describes as the “logic of elimination”, wherein the settler-colonial power systematically removes indigenous presence, either physically or symbolically.

Thus, the Israeli state's treatment of Palestinian cultural heritage is not incidental but an integral part of its settler-colonial strategy. It functions to displace Palestinian identity while asserting a hegemonic Israeli narrative over the land. This underscores the central role of cultural heritage as a site of struggle, where preservation, representation, and control over history become critical battlegrounds in the broader fight for self-determination.

3 Chapter Three: Overview of the Israeli Policy of "Museumification"

Since the birth of modern museums, there has been a shift in museum politics and policy that generated distinctive political demands. Museums have increasingly become spaces where cultural narratives and identities are negotiated, contested, and exhibited. The shift towards inclusive representation of diverse groups and equitable accessibility has been accompanied by a critical awareness of museums' political roles. The politicization of museums and the reorientation of their roles represent a significant paradigm shift in recent museological scholarship and practice. This evolution, termed "new museology" by scholars such as Sharon Macdonald (2011), underscores museums' transformation from neutral repositories of culture into active arenas of political discourse and identity formation. (Macdonald, 2011)

Museumification, central to this thesis, broadly refers to the process by which living spaces, objects, or landscapes are transformed into static historical exhibits, frozen in time and disconnected from their original socio-cultural contexts. Museumification of artifacts or objects traditionally refers to the curatorial practice of conserving and exhibiting cultural items within museum settings, generally driven by the intention to preserve and communicate heritage through collections. This traditional museumification approach primarily emphasizes protection and representation, aligning with classical museological objectives. Conversely, the focus of this thesis is on the museumification of spaces, a more politically charged and critical concept extensively discussed within contexts of colonialism and occupation.

In the specific case of Palestinian villages, houses, and landscapes, museumification involves deliberate and politicized processes of spatial appropriation, static preservation, commodification, and historical re-narrativization. Scholars such as Slyomovics (1998) and Abu El-Haj (2001) highlight how this process has been strategically utilized by Israeli authorities to erase indigenous Palestinian presence and to legitimize settler-colonial narratives. Thus, the

museumification of spaces does not merely preserve heritage; rather, it systematically transforms dynamic, lived environments into static monuments, symbolically rendering Palestinian spaces lifeless or “frozen” in history. This thesis specifically investigates how these spaces, exemplified by Ayn Hawd in Haifa, have been reconfigured from sites of living Palestinian memory and identity into politicized museums or tourist commodities, thereby facilitating the Zionist project of cultural erasure and historical domination.

Within the Palestinian context, museumification functions as a cultural instrument that supports and extends Israel's settler-colonial agenda. It aligns with political efforts to reshape the land not only through physical occupation but also through symbolic and narrative control. Zionist settler colonialism, as articulated by figures like Theodor Herzl, was grounded in the belief that building a new society required the elimination of what previously existed—not only in material terms but also in cultural and historical ones. This logic has been consistently reflected in Israeli practices on the ground.

Meron Benvenisti (2000) documents how this ideology was enacted through acts such as the destruction of Palestinian agricultural landscapes, including the uprooting of centuries-old olive groves in depopulated villages like al-Bassa. These actions exemplify the settler-colonial aim to erase visible markers of Palestinian presence and replace them with symbols aligned with Israeli national identity and development. Benvenisti’s work captures how the Israeli state sought not only to displace Palestinians physically but to overwrite their historical and cultural ties to the land through both literal and symbolic transformations.

Ayn Hawd, a village near Haifa, exemplifies how Palestinian villages ethnically cleansed during the 1948 Nakba have been subjected to museumification. In Ayn Hawd, this practice

involves transforming an ethnically cleansed Palestinian village into a sanitized site for Israeli artistic and cultural expression, disconnecting it from its Palestinian origins and identity. Thus, museumification not only halts the natural development and habitation of such spaces but strategically reconstructs their histories to align with a Zionist national narrative.

Museumification and material demolition are two complementary, tangible instruments in a nation-building apparatus where demolition, uprooting of olive trees in al-Bassa physically, disrupts or maims livelihoods, foodways, and sites of memory. Meanwhile, preservation and museal decontextualization converts displaced practices and objects into state-authorized artifacts; together they are enforced through concrete legal and administrative structures of land registries, absentee property laws, zoning, heritage cornerstones. This is the settler colonial fabrication: an organized set of policies and institutions that authoritatively define ownership, belonging, and legitimate natural means of belonging. Demolition produces immediate material dispossession and bodily precarity; preservation produces an epistemic dispossession that legitimates that material loss by absorbing traces into the state's narrative. Hence, the Palestinian body is reclassified twice, the first time from its bio-autonomy and its human presence and belonging, as physical dispossession is one that ecologically uproots body. And the second time it strips the Palestinian from ontological presence, one that rendered it incapable of belonging after it deemed it unnatural. As a hegemonic strategy, these paired tactics alter biopolitical realities by reorganizing populations (through permits, residency status, mobility restrictions), reshaping livelihoods and health, and determining which bodies and lives are legible as rights-bearing citizens and which are managed, disabled, or rendered non-peripheral.

Moreover, the transformation of Palestinian villages into heritage sites or museums serves a dual purpose. On one hand, it physically obscures evidence of Palestinian presence and history,

rendering Palestinians invisible within their own landscapes. On the other, these museums and cultural spaces serve as visual evidence supporting the Zionist claim of "bettering" the land, reflecting a constructed narrative of Israeli cultural and developmental superiority. This ideological framing positions Palestinian existence as incompatible with progress and modernity, further justifying displacement and erasure.

Ultimately, museumification within the Israeli-Palestinian context emerges not merely as passive cultural preservation but as a politically charged, deliberate practice of cultural dispossession and historical revisionism. It enacts a calculated, long-term project of erasure and replacement, embedding settler colonial identity into the land and collective memory at the expense of Palestinian existence and heritage. Through museumification, Israel constructs both the physical and ideological invisibility of Palestinians, crafting a national narrative grounded in exclusionary ethnocultural nationalism. As such, the Israeli model of museumification reveals itself to be integral to the broader settler colonial project, serving not only to solidify Zionist legitimacy but also to systematically displace and erase the indigenous Palestinian identity, history, and rights.

The aim of Zionism to establish a State for Jews in Palestine represented an applied state that had been dreamed of in the propaganda value of Epinal imagery used to demonstrate the virtues of colonialism. The expression "*image d'Épinal"* has become proverbial in French and refers to an emphatic traditionalist and naïve depiction of something, showing only its good aspects. However, the reality of Israel's ideology is explicitly an exclusionary ethnoculturally based nationalism. Furthermore, Israel is a settler colonial state established through the forcible displacement and subjugation of the indigenous population. (Graff, 1997).

4 Chapter Four: Settler Colonialism Art-washing

Within the context of the depopulation and erasure of Palestine and mass movement of bodies, the role of art becomes particularly contentious, exemplifying a stark intersection of art making and settler colonialism. The transformation of ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages into Israeli artists' colonies and cultural sites, such as Ayn Hawd, serves as a potent example of "Art-washing." This process uses art to craft a new narrative, replacing Palestinian history with a narrative that legitimizes Israeli statehood. This act of cultural erasure raises profound ethical questions about the utilization of art to obscure the realities of displacement and colonization. (Horkheimer et al., 2002)

Horkheimer and Adorno, in their seminal work Dialectic of Enlightenment (2002), argue that culture under capitalist modernity often becomes instrumentalized as a tool of ideological domination rather than a medium for genuine critique or resistance. They identify the "culture industry," a concept referring to the commodification and manipulation of culture to perpetuate existing power structures and suppress dissent. According to Horkheimer and Adorno, art loses its emancipatory potential when employed to reinforce dominant narratives and conceal systemic violence or exploitation. This theoretical framework reflects how Israeli settler colonialism strategically utilizes art to sanitize its colonial enterprise. The establishment of Israeli artists' colonies in ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages, such as Ayn Hawd, epitomizes the process Horkheimer described: culture is converted from a potential site of critique into a vehicle of ideological legitimization. Art-washing, in this sense, functions as a cultural manifestation and embedding of the object to settler colonial power, rearticulating the violence of displacement behind aestheticized portrayals of heritage, creativity, and modernity.

This phenomenon exemplifies Horkheimer's contention that culture can become complicit in oppression when detached from critical engagement and appropriated by hegemonic interests.

Thus, the ethical questions surrounding art-washing align directly with Horkheimer's concerns: art is employed not merely to reflect reality, but actively to reshape, obscure, and even justify oppressive historical and political realities.

The Zionist project sought to construct an instantaneous identity, one that served an efflux of immigrants each with their own identities and culture. It wanted to visually and aesthetically brand itself in contemporary realms of progress, digestible commodities and new social fabric that has its own aesthetic dimension and visual commodities. It was one that had the newest forms of art, design, and architecture (Harpaz, 2013).

Such instantaneous narrative manifested materially through object: it channeled through architecture and urbanism with modernism as an "aesthetic." But also, had its own spectacle and optics, it commodified the land, fabricated a story for that land, and constructed an image of its preexisting objects within a new context. If we were to dissect the elements which compositionally create the image of Israel as a whole, and 'Ein Hod'--the artist colony specifically, the aesthetic dimension of it is instrumentalized as a settler colonial tool that not only wants to create another context to reinhabit the ruins of a preexisting people but modify/fashion the historic lineage depicted through such visual image, to fabricate a new history for future purposes. As if such antiques, perhaps ruins, had no present; and no traceable owners. As images gain more and more terrain as methods of representation, the aesthetic dimension envelopes consumerist societies, as Fredric Jameson puts it:

"Everything in consumer society has taken on an aesthetic dimension," writes Fredric Jameson. "This is […] the triumph of instrumentalization over that „finality without an end" which is art

itself, the steady conquest and colonization of the ultimate realm of non-practicality, of sheer play and anti-use, by the logic of the world of means and ends"(Jameson, 1979, p. 132).

Marxist theory provides a method to conceptualize the settler colonial process, especially its critique of commodification and abstraction to transforms both the land and meaning: as Fredric Jameson argues, under late capitalism "everything… takes on an aesthetic dimension," and in the context of settler colonialism this aestheticization becomes a tool for legitimizing territorial and historical domination. In 'Ein Hod,' Palestinian ruins are not merely appropriated but stripped from their social life and reinserted as consumable cultural artifacts within a curated narrative of Israeli artistic modernity, revealing a process that is not only economic but also ideological.

This is where Patrick Wolfe's principle of "elimination by substitution" becomes indispensable, whereas the settler project does not just remove Indigenous presence, but naturalizes the right to maim, reshaping space with symbols, stories, and landscapes that consolidate the settler's natural claim. This extends the framework of settler colonial to that of universal capitalism, of retrofitting historic models of pre-modern institutions of generating capital where dispossession upholds a positive income value.

Significantly, the colony was spearheaded by Marcel Janco, a prominent figure of the Dada movement—an artistic philosophy defined by irrationality, absurd abstraction, and deliberate historical disruption, emerging as a radical response to World War I. Ironically, the same logic of fragmentation and historical distortion inherent to Dadaism was echoed in the act of transforming Palestinian cultural heritage into decontextualized visual commodities. Thus, the colony's aesthetic and ideological foundations did not merely reflect contemporary artistic branding but

actively contributed to the truncation of a rich, lived history, rendering it palatable within a colonial narrative.

If we assess purely the optics of Ein Hod, it presents itself as a picturesque artists' village deeply connected to Marcel Janco, a leading figure of the Dada movement. Janco, a Polish-born Jewish artist and architect who fled Europe following the horrors of World War II and the Holocaust, significantly influenced the Israeli art scene by introducing Dada's radical aesthetic philosophy - characterized by absurdity, abstraction, fragmentation, and a deliberate disruption of historical context. In Ein Hod, Janco envisioned and articulated a new Israeli cultural identity by appropriating Palestinian ruins as "found objects," analogous to the Dada practice of repurposing ordinary or discarded materials into art. This act, although seemingly rooted in avant-garde artistic practices, resulted in the instrumentalization of art for political ends. Specifically, it transformed the physical remnants of Palestinian heritage into sanitized cultural commodities, deliberately divorced from their original historical meanings. Thus, Janco's role highlights a disturbing irony: while his work critically confronted Europe's traumatic past, the very methods he employed in Israel, repurposing and aestheticizing ruins, facilitated historical erasure, rejecting reconciliation with the displaced Palestinian inhabitants who still lived merely kilometers away.

Above all, this art-washing process is inherently about establishing ownership and asserting the colonizers' right to occupy, reinterpret, and claim these spaces. By repurposing Palestinian ruins into an Israeli artists' colony, Ein Hod and similar sites portray their new inhabitants as legitimate inheritors, creators, and custodians of history, culture, and space. Palestinians, the original owners and builders of these homes and villages, are intentionally omitted from this narrative, rendered invisible within the aesthetic framework. Imported from its predecessors in Europe, this modality of aesthetics underscores the entanglement of European

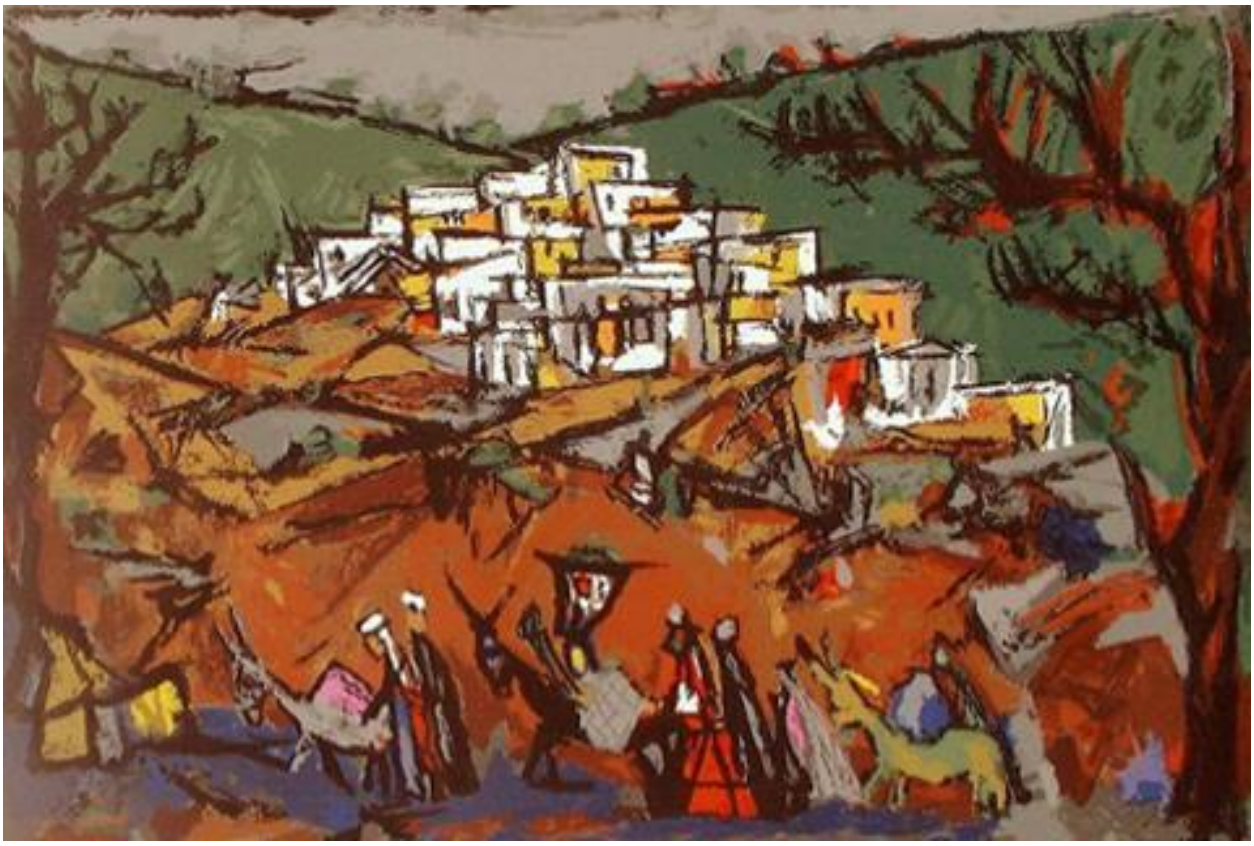
imperial conquests and tools to modernize its colonized nations through the built object to serve methods of resource extraction and domination.

Through such strategic erasure, a narrative emerges suggesting that these artists -and by extension the Israeli state - are not merely occupants, but rightful, authentic inheritors of an ancient past. This carefully constructed narrative conceals displacement under layers of culturally sophisticated imagery, effectively erasing Palestinians both physically and symbolically.

An expulsion by the Nazis in the Soviet Union, 1941, by Marcel Janco (however, he was empathetic with the Palestinian expulsions)

Thus, art-washing does not merely involve aesthetic reinterpretation or cultural erasure; rather, it explicitly claims ownership of historical legitimacy. The act of metaphorically and literally "painting over memory" extends beyond symbolic gestures: it actively constructs a false continuity

between the new occupants and the ancient landscape, suppressing the original inhabitants' lived experiences. By turning vernacular Palestinian homes and villages into sites of artistic production and cultural tourism, the colony establishes a deliberate amnesia about the Palestinians who built, inhabited, and cultivated these lands. Consequently, this process reshapes collective memory, influencing how the world perceives these spaces over time—promoting a narrative that legitimizes the colonizers as the true custodians of history and culture, effectively severing ties to the original Palestinian past.



On the Way to Ein Hod, Marcel Janco

In the Palestinian context, Israeli architect and scholar Sharon Rotbard invokes Albert Speer's "Theory of Ruin Value" to expose the ideological foundations embedded in Zionist spatial practices. Speer, after observing the enduring significance of Roman ruins, intentionally designed

monumental structures to decay in aesthetically pleasing ways ensuring their reception in historical memory. As Rotbard explains, Speer “sought to plot the degeneration of his own monuments, thereby controlling the way they would be received into historical record” (Rotbard, 2005, p. 152).

By appropriating displaced Palestinian villages as “instant antiquities,” the Zionist project positions itself as inheriting a timeless past, actively erasing Palestinian presence and denying Palestinians any legitimate claim to the land or its history. The ruin, stripped of its original Palestinian context and repurposed within a Zionist narrative, appears intentionally frozen in a constructed temporal limbo—never truly existing in the present, and thus unable to project a genuine Palestinian future. Consequently, the Palestinian landscape becomes trapped in a perpetual state of distortion, where the colonizers appear as both the rightful heirs and creators of culture, history, and memory.

Thus, Speer’s troubling notion of intentionally designing monuments with predetermined historical meaning resonates disturbingly within the Palestinian experience. The Palestinian ruin is transformed from a living space with tangible, recent histories into a symbolic object, stuck between romanticized nostalgia and the imagined futurity of Zionist historical projection. Palestinians are thereby denied their present reality and potential future on the land, while the colonizer’s act of appropriation becomes a continuous symbolic "funeral procession," carrying Palestinian history toward permanent oblivion.

This remains relevant because Zionism as an ideological project wanted to appropriate Palestinian displaced villages as its own antiques, Rotbard argues that such distortion frames the idea that the building never had a present, and therefore it will never have a future.

“Instead, it sits wedged awkwardly somewhere between a nostalgia for the glorious past of the neo-classical monument and a longing for the imaginary future of the Roman ruin. Folding this heterochronic time bomb into--the contemporary (and temporary) exterior of the building, the architect turns the present into a kind of festive funeral procession, drifting off towards some endless and unavoidable future.” (Rotbard, 2005, p. 154)

Rotbard’s imagery suggests that the appropriation of Palestinian ruins traps these places between two artificial temporalities: an idealized past that never belonged to their colonizers and a projected future from which Palestinians are excluded. The ruins become dislocated objects suspended outside historical reality - transformed into decorative shells that neither preserve nor accurately represent Palestinian heritage. By portraying Palestinian spaces as artifacts in a perpetual state of decay, the colonizers impose a false historical trajectory, creating a distorted sense of inevitability around Palestinian absence. Thus, these Palestinian spaces exist in perpetual tension: aesthetically admired yet politically silenced, their presence reduced to superficial displays that mask ongoing erasure beneath an illusion of timelessness and cultural permanence.

4.1 Fabricating a Nation: Hauntology of the future

Ein Hod’s mutilated memory and contemporary identity, constructed during Israel’s formative years, reflect the deliberate transformation of Palestinian lived spaces into symbolic instruments serving Israeli modernist aspirations. Ein Hod’s mutilated memory and contemporary identity, constructed during Israel’s formative years, reflect the deliberate transformation of Palestinian lived spaces into symbolic instruments serving Israeli modernist aspirations. This creates what philosopher Jacques Derrida coined as a hauntological condition: one in which erased histories persist as spectral traces that neither fully vanish nor fully belong to the present. The village’s remains are preserved as aesthetic fragments, emptied of their original life yet mobilized

to legitimize a fabricated Israeli national narrative. In this way, the future nation is built through managing the ghosts of what it has destroyed, turning erasure into exhibition, and absence into cultural capital. Usually, hauntology is mentioned in regards to the death of culture, when society is unable to contend with contemporary forms of culture, perhaps this teleological reading is about the haunting of a national project. The death of culture is the death of the modernist progressive project and is one that can grapple with Zionist conquest as a consequence.

The village's reinvention as an artists' colony coincided with Israel's urgent project of instantaneous state-building and national identity formation - a process dependent on physically occupying Palestinian villages and overlaying them with new ideological narratives. Rather than reviving genuine historical connections, Israel turned towards modernism as a vehicle to fabricate an identity divorced from the Palestinian cultural landscape it had forcibly emptied. This identity relied heavily on appropriating not only international aesthetic movements, such as the Bauhaus style, but also the very Palestinian spaces it occupied, reframing them as evidence of a timeless Israeli modernity. Thus, Ein Hod became emblematic of Israel's broader project: reshaping Palestinian spaces into sites of Eurocentric modernist experimentation, simultaneously erasing Palestinian histories and inventing a new, artificial sense of belonging and cultural authenticity (Efrat, 2017, p. 206).

This remains problematic because the Bauhaus was never authentically adopted in Israel, none of the Bauhaus students actually practiced there, and the Bauhaus itself was not merely a visual style, but a social and ideological movement that ended in Germany. The so-called Israeli "modernist" white structures of the 1950s were instead emblematic of the rapid, improvised manner in which settlements were formed. These settlements emerged quickly, lacking cohesive design principles, yet they were not simply products of haphazard improvisation. Rather, they

represented calculated visual imprints of the Zionist ideological project, embodying the cultural baggage and aesthetic preferences of European émigrés. Thus, architecture functioned as a tool of accumulation through dispossession, transforming seized Palestinian land and properties into profitable and aesthetically appealing assets for Israeli elites. This process reveals a deeper contradiction: beneath the rapid, seemingly unplanned development lay a deliberate and strategic romanticization of Palestinian locality. From the outset of Jewish colonization, the Israeli elite's attraction to Palestinian landscapes and properties signified their desire to appropriate an imagined "authenticity," legitimizing their cultural claims while erasing the Palestinian origin of these spaces (Efrat, 2017, p. 330).

Accumulation by dispossession means that the architecture of dispossession serves the interests of "business," transforming seized Palestinian land and properties into profitable assets. Zvi Efrat, an Israeli architectural historian, identifies two types of elites involved in colonizing dispossessed Palestinian villages and neighborhoods. The first, an academic elite, favored urban neighborhoods like Ein Kerem and Musrara in Jerusalem and Wadi Salib in Haifa; the second, an artistic and bohemian avant-garde, settled in neighborhoods such as Malha in Jerusalem, Old Jaffa, Old Safed, and artist colonies like Ein Hod. However, beyond economic motivations, these elites actively exoticized and romanticized the Palestinian landscape, characterizing it as an "authentic," timeless locality steeped in oriental charm (Efrat, 2017, p.150).

Through the lens of settler colonialism and orientalism, this exoticization process positioned Palestinians and their spaces as passive, picturesque objects awaiting discovery and transformation by the colonizer, thereby erasing Palestinian agency and historical specificity. Consequently, the act of settlement was not merely one of spatial occupation, but of cultural appropriation, rendering Palestinians invisible as contemporary subjects and portraying them

instead as symbolic relics of the past. By exoticizing and romanticizing the Palestinian landscape, these Israeli elites effectively became cultural and ideological soldiers, instrumental figures relied upon by the state to legitimize ongoing colonization and to reinforce the colonial narrative of a newly constructed Israeli authenticity.

Indeed, Zionism consistently employed contemporary aesthetic doctrines to legitimize and facilitate the colonization of Palestinian spaces. In the specific case of Ein Hod, the Zionist project utilized avant-garde movements, particularly Dadaism through figures like Marcel Janco, to visually and culturally rebrand displaced Palestinian villages as artist colonies. This strategic use of radical contemporary art not only erased Palestinian memory but actively replaced it with a modernist Israeli narrative. Similarly, Rotbard highlights how Zionism employed architectural doctrines such as the International Style in Tel Aviv and Le Corbusier's modernist urban planning principles in the 1950s and 1960s precisely to reinforce settlement and population dispersal. These parallel cases underscore that the appropriation and instrumentalization of contemporary art and architecture in Ein Hod were not isolated phenomena; rather, they represented part of a broader colonial strategy aimed at reshaping the Palestinian landscape to consolidate Israeli control and cultural dominance (Rotbard, 2015, p. 52).

> "The spectacle cannot be understood either as a deliberate distortion of the visual world or as a product of the technology of the mass dissemination of images. It is far better viewed as a weltanschauung that has been actualized, translated into the material realm – a world view transformed into an objective force" (Debord, 1999, pp. 12-13).

Art plays a significant role in materializing ideology, transforming abstract ideas into tangible expressions and influencing collective consciousness (Baronian, 2013; Saad-Filho, 1997).

However, in Ein Hod, the issue is not art itself, but rather the deliberate actions and complicity of artists who occupied the village. These artists, by actively choosing to settle and produce art within spaces forcibly emptied of their original Palestinian inhabitants, directly participated in the ideological erasure of Palestinian history. Thus, the artists become implicated - not merely through artistic production but through their conscious role in aestheticizing dispossession. Their creative activities lent ideological legitimacy to a colonial project, converting physical spaces of trauma into culturally celebrated sites, thereby obscuring Palestinian suffering beneath the veneer of artistic and spiritual advancement.

This dynamic was not only channeled through Ein Hod but violently enacted when European Jewish avant-garde artists migrated and occupied the ruins of a displaced Palestinian village. Ontologically, the artists' kibbutz served as a retreat specifically for these newly arrived European Jewish artists who identified with the Dada movement. This settler-artistic elite not only reinforced classist dynamics by attracting wealthy art collectors but also directly supported the Zionist settlement project. Settlement organizations and the Israeli government strategically utilized Ein Hod as an ideological branding tool, promoting the colony as a site of European-style artistic culture and tourism. The nostalgic European image of an idyllic artistic village became commodified - printed onto postcards, promotional literature, and Zionist propaganda - to appeal explicitly to European tastes and sensibilities, further erasing the Palestinian origins of the space.

Rotbard emphasizes that the Israeli use of Palestinian ruins draws directly from a broader European Orientalist tradition that developed in the nineteenth century, notably characterized by the romanticized "voyage to the East." Within this tradition, ruins were consistently depicted as visual evidence of Eastern inferiority through European artistic representations - paintings, engravings, and later, photographs. These representations not only served to exoticize and

infantilize Eastern societies but actively laid ideological groundwork that rationalized and justified colonial conquest, positioning European powers as rescuers or rightful inheritors of the East's neglected cultural treasures.

In the Israeli context, this Orientalist narrative took on a particularly potent and destructive role after 1948. The ruins created by the forced displacement and dispossession of Palestinians were immediately appropriated and reframed through the lens of this European tradition. Rather than acknowledging these villages as evidence of violent expulsion, Israel portrayed the ruins as inherently indicative of Palestinian cultural failure and inability to maintain their own heritage. Palestinian lived spaces, therefore, ceased to be recognized as contemporary, thriving communities and instead were recast as archaeological sites - instant relics waiting to be reclaimed and reanimated by Israeli settlers (Rotbard, 2015, p.155).

The ruin thus served a dual ideological function: it simultaneously erased Palestinian presence while creating a narrative of Israeli permanence and superiority. This strategic aestheticization transformed Palestinian ruins into powerful symbols within Zionist visual culture, symbols meant to legitimize the colonial project as both necessary and culturally virtuous. By visually aligning Palestinian ruins with European nostalgia for ancient civilizations and monumental decay, Israel deliberately positioned itself as an extension of European civilization, projecting itself as the natural inheritor of a supposedly neglected historical landscape. Consequently, the aesthetic framing of ruins became a self-fulfilling prophecy: the deliberate destruction and subsequent romanticized depiction of these spaces reinforced the settler-colonial logic that underpinned the ongoing erasure of Palestinian presence and history.

Today, on the official website for Ein Hod Artists' Village, one hotel room explicitly demonstrates how settler colonialism operates through intertwined strategies of cultural commodification, classism, capitalism, whitewashing, and aesthetic appropriation. For instance, the room named “Provence” is described as “a wonderful apartment completely accessorized with every convenience, for a perfect, romantic holiday stay. Just like the south of France” (Ein Hod, Israel Vacation Rental | Art B&B Batia & Claude in Ein-Hod - The Green Room | 1 Bedrooms 1 Bathrooms | Best Airbnb Alternative, n.d.). This deliberate framing, which evokes European aesthetics and nostalgic luxury tailored explicitly for elite tourists, actively erases the village’s Palestinian past. The exoticized reference to Provence obscures the violence inherent in the displacement of Palestinians and the strategic appropriation of homes deeply rooted in Ottoman-era Islamic and Arab architectural traditions—indigenous spaces recast as European commodities.

Through the theoretical lens of settler colonialism, Ein Hod exemplifies how colonization involves ideological, aesthetic, and class-based forms of erasure and replacement, going far beyond mere territorial conquest. Rotbard (2015) emphasizes that Ein Hod, like Old Jaffa and Ein Kerem, embodies the calculated Zionist strategy of converting Palestinian ruins into desirable cultural sites for Israeli bohemians and wealthy art collectors. Palestinian trauma sites are actively transformed into vibrant centers of elite escapism, commodified through art exhibitions, classical music festivals, and tourism. The appropriation of Palestinian vernacular architecture, alongside orientalist imagery and romanticized exoticism, turns Palestinian spaces into marketable cultural experiences, branded as authentic yet sanitized and palatable to foreign visitors. Hence, the transformation of Ein Hod into a European-styled artistic retreat not only masks the violence inherent in its history but materially legitimizes ongoing dispossession and colonization,

positioning Israeli identity as cultured, refined, and inherently European in its aesthetic and ideological aspirations (Rotbard, 2015, p.145).

The strategy of museumification extends beyond merely repurposing Palestinian spaces into Israeli cultural sites; it actively involves the Israeli public's complicity in reimagining and reconstructing these spaces to justify their right to settle there. This process of cultural camouflage allows Israeli society to forget or ignore the violent displacement of Palestinians, replacing uncomfortable historical realities with narratives emphasizing continuous Israeli presence, cultural legitimacy, and heritage preservation. Israeli citizens thus become active participants, not passive observers, in an ideological project that rebrands Palestinian trauma sites as authentic expressions of Israeli cultural identity. Thus, further entrenching an imperial pre-modern settler colonial ideology into every aspect of a contemporary public where lifestyles of consumerism and leisure become entangled with an apparatus of dispossession.

Drawing on Weizman's (2007) examination of spatial transformations, this cultural forgetting is reinforced not only through state apparatuses such as museums and memorials but also through everyday practices and ideologies embraced by Israeli communities themselves. Saloul (2012) further argues that such deliberate rewriting of history and landscape effectively normalizes settler colonialism by obscuring its original violence, enabling settlers to inhabit these spaces without confronting their contested past. Thus, the Israeli public's agency, driven by collective desires for legitimacy and belonging, becomes an essential mechanism in systematically erasing Palestinian memory and asserting a permanent right to colonized spaces.

Furthermore, the deliberate exclusion of Palestinians from the public narrative both internally and externally fosters a collective forgetting, normalizing the settler presence to the

extent that Palestinians become invisible or reduced to passive historical relics. The multiplicity of Palestinian presence and narrative is important to highlight. The erasure of 1948 Palestinians from state narratives renders them as third class citizens of a state that does not recognize them; the codification of their bodies and presence legally within the Jewish state refuses to contend with their past and rather rejects their involvement in the future. Meanwhile for the apparatus to stand, it also has to reject the presence of Palestinians outwards in the diaspora, detangling that for every Israeli settlement there is a displaced Palestinian camp.

This depoliticization is one of ontological erasure and premediated depoliticization of a nations emancipatory cause. In this sense, the Israeli public actively participates in the ideological reproduction of settler colonialism, perpetuating a psychological distance from the ethical realities of dispossession. Thus, the cultural and psychological mechanisms employed by Israeli society - grounded in selective nostalgia, historical revisionism, and ideological self-justification - do not merely erase Palestinian history but actively enable settlers to internalize their role as legitimate inheritors and rightful custodians of the colonized landscape.

5 Chapter Five: Conceptual Framework: Technologies of Power

Settler colonialism, as theorized by scholars such as Patrick Wolfe (2006) and Lorenzo Veracini (2010), is not a single historical event but an ongoing structure whose primary logic is the elimination and replacement of the Indigenous population. It functions through both material and symbolic mechanisms that secure settler permanence while erasing Indigenous presence. Within the Israeli context, this structure operates not only through physical displacement and territorial control but also through technological strategies that naturalize settler sovereignty. The processes of museumification, art washing, and the spectacle examined in this chapter represent key cultural manifestations of this ongoing project - technologies through which erasure, rebranding, and power are exercised and sustained.

This chapter situates the concepts of museumification and art washing within a broader theoretical framework that integrates the ideas of Michel Foucault, Herbert Marcuse, Fredric Jameson, and Guy Debord. Together, these thinkers provide the analytical tools to understand and operate mechanisms of power, subject formation, and erasure as technological tools of world-making, rendering their structure visible. This is important to recontextualize Palestine as a universal struggle not only against settler colonial entity but capitalism. Through their insights, museumification emerges not simply as a heritage practice, but as a political technology through which sovereignty is constructed, legitimized, and naturalized.

5.1 Technology of the Powerful

Drawing on Foucault's (1975) conception of power as productive and embodied, this framework views settler colonialism as a system that operates not only through coercion or dispossession but through the production of compliant subjects who internalize domination as moral and aesthetic fulfillment. Foucault's idea that power "produces the soul" (p. 157) - a reality formed around and within the body - illuminates how settler-colonial power is sustained through

cultural and psychological processes. Within this logic, settlers' aesthetic and spiritual engagement with Palestinian landscapes becomes a form of embodied colonization, transforming acts of appropriation into experiences of renewal, creativity, and self-realization.

Palestinians thus become subjected not merely physically, but culturally and psychologically as well - turned into historical artifacts within a curated national narrative. Settlers' subjective experiences - expressed as aesthetic appreciation, spiritual renewal, or cultural enrichment - normalize and justify their appropriation of Palestinian spaces, allowing them to dissociate from the material violence underpinning their presence. Hence, the "soul," in Foucault's terms, produced by settler colonial power is neither illusory nor abstract; rather, it emerges concretely through settlers' subjective engagement with colonized spaces, effectively masking the violent realities of dispossession beneath a veneer of cultural legitimacy and personal fulfillment.

"The reactivated remnants of an ideology, one would see it as the present correlative of a certain technology of power over the body. It would be wrong to say that the soul is an illusion, or an ideological effect. On the contrary, it exists, it has a reality, it is produced permanently around, on, within the body by the functioning of a power that is exercised on those punished - and, in a more general way, on those one supervises, trains and corrects, over madmen, children at home and at school, the colonized, over those who are stuck at a machine and supervised for the rest of their lives." (Foucalt, 1975, p. 157)

5.2 Technology of the Rational

Building on Foucault's analysis of productive power, Herbert Marcuse's (1964) concept of repressive tolerance further illuminates how domination persists through the normalization of desire, norms, and acceptable forms of dissent. Power here operates not only through coercion but through a technological rationality that orders perception itself. This rationality, exercised by

institutions and internalized by individuals, transforms control into consent by shaping what can be imagined, valued, or resisted.

In the settler-colonial context, technological rationality extends beyond surveillance or the commodification of Indigenous bodies; it also involves settlers as active participants in the colonial project. Those who profess liberal ideals of equality, peace, or cultural appreciation often become instruments of the state by appropriating Palestinian spaces in ways that fulfill personal desires for authenticity, creativity, or spiritual renewal. Through this process, colonial domination is aestheticized and moralized, turning dispossession into a practice of cultural self-realization.

Marcuse warns that such rationality produces a "technological reality" that encloses perception and reduces nature and history to instrumental functions (1964, p. 218). Within this one-dimensional framework, alternative narratives become almost unthinkable. Settlers thus internalize colonial logic, not merely as material advantage but as an ethical and aesthetic worldview that renders the occupation of Palestinian land natural, inevitable, and even benevolent.

Fredric Jameson's (1979) notion of the cultural logic of late capitalism complements Marcuse's critique, exposing how culture itself becomes an ideological instrument. Under capitalism, art and heritage operate as commodified forms that stabilize the social order by depoliticizing historical realities. In the Israeli settler-colonial context, these cultural logics transform Palestinian villages into curated, consumable landscapes—erasing histories of displacement while recasting them as sites of progress and creativity.

5.3 Technology of the Sovereign

Guy Debord's (1999) theory of the spectacle completes this constellation. The spectacle describes a social world mediated through images that reproduce ideological dominance. While

Foucault reveals how power molds subjectivity and Marcuse uncovers its rationalizing mechanisms, Debord shows how representation itself becomes domination. Within Israeli settler colonialism, the spectacle manifests in two interrelated ways: first, through the commodification of Palestinian art and culture as aesthetic display; and second, through the cultivation of cultural amnesia that renders dispossession invisible. The result is a mediated reality in which violence appears as creativity and erasure masquerades as renewal.

The transformation of Ayn Hawd into the Israeli artists' colony of Ein Hod exemplifies this process: Palestinian ruins are repurposed into aestheticized displays that celebrate Israeli cultural vitality while concealing the material violence of displacement. The spectacle thus fabricates a reality in which domination appears benign, even beautiful—a cultural landscape where erasure becomes art and colonization becomes heritage.

The spectacle of Palestinian arts and cultures involves transforming authentic, lived Palestinian experiences and identities into images and consumable commodities, presented as exoticized and depoliticized cultural products. This process neutralizes their historical meanings, enabling settlers and tourists alike to consume these commodified experiences without engaging with the ethical realities of dispossession. On the other hand, cultural amnesia represents a deliberate ideological forgetting, systematically obscuring or erasing the histories of violence, displacement, and colonization underlying these spectacles. The two processes, while different, reinforce one another: cultural amnesia allows the spectacle to operate uncritically, while the spectacle continually reproduces and deepens this collective forgetting. (Debord, 1999)

The spectacle functions precisely as the kind of "technology of power" Foucault (1975) describes - one that operates not only on bodies but on perception, desire, and consciousness.

Within the Israeli settler-colonial context, the spectacle mediates the relationship between settlers and the colonized landscape, shaping how they perceive, experience, and justify their presence. Through the constant production and circulation of aestheticized images - artistic exhibitions, heritage reconstructions, and touristic representations - settlers internalize a worldview where colonization appears natural, desirable, and culturally enriching, effectively masking - and perpetuating - the violence at the core of the settler colonial project.

In this sense, the spectacle becomes a disciplinary mechanism that governs perception: Palestinian histories, identities, and material traces are overwritten by curated narratives of creativity, peace, and national revival. The result is a visually and emotionally mediated regime of truth that naturalizes settler belonging while rendering Palestinian displacement invisible. This process reinforces Marcuse's critique of technological rationality, which he argues produces a "one-dimensional reality" that limits the possibility for genuine critique or opposition. Settlers, absorbed within this aestheticized logic, internalize a sense of moral and cultural superiority that conceals - and simultaneously perpetuates - the violence inherent to the settler-colonial project.

5.4 Technologies of Power

Within this theoretical constellation, art washing emerges as a key cultural technology that extends museumification's logic. It aestheticizes domination and produces settler subjectivity by transforming acts of dispossession into moral and creative practices. Art washing does not merely commodify Palestinian spaces; it affectively colonizes them; it reframes ownership over the residue of its dispossession into a spectacle of belonging.

Through this aesthetic process, settler-colonial sovereignty is both constructed and maintained - not solely through territorial control, but through the manipulation of perception, emotion, and collective memory. Museumification and art washing therefore function as

technologies of power, embedding ideology within cultural practice and aesthetic experience. They reveal how the politics of visibility and beauty themselves become instruments of control, transforming the settler-colonial project into a spectacle of continuity, creativity, and moral legitimacy.

Museumification and art washing therefore function as technologies of power, embedding ideology within cultural practice and aesthetic experience. They reveal how the politics of visibility and beauty themselves become instruments of control, transforming the settler-colonial project into a spectacle of continuity, creativity, and moral legitimacy. Building on this foundation, the following discussion expands the concept of art washing to account for its intersections with capitalist and ideological processes across global settler-colonial contexts.

Thus, traversing the intersections between capitalist market dynamics, political ideology, and settler colonialism raises critical questions about how the concept of art washing can be extended beyond its conventional application. In its most common usage, art washing refers to cultural strategies used to sanitize or legitimize processes of gentrification and urban redevelopment, particularly in Western contexts where art is deployed to obscure socioeconomic displacement. However, recent scholarship in settler-colonial and postcolonial studies, particularly in regions such as Africa, Latin America, and Southeast Asia, has expanded this understanding, examining how cultural and aesthetic production functions within projects of dispossession, racial capitalism, and Indigenous erasure.

Applying art washing to the case of Ein Hod within the framework of Zionist settler colonialism requires such an expansion. In this context, art washing cannot be understood merely as the commodification of urban space; it operates as an ideological mechanism deeply embedded

in the colonial structure itself. It simultaneously aestheticizes domination and erases the evidence of Indigenous presence, transforming material violence into moral legitimacy. Through artistic production and cultural discourse, Zionist ideology enacts a visual and symbolic replacement of Palestinian life, constructing a continuous narrative of Jewish nativeness and sovereignty.

Thus, art washing in the Israeli context is not simply an economic or cultural phenomenon; it is a settler-colonial technology of power. It fuses capitalist logic with theological and nationalistic claims, producing a form of political aesthetics that recasts dispossession as creativity and occupation as cultural flourishing. Understanding art washing through this expanded lens situates it firmly within the global repertoire of settler-colonial practices, while also emphasizing the specificities of Zionism as a modern manifestation that mobilizes both spiritual renewal and aesthetic labor to sustain settler sovereignty.

In Ein Hod, art washing intersects directly with settler colonialism by providing a mechanism through which settlers justify their occupation, appropriation, and erasure of Palestinian spaces through cultural and aesthetic means. Unlike traditional gentrification scenarios, which primarily reflect materialist concerns related to capitalist alienation and class displacement, the settler-colonial context introduces additional layers of ideological and cultural alienation. This involves not only the economic or physical displacement of the Indigenous Palestinian population but also the active rewriting and sanitizing of collective memory and historical identity.

Within this framework, art washing operates by aligning capitalist consumption, cultural commodification, and the ideological apparatus of the colonial state into a cohesive narrative that normalizes colonization. Palestinian lived spaces are systematically transformed into aestheticized commodities, providing settlers with cultural legitimacy, spiritual fulfillment, and personal

enrichment. Through these ideological and aesthetic strategies, settlers become not only consumers but active agents of the state, reinforcing the settler-colonial narrative that seeks to erase Palestinian histories and identities. This conceptual framework aligns with the broader arguments presented in this thesis, which examine how cultural practices, aesthetic spectacles, and commodified experiences actively reinforce settler-colonial power dynamics, producing both physical and psychological alienation among the colonized.

Art and space are socially produced and hold political and ontological implications. While art washing is a widely used term in cultural geography and urban studies, scholars have noted its conceptual fluidity and lack of fixed academic definition (Mould, 2015; Colomb & Novy, 2017). Rather than a formalized theory, it operates as a critical descriptor for processes in which artistic practices are co-opted - whether deliberately or unwittingly - in the service of capital, development, or ideology. As Mould (2015) defines it, art washing is "a process that uses artistic practices in the service of private capital," functioning as a strategy to make spaces more "amenable" to investment and the aesthetic desires of dominant groups. Within the Israeli settler-colonial context, this process acquires additional meaning: art is mobilized not merely to attract capital but to naturalize settler belonging, making the reappropriated landscape appear creative, legitimate, and continuous with a fabricated national narrative. The adoption of the Dada movement as the visual identity of the Ein Hod art community thus becomes more than a stylistic choice - it represents an aesthetic ideology that masks historical violence through irony, absurdity, and abstraction, aligning with the broader settler project of aestheticized erasure.

Researcher and artist-activist Stephen Pritchard (2017) approaches art washing as a process that "uses art to smooth and gloss over capitalism, hiding its primitive aggression." His analysis identifies multiple forms of art washing, including corporate art washing, developer-led art

washing, and government-led art washing. Corporate art washing involves the use of cultural sponsorship and branding to sanitize exploitative corporate practices; developer-led art washing typically manifests through public art projects or designated “cultural quarters” that accompany urban regeneration and property speculation; and government-led art washing refers to state or municipal efforts to deploy art in order to reinforce social agendas, promote civic identity, and legitimize political authority.

Within the framework of settler colonialism, however, this last category - government-led art washing - requires further differentiation. I argue that within a settler-colonial context, particularly that of Zionist nation-building, art is not merely instrumentalized to mask capitalist exploitation or urban redevelopment, but to aestheticize and legitimize processes of Indigenous displacement. Whereas gentrification displaces prior populations for economic or class-based reasons, settler colonial art washing operates through ideological and political imperatives aimed at the permanent elimination and replacement of Indigenous presence. In this sense, it constitutes a distinct form of art washing - one that mobilizes cultural production and aesthetic discourse as tools of territorial, historical, and symbolic domination. (Pritchard, 2017)

Israel’s policy of Israelization has advanced through multiple spatial, cultural, and ideological mechanisms, one of which is the deliberate use of museumification—a process through which Palestinian heritage is recontextualized to camouflage the settler-colonial project and obscure ongoing human rights violations against Palestinians. Following the mass expulsions and systematic destruction of villages during the Nakba in 1948, the vast majority of over 500 depopulated Palestinian villages were razed to the ground (Khalidi, 1992; Pappé, 2006). Yet, a small number of villages that survived physical demolition were subsequently appropriated, repurposed, and rebranded within Israeli state and cultural frameworks. These surviving sites

became aestheticized spaces of erasure - material remnants that simultaneously preserved and distorted the traces of Palestinian life.

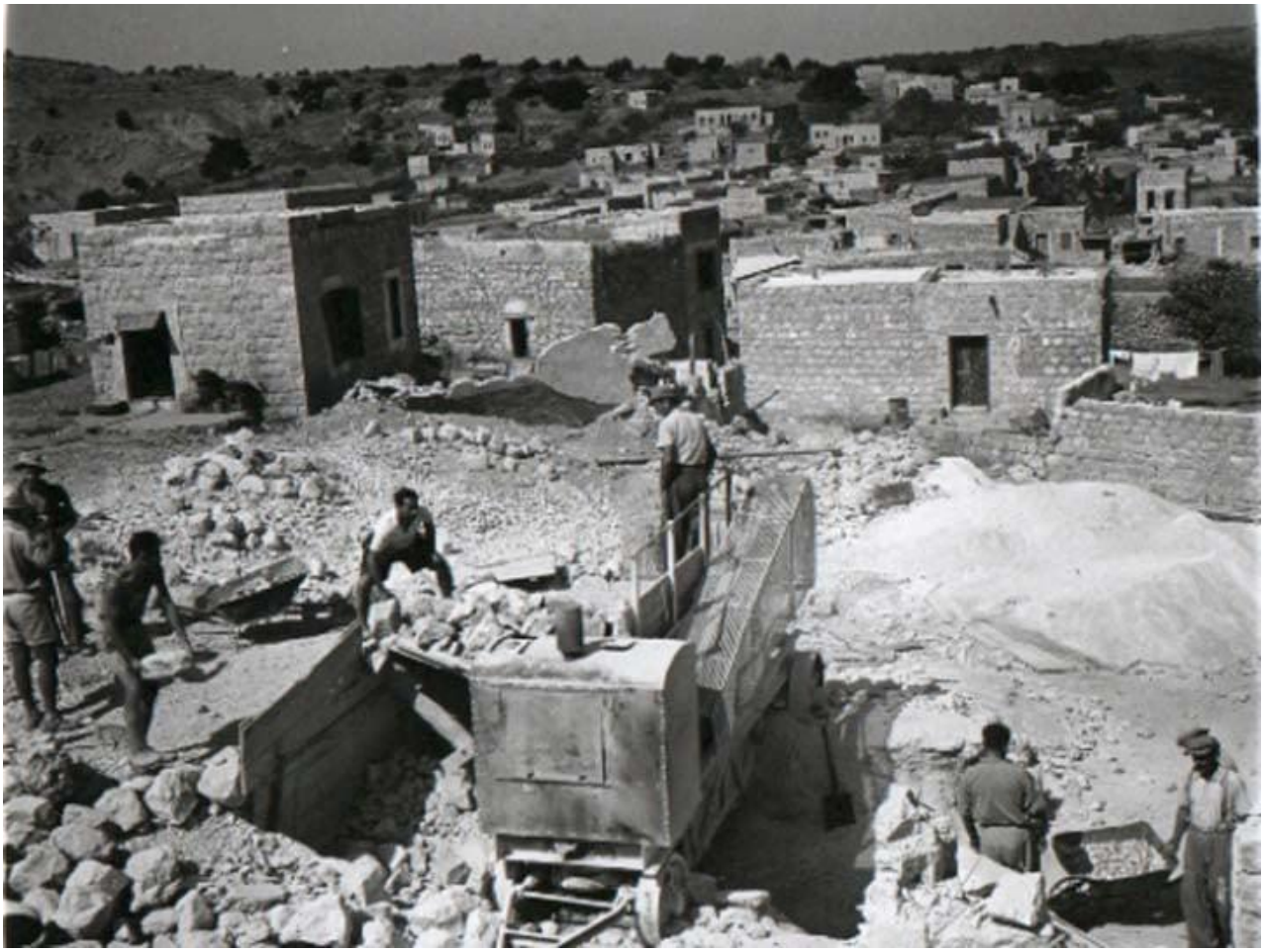
The village of Ayn Hawd (renamed Ein Hod) provides one of the most emblematic examples of this transformation. Located south of Haifa, Ayn Hawd was depopulated during Al-Nakba in 1948 when its residents were forcibly expelled. In 1953–1954, the Israeli sculptor Marcel Janco, a founding figure of the Dada movement, led the initiative to convert the empty village into an Israeli artists' colony, with state approval and funding from the Israel Association of Painters and Sculptors (Khalidi, 1992; Shlay, 2015). The newly named Ein Hod became a space where art, tourism, and national identity intertwined - its Palestinian-built architecture preserved but stripped of its original meaning. The village mosque was transformed into a café and bar named "Bonanza", symbolizing the commodification of sacred and communal space (Slyomovics, 1998; Tamari, 2017). What was once a living village rooted in Palestinian social and spiritual life thus became an aestheticized site of consumption, embodying both material preservation and symbolic annihilation.

Other Palestinian villages underwent similar processes of selective preservation and reinterpretation. The ethnically cleansed village of Lifta, on the western edge of Jerusalem, was never entirely destroyed; instead, its stone houses were preserved as picturesque ruins and designated a "heritage site" within the Israeli national park system (Zochrot, 2012; Abu-Sitta, 2016). While marketed as an "abandoned Arab village," Lifta's presentation erases the identities of its former inhabitants, many of whom still live as internally displaced persons within Israel. In al-Zeeb, near the northern coast, the village mosque was renovated and presented as a tourist attraction, and the mukhtar's house was converted into a museum, reinterpreting the site through the lens of Israeli heritage while concealing its Palestinian lineage (Mould, 2015; Zochrot, 2013).

Similarly, in Qisarya (Caesarea), the visible ruins predominantly emphasize Roman and Crusader layers, while the village's modern Palestinian past - uprooted in 1948 - has been erased from public displays and official narratives (Khalidi, 1992; Pappé, 2006).

Such transformations underscore the broader Zionist ideological strategy, which prominently features claims of cultural superiority and preservation to justify settler-colonial practices. Israeli cultural discourse and state propaganda frequently emphasize that Israel hosts "more museums per capita than anywhere else in the world," effectively using this cultural assertion as a tool of legitimization. This rhetoric transforms the abundance of museums into a national virtue, projecting an image of Israel as a civilized, enlightened society deeply invested in art and heritage. Yet beneath this claim lies a strategy of aesthetic displacement, where the proliferation of museums and curated heritage sites serves to obscure, justify, and normalize the erasure of Palestinian presence, the appropriation of Indigenous lands, and the rebranding of Palestinian heritage as Israeli patrimony.

These examples reveal that museumification functions as both a physical and ideological strategy of the settler-colonial state. By preserving selective fragments of the Palestinian built environment, while divorcing them from their social and historical contexts, Israel constructs an aesthetic of continuity that legitimizes its claim to the land. The process transforms ruins into curated sites of cultural consumption, where visitors encounter sanitized representations of "ancient" or "exotic" heritage, divorced from the violence of dispossession that produced them. In this way, museumification operates not as a gesture of preservation, but as an apparatus of erasure, rearticulating settler sovereignty through the aesthetic manipulation of memory, space, and history.



General View Of 'Ayn Hawd As It's Being Renovated By Jewish Artists In 1954 (Posted by Rachel Jones On May 26, 2001)

5.5 Commodification, Capital, and Settler Colonial Erasure

Linking these findings to Marx's concept of commodification further clarifies the mechanisms underlying the transformation of Palestinian cultural and historical sites into settler commodities. As previously argued, settler colonialism actively erases indigenous history by repackaging dispossessed cultural landscapes into consumable products, aligning closely with Marx's critique of capitalist commodification. According to Marx, as societies evolve toward private ownership and the stratification of social classes, not only material goods but also human relationships and cultural heritage become commodified, stripped of intrinsic value, and transformed into objects of exchange (Burchill, 2005).

In the Israeli settler-colonial context, lands that once embodied profound Palestinian historical and cultural meanings are similarly commodified into capital, losing their original significance in favor of economic and ideological appropriation. Marx's analysis thus illuminates how settler colonialism inherently involves redefining the indigenous cultural landscape as mere property, subjected to market logic and state control, facilitating the ongoing erasure and dispossession of Palestinians. This process aligns seamlessly with earlier discussions on materialism, commodification, and cultural amnesia, revealing revealing how capitalist dynamics are mobilized not only to exploit land but also to construct colonial legitimacy through cultural and economic domination.

Marx contended that private property forms the foundation of social inequality by amplifying self-interest and institutionalizing competition over scarce resources. Such disparities enable systemic exploitation, sustained through a state apparatus that functions as an instrument of repression and control (Burchill, 2005). Yet, while Marx primarily addressed capitalist exploitation in general terms, the Palestinian experience under Israeli settler colonialism reflects additional layers of dispossession distinct from classical capitalism. Unlike forms of exploitation driven solely by economic subjugation, Palestinian dispossession entails the deliberate erasure of historical and cultural identity, enacted through ideological and physical violence. Israeli settler colonialism therefore employs capitalist mechanisms of commodification and private ownership as tools of elimination - using the market to naturalize the removal of Indigenous presence and the rewriting of collective memory.

As Robert Nichols (2020, p. 8) observes, under settler colonialism, “dispossession merges commodification and theft into one moment.” In Palestine, this fusion takes on a distinctive character. Whereas Anglo settler projects in North America centered on privatizing Indigenous

lands as commodities, the Israeli colonial enterprise intertwines commodification with ideological reconstruction, aestheticizing Palestinian ruins, rewriting their histories, and reinscribing them within Zionist narratives of nativeness and modernity. The land is not merely commodified; it is re-imagined and re-signified, transformed simultaneously into capital and myth (Nichols, 2020, p. 8).

A historical-materialist perspective on settler colonial dispossession therefore connects the abstraction of land as commodity to broader practices of racial classification, hierarchy, and colonial violence (Bhandar, 2018, p. 29). The museumification of ethnically cleansed Palestinian villages exemplifies this dual process: land and heritage are commodified economically, while narratives of indigeneity are reconstituted as ideological commodities (Abu-Lughod, 2020). Though such spaces are often presented as touristic attractions, tourism itself is not the primary objective. Rather, the commodification of Palestinian spaces serves a deeper ideological function - normalizing dispossession in the consciousness of settlers and transforming colonial presence into cultural virtue.

By reconstructing Palestinian villages as aestheticized and marketable experiences, settlers validate their own presence and moral legitimacy on stolen land, transforming occupation into an act of creativity and preservation. This process of ideological self-validation enables settlers to perceive themselves as rightful inheritors and custodians, masking historical violence beneath layers of aesthetic and spiritual renewal. Consequently, the commodification and museumification of Palestinian heritage become central mechanisms through which the settler community constructs a hegemonic narrative of belonging - one that rationalizes colonization as natural, benevolent, and historically inevitable.

6 Chapter Six: Ayn Hawd Case - A Narrative Multiplicity

Ayn Hawd represents a striking paradox of artistic production amidst recent historical displacement. Unlike ancient archaeological sites commonly associated with distant ruins, Ayn Hawd consists primarily of Palestinian architectural remains from the immediate past homes, courtyards, mosques, and communal spaces that were forcibly abandoned during the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. The hauntology of these physical relics of a people no longer there, remains as a disruptive tool of resistance in the Zionist project to build national narratives.

This situation raises a poignant question: What kind of art emerges from a landscape still saturated with the memory of displacement, yet deliberately silenced through erasure? By clearly distinguishing between ancient ruins, such as those representing distant historical epochs, and the contemporary ruins created by displacement and dispossession, this chapter explores how Ayn Hawd's transformation exemplifies Israel's broader policy of museumification. Within this process, art functions simultaneously as a tool for ideological concealment and a potential site of revelation. It becomes a critical lens for examining the complexities inherent in settler colonial strategies that transform recent history into aesthetic commodities, effectively masking the violent erasure of indigenous Palestinian narratives beneath layers of cultural and artistic rebranding.

This chapter aims to recontextualize Ayn Hawd with a narrative-based methodology that aims to archive and preserve. Before 1948, Ayn Hawd was a thriving Palestinian village of approximately 700 inhabitants, primarily members of the Abu al-Hayja family, renowned for their deep connection to the land, agriculture, and communal life. The village's spatial configuration, stone houses clustered around shared courtyards, terraced fields, and the central mosque - embodied both social cohesion and environmental adaptation. Oral histories describe a community deeply rooted in the rhythms of olive and grape harvests, sustained by intergenerational knowledge and cultural traditions tied to Mount Carmel's landscape.

During the Nakba of 1948, Ayn Hawd's residents were expelled by Zionist military forces, joining the mass displacement of Palestinians across the Galilee and coastal regions. Unlike many other depopulated villages, Ayn Hawd was not destroyed. Its intact architecture stood as a silent witness to the violence of expulsion. The displaced villagers established Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah, a new settlement just two kilometers away, where they sought to preserve their social fabric, collective memory, and ancestral name. For decades, however, the new Ayn Hawd remained an "unrecognized village" within the Israeli state - denied access to water, electricity, and municipal services, and excluded from official maps. Only in 2004 was it formally recognized, though even this came with restrictive zoning policies that limited expansion and reinforced structural inequality.

This persistence reveals the temporal and spatial duality that defines Palestinian multiplicity on a broader level. Hence Palestinians in 1948 territories experience a different set of legal and social parameters than Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, the West Bank and in the diaspora. The story of Ayn Hawd and Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah encapsulates the broader struggle of 1948 Palestinians - those who remained within the new state's borders but faced ongoing dispossession through cultural, administrative, and spatial control.

In 1953, Marcel Janco, a Romanian-born Jewish artist and co-founder of the Zurich Dada movement, spearheaded the transformation of depopulated Ayn Hawd into the Israeli artists' colony of Ein Hod. Janco envisioned the site as a utopian haven for artistic renewal and spiritual retreat - a space where artists could reconnect with "authentic" Mediterranean forms and resist what he saw as the sterility of urban modernism. He described Ein Hod as a place "to preserve the natural spirit of creativity and harmony with the land".

Yet, this vision of preservation was paradoxically founded on erasure. The Palestinian houses, courtyards, and mosque that gave the village its architectural and cultural coherence were appropriated and re-signified as studios, galleries, and cafés. The village mosque, once a sacred communal center, was converted into a bar and café named Bonanza - a symbolic inversion of its prior meaning and function. Janco's artistic vision, though framed in universalist and modernist terms, effectively participated in what this thesis identifies as art washing - the rebranding of a colonized landscape as an aestheticized site of Israeli cultural vitality.

Through Janco's initiative, Ein Hod became a living museum, embodying what Israeli scholar Zvi Efrat (2018) calls "the aestheticization of settlement." Here, modernist artistic ideals and Zionist nationalist narratives merged seamlessly, transforming Palestinian dispossession into a tableau of creative rebirth. The transformation of Ayn Hawd under Janco thus exemplifies the settler-colonial instrumentalization of art: a cultural process that aestheticizes domination, legitimizes spatial appropriation, and obscures the Palestinian past under the guise of artistic freedom.

This section traces Ayn Hawd's journey, providing essential historical context by outlining how the village's physical preservation paradoxically enabled its ideological transformation, illustrating the broader dynamics of dispossession and cultural erasure central to the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

The duality of Ayn Hawd's existence, as a site of historical erasure and simultaneously a center for contemporary artistic expression, is reflected clearly in the various artistic, cultural, and tourist-oriented activities organized by the residents and local officials of Ein Hod. Following the forced expulsion of its original Palestinian inhabitants in 1948, the village was transformed into

the Israeli artists' colony "Ein Hod" in 1953 (Al-Hayja, 2001) and is now widely marketed through galleries, art workshops, cultural festivals, and guided tours, that attract both domestic Israeli tourists and international visitors seeking a cultural experience. Meanwhile, the displaced Palestinian residents established a nearby village, also named Ayn Hawd, initially intended as a temporary refuge but continuing to symbolize their ongoing struggle for recognition and basic services (Schechla, 2001). This deliberate duality—Israeli artistic production and touristic appeal built directly upon Palestinian displacement—highlights the complex dynamics of memory, identity, appropriation, and resistance inherent within the contested landscape of Ayn Hawd (Jabareen, 2025).

"After struggling for recognition for so long, I now recognize, how a group of people, a village, can finally obtain official status of their home, recognition of their right to live lawfully in their own village after so many years. It is true that many years have gone by, but this is a great achievement for everyone, a big step forward. The State of Israel has finally applied a policy of equality to us and I am hopeful that this will prove to be the case for other villages that are in similar situations as well. This step shows that there is hope for additional changes for the better as well. It helps to convince me that equality is attainable, no matter how difficult it may seem."

- Mohammed Abu al-Hija, Mayor of Ayn Hawd (2005)

Yet, while Abu al-Hija's statement reflects the emotional weight and affective importance of official recognition after decades of marginalization, it also underscores the paradox of recognition within settler-colonial regimes. The 2004 recognition of Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah did not signify a rupture in the colonial structure but rather its adaptation to a more "legible" and governable form. As Glen Coulthard (2014) argues, state recognition of Indigenous communities

often operates as a colonial strategy of incorporation—a means of managing dissent while leaving the underlying relations of dispossession intact. Similarly, Marcuse's (1964) concept of repressive tolerance helps reveal how such gestures of inclusion serve to stabilize the status quo: by appearing benevolent and progressive, the state neutralizes radical demands for justice and equality.

In this sense, the "recognition" of Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah may be understood less as a restoration of rights than as a reconfiguration of control. The village's subsequent master plan imposed strict spatial and developmental limitations, effectively preventing its expansion and maintaining its dependence on Israeli planning authorities. This conditional recognition mirrors what Foucault (1975) would describe as a technology of power—a form of governance that disciplines through visibility and regulation rather than overt repression.

Thus, while Abu al-Hija's hopeful words capture the enduring resilience of the community, they also reveal how settler-colonial power absorbs and transforms resistance into administratively acceptable forms. Recognition here functions as both a promise and a constraint: it legitimizes Palestinian presence only to the extent that it remains compatible with the settler state's spatial, political, and demographic objectives.

This duality, between Ein Hod, the Israeli artists' colony, and Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah, the Palestinian village established by those displaced from the original site—embodies two divergent trajectories born from the same act of dispossession. While Ein Hod's current Israeli residents live within a flourishing cultural landscape celebrated as a site of creativity and national pride, the Palestinians of Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah continue to inhabit a reality defined by displacement, restricted development, and symbolic marginalization.

Mohammed Abu al-Hija's reflection upon the long-awaited state recognition of Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah captures this paradox. His expression of cautious optimism, seeing recognition as a a sign of progress, reveals both the enduring resilience of a community that has fought for decades to exist within its ancestral land and the limits of such recognition under a settler-colonial regime. The villagers' happiness derives from the hope of legal stability after decades of living under threat of demolition, yet this "victory" remains partial and precarious. The state's recognition did not restore the villagers' original lands nor grant full equality; instead, it translated their presence into a tightly regulated form of inclusion, confined by zoning laws and planning restrictions that prevent physical expansion or political autonomy. If this highlights anything, it underlines the systemic technological tool of erasure, where Palestinians are asking for their biopolitical agency, to be recognized as civilians to the state that governs them before even reclaiming their historic reality of belonging to the original Ayn Hawd.

This dynamic exemplifies what Pierre Bourdieu terms symbolic violence—a subtle, normalized imposition of power that makes domination appear legitimate. The act of recognizing the village functions as a form of settler-colonial containment, transforming Palestinian persistence into a governable, depoliticized subjectivity. The paradox of cloning, of Ein Hod and Ayn Hawd thus dramatizes the structural logic of settler colonialism as an ongoing process: one that simultaneously eliminates and incorporates, erases and aestheticizes. The Israeli artists' colony materializes the settler fantasy of rootedness and cultural vitality, while the nearby Palestinian village embodies the unresolved trauma of displacement - present yet marginalized, visible yet politically absent. This contrast between cultural privilege and spatial precarity exposes the deep asymmetries of power through which settler colonial sovereignty sustains itself, not only by seizing land but by reshaping memory, visibility, and the very conditions of existence.

Drawing on Jonathan Cook's analysis in "Disappearing Palestine: Israel's Experiments in Human Despair" (2008), the metamorphosis of Ayn Hawd exemplifies a wider strategy employed across various Palestinian locales—including villages such as Qisarya, Safad, and Lifta—in which art, culture, and heritage are strategically instrumentalized to erase Palestinian memory and assert Israeli narratives. Cook argues that such tactics include repurposing Palestinian homes and communal buildings into galleries, cafes, museums, and tourist centers, deliberately obscuring their Palestinian origins. For example, in Ayn Hawd, the village mosque was converted into a café-bar named *Bonanza*, completely removing its religious and communal identity. Similarly, in Safad, former Palestinian homes have been transformed into galleries and guesthouses marketed specifically to Israeli and international tourists, omitting Palestinian histories from official narratives and promotional materials. In Qisarya, the Palestinian past is overshadowed entirely by Roman archaeological narratives, effectively masking the village's recent Palestinian history.

These spatial appropriations are not isolated acts of cultural adaptation but form part of a broader settler-colonial strategy of museumification, through which material remnants of Palestinian life are aestheticized, depoliticized, and reinscribed into the Zionist cultural imaginary. As this thesis argues, the process of museumification functions as both a physical and symbolic technology of power—appropriating Palestinian ruins not merely as heritage, but as instruments of sovereignty. Through selective preservation, reconstruction, and commodification, Palestinian spaces are recast as Israeli cultural artifacts, producing a sanitized narrative that renders colonization as creativity and erasure as preservation (Cook, 2008).

Within this landscape of institutionalized forgetting, organizations such as Zochrot, founded by Israeli activist Eitan Bronstein, represent crucial counter-currents. Zochrot's efforts to publicly mark destroyed Palestinian villages, host exhibitions, and develop educational programs

aimed at Israeli audiences disrupt the hegemonic Zionist narrative by re-inscribing Palestinian memory into the Israeli public sphere. The relevance of Zochrot's interventions lies precisely in their challenge to the mechanisms of museumification: they perform what Michel Foucault might call an insurrection of subjugated knowledges, exposing how state-sanctioned heritage operates as a disciplinary apparatus that regulates both memory and space. By inserting Palestinian narratives back into visible, tangible forms, street signs, maps, and memorials, Zochrot transforms the very terrain of museumification into a site of counter-memory and resistance.

Thus, the inclusion of Cook's critique and Zochrot's activism underscores the dialectical nature of the Palestinian cultural landscape: where Israeli settler colonialism aestheticizes erasure through art and heritage, Palestinian and critical Israeli actors re-politicize these same spaces through acts of remembrance. This tension—between erasure and counter-memory, spectacle and testimony—reveals that the struggle over sites like Ayn Hawd extends far beyond architecture or art; it is fundamentally a struggle over who holds the power to define history, identity, and belonging.

Similarly, Susan Slyomovics's ethnographic work (*The Object of Memory*, 1998) illuminates how Palestinian cultural practices and acts of remembrance constitute vital forms of resistance against settler-colonial erasure. Through oral histories, communal rituals, and daily practices, Palestinians actively reclaim agency over landscapes such as Ayn Hawd, sustaining narratives and identities that subvert Israeli efforts to reframe these landscapes through processes of museumification and aesthetic appropriation. Slyomovics's analysis demonstrates that memory, far from being a passive recollection of loss, functions as an embodied political practice—a means through which displaced Palestinians continue to inhabit and assert presence in spaces from which they have been materially excluded. (Slyomovics, 1998)

In the context of Ayn Hawd, these practices directly challenge the Israeli state's attempt to transform the village into a sanitized cultural artifact. Oral testimonies, familial storytelling, and ritual visits to ancestral lands serve as counter-narratives that re-inscribe Palestinian subjectivity into a landscape otherwise redefined through Israeli art, tourism, and heritage discourse. By foregrounding memory as a living, performative act, Slyomovics's work underscores the central argument of this thesis: that Palestinian remembrance itself disrupts the mechanisms of museumification and art washing, reclaiming the terrain of culture and representation from settler-colonial control.

Thus, Ayn Hawd emerges not only as a physical site of historical contestation but as a symbolic terrain where the politics of memory, erasure, and endurance continually intersect. The Israeli transformation of the village into an artists' colony demonstrates how cultural production can aestheticize domination and normalize dispossession, transforming violence into heritage and erasure into spectacle. Yet, the ongoing acts of remembrance by its displaced Palestinian inhabitants expose the fragility of this constructed order. Through collective memory, oral transmission, and everyday practices of belonging, Palestinians continually disrupt the narrative architecture imposed by the settler state.

In this sense, Ayn Hawd embodies the enduring struggle between aestheticized domination and decolonial resistance. Its layered histories reveal that the contest over heritage and space in Palestine is not simply a dispute about the past, but an ongoing battle over the power to define presence, identity, and truth itself.

Conclusion

Ayn Hawd's contemporary condition provides a critical lens for understanding the entanglement of cultural production, memory, and settler colonialism. While most depopulated Palestinian villages were demolished, Ayn Hawd, renamed Ein Hod, was physically preserved but ideologically and culturally transformed. This preservation was not neutral; it constituted a deliberate act of appropriation. Palestinian homes were repurposed to house Israeli artists, while communal and religious spaces were converted into galleries, cafés, and performance venues.

The survival of the built environment, stripped of its Palestinian identity, becomes a key element in the Israeli settler-colonial spectacle, a spectacle that aestheticizes erasure and repackages it as cultural renaissance. In this sense, the process of museumification operates as a settler-colonial mechanism of spatial sovereignty; one that fabricates legitimacy by reconfiguring Palestinian space into curated heritage, visually and symbolically securing the claim of ownership.

Zionism, as a settler-colonial ideology, has always operated in the material realm. Its narratives were not only written but built, embedded in architecture, landscape, and spatial reorganization. National parks, tourist sites, and curated art spaces have been instrumental in overwriting Palestinian presence and rearticulating the landscape as an expression of Israeli sovereignty. This aestheticization of domination transforms acts of dispossession into expressions of cultural vitality, allowing acts of violence to be reframed as creation.

This transformation is not merely about heritage preservation but about the visual and spatial performance of legitimacy; an ideological operation that renders Palestinian displacement invisible while embedding settler narratives within the terrain itself. In this way, sovereignty is not

only territorial but aesthetic, maintained through visual regimes that naturalize the settler's presence while displacing indigenous history.

Ein Hod exemplifies this performative logic. The establishment of the artists' colony was facilitated through state planning and cultural policy, reflecting how the aesthetic realm operates as an extension of political power. Artistic practices that might otherwise be associated with creativity and emancipation here function as mechanisms of normalization and possession. The colony's cultural image, marked by ideals of creativity, renewal, and cosmopolitanism, functions to mask the historical violence upon which it is built. Such state-led art washing rebrands dispossession as cultural achievement, cleansing the violence of displacement through aesthetic substitution. Through this process, art becomes an instrument of settler subject formation, transforming sites of dispossession into symbols of national vitality**.** This fusion of culture and governance demonstrates how the state instrumentalizes art to convert erasure into heritage and occupation into legitimacy.

At its core, the story of Ayn Hawd/Ein Hod illuminates a central contradiction: the same aesthetic forms that can inspire freedom and imagination are capable of sustaining domination when situated within colonial structures. The spectacle of the artists' colony celebrates cultural vitality while simultaneously suppressing Palestinian memory and continuity. Here, the spectacle functions as an ideological apparatus, transforming Palestinian absence into a visual presence emptied of history, replacing lived experience with representation. Yet, this suppression is never complete. Acts of remembering; through oral histories, collective narratives, and spatial persistence, constitute an enduring counter-discourse that challenges the state's monopoly on meaning.

Memory, as argued throughout this thesis, operates as counter-sovereignty: a decolonial practice that reclaims both the narrative and spatial terrains upon which settler authority depends.

The replacement of Ayn Hawd with Ein Hod was neither incidental nor inevitable; it was a calculated act of cultural and political substitution designed to replace one community's presence with another's narrative of belonging. This thesis has shown that such transformations depend not only on physical displacement but also on symbolic practices of renaming, repurposing, and aesthetic re-inscription that naturalize Palestinian absence. The case of Ayn Hawd thus exposes how settler colonialism functions simultaneously as a material and representational regime, one that constructs sovereignty through the erasure and commodification of the colonized. In this regard, commodification merges cultural appropriation and dispossession into a single process, converting land, architecture, and even memory into instruments of capital and ideology.

However, Ayn Hawd's story is also one of persistence. The establishment of Ayn Hawd al-Jadidah by displaced residents, their sustained attachment to the original village, and broader Palestinian practices of remembrance reflect a refusal to accept erasure as final. These practices of memory and belonging constitute a form of counter-sovereignty: they reassert presence within a landscape designed to deny it. Through this endurance, Palestinians transform the terrain of loss into one of ongoing resistance. Their continued remembrance undermines the state's spectacle of forgetting, revealing the instability of settler sovereignty and the enduring potential of decolonial reclamation.

Ultimately, this thesis demonstrates that state museumification in the context of Israeli settler colonialism are not peripheral cultural processes but central technologies of power. They construct sovereignty through aesthetic means and sustain political domination through the

management of visibility and memory. Yet, the persistence of Palestinian memory, narrative, and attachment reveals the instability of this colonial order.

The struggle over Ayn Hawd - its meaning, represents ontological presence and continuity. To expand the framework to reckon with the current slaughter and genocide in the Gaza Strip, the story of Ayn Hawd provides a praxis to navigate erasure. The invisibility and fetishization of Palestinian bodies, stripping them from their biological and legal agencies while displacing them and altering their ecological environments is key to understanding the continued concept of the Nakba. The Nakba is ongoing, and the struggle to stay in ontological rememberment is one of archiving, preservation, and narrative. In this contested terrain, the act of remembering becomes a radical assertion of existence, a form of decolonial imagination that resists erasure and reclaims both history and space as living, evolving sites of a Palestinian nation that once will-be. It is a tool to resist an ontology that is not ready to reckon with the question of Palestine.

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Appendices

Appendix A
Location and Cartography

Map of Ayn Hawd and surrounding area, 1870s.

The Survey of Western Palestine. London: Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, 1880.

It should be noted that the above detailed pre-Nakba map was based on British Mandate's Survey of Palestine & Village Statistics; both have been made available online.

Pre Nakba

Post Nakba

Appendix B

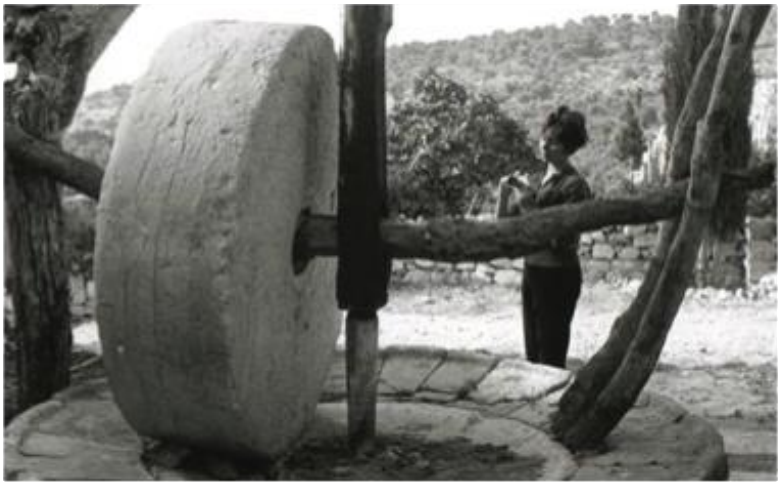
Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

All images in this annex were retrieved from the "Pictures" section of the Ayn Hawd village page on the Palestine Remembered website (https://www.palestineremembered.com/Haifa/Ayn-Hawd/index.html#Pictures), accessed on June 17, 2025. Used for academic purposes under fair use.

Posted by Rachel Jones

Scanned from All That Remains by Dr. Walid Khalidi "Remains of the village cemetery, 1987"

Scanned from All That Remains by Dr. Walid Khalidi "Village mosque, now the Bonanza Bar Restaurant, 1987"



Posted by Rachel Jones

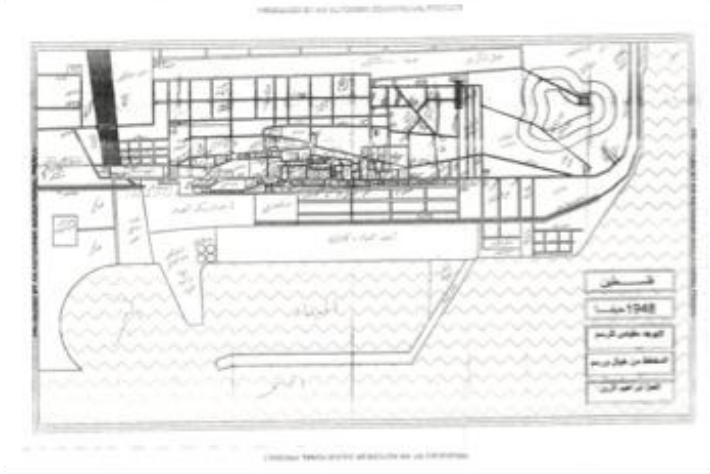
Scanned from All That Remains by Dr. Walid Khalidi "Stone Arch In 1987"

Posted by Rachel Jones "Another Palestinian house which have been stolen. it seems it has been renovated since 1948 Nakba"

Posted by Abu Raya

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948



Remembered by Ibraheem Al-Zeben

Posted by Rachel Jones

Scanned from All That Remains by Dr. Walid Khalidi

Posted by Abu Raya "Settlers cultivating Ein Hod's land after its displacement

Posted by Abu Firas "Irbid (Jordan) Refugee Camp where many of 'Ayn Hawd refugee lives now"

Posted by Abu Firas "Ayn Hawd Family (Abu-Fawzi Family)"

Ein Hod Painting's class at work in a studio in the artists' village Ein Hod

Posted by Abu Firas "The alleyway leading to the house of Hekmat al-Sa'eed, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of Atah al-Najeeb"

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of al-Haj Embada el-Hassan #2, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of al-Haj Embada el-Hassan, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas

Posted by Abu Firas "The entrance to 'Ayn Hawd, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The entrance to Wadi al-Falah nearby 'Ayn Hawd, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of al-Haj Dahood #2, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The stolen Grape Vines -Krom el-Inab- which belongs al-Haj Yusef, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of Abed el-Salam al-Rashed, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "Abu Al Haija Nassr, 2000. This is my mother and her sister. standing in front of thier house where they borned before 1948"

Posted by Abu Firas "Abu Shakeeb cafe house, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The entrance to the house of al-Haj Yusef, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "The entrance to the house of al-Haj Musa el-Nemer, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas "Ared al-Manazel neighborhood, 2000"

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Photographs of Site Transformations: Before and After 1948

Posted by Makbula Nassar "Arab youth organization returning to Eyn Hawd, 2007"

Posted by Makbula Nassar

Posted by Makbula Nassar "Youth returning to Eyn Hawd"

Posted by Makbula Nassar

Posted by Suheel Makhoul

Posted by Makbula Nassar "the village's school converted to commercial spaces"

Posted by Abu Firas "The house of al-Haj Emtaweh al-Sa'eed, 2000"

Posted by Abu Firas

Posted by Aqsa Association-Palestine-1948

Posted by Suheel Makhoul "the village's school converted to commercial spaces"

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Posted by Sahar Ruhana "Broken Roots, 2009"

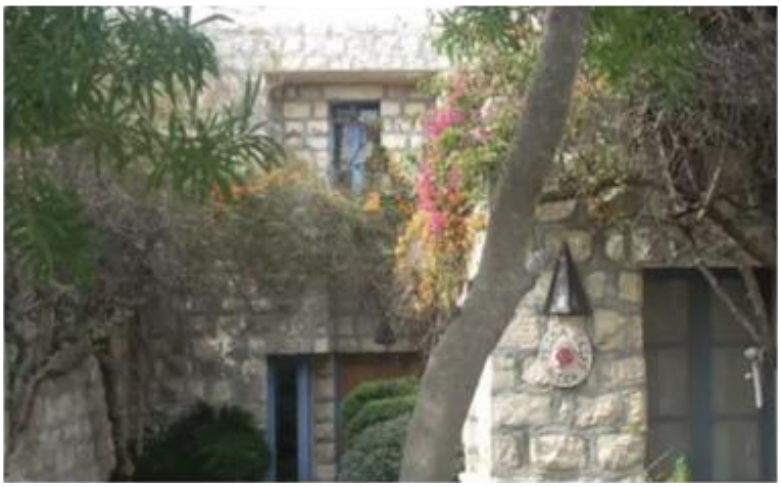
Posted by Abu Raya "olive groves"

Posted by Abu Raya

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit



Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Posted by Suheel Makhoul "Renovated House, Recent visit"

Posted by Abu Raya

Renovated House, Recent visit

Renovated House, Recent visit

Appendix C

Zochrot Tour Material and Signage Samples

Zochrot is an NGO that has been working since 2002 for exposing and disseminating historical information about the Palestinian Nakba in Hebrew, with a view to promote accountability for the Nakba among the Jewish public of Israel and the implementation of the Right of Return of Palestinian refugees. (Zochrot, 2025)

Figure 1: Zochrot (2025), Who, Why and How. Retrieved from https://www.zochrot.org/articles/view/56525/en?Who_Why_and_How

Figure 2: Image from Zochrot (2025). Retrieved from https://www.zochrot.org/articles/view/56525/en?Who_Why_and_How

Zochrot. (2025). Who, why and how ["Our mission" section]. In Who, Why and How. Zochrot. Retrieved June 17, 2025, from https://www.zochrot.org/articles/view/56525/en?Who_Why_and_How

The forest through the trees: What the Carmel fire reminds us about Israel's history (Blumenthal, 2010)

Figure 3: Image from Zochrot, Searching for the Lost Palestinian Villages.

"Among the towns that have been evacuated is Ein Hod, a bohemian artists' colony nestled in the hills to the north and east of Haifa. This is not the first time Ein Hod was evacuated, however. The first time was in 1948, when the town's original Palestinian inhabitants were driven from their homes by a manmade disaster known as the Nakba. Most of the original inhabitants of Ein Hod, which was called Ayn Hawd prior to the expulsions of '48, and was continuously populated since the 12th century, were expelled to refugee camps in Jordan and Jenin in the West Bank. But a small and exceptionally resilient band of residents fled to the hills, set up a makeshift camp and watched as Jewish foreigners moved into their homes. In 1953, a Romanian Dadaist sculptor named Marcel Janco convinced the army not to bulldoze Ein Hod as it did the scores of nearby Palestinian towns it had ethnically cleansed five years prior. He proposed establishing an art commune to generate tourism and contribute to the culture of Zionism. Today, the rustic stone homes that once belonged to Palestinians are quaint artist studios, while the village mosque has been converted into an airy bar called Bonanza. Visitors to the town are greeted at the entrance by Benjamin Levy's "The Modest Couple in a Sardine Can," a sculpture depicting a nude woman and a suited gentleman in a sardine can, which was unveiled by Israeli President Shimon Peres in 2001."
(Blumenthal, 2010)

Blumenthal, M. (2010, November 30). The forest through the trees: What the Carmel fire reminds us about Israel's history. Zochrot. https://www.zochrot.org/publication_articles/view/51193/en?The_forest_through_the_trees_What_the_Carmel_fire_reminds_us_about_Israels_history

Appendix D

Webpage Excerpt – Vacation Rental Description from Ein Hod Artists' Village

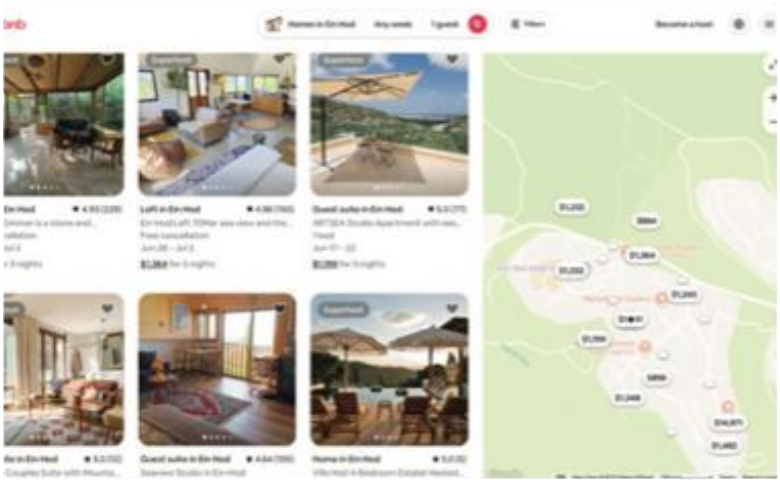


Figure 1: Screenshot from Airbnb (n.d.), showing listings in Ein Hod.

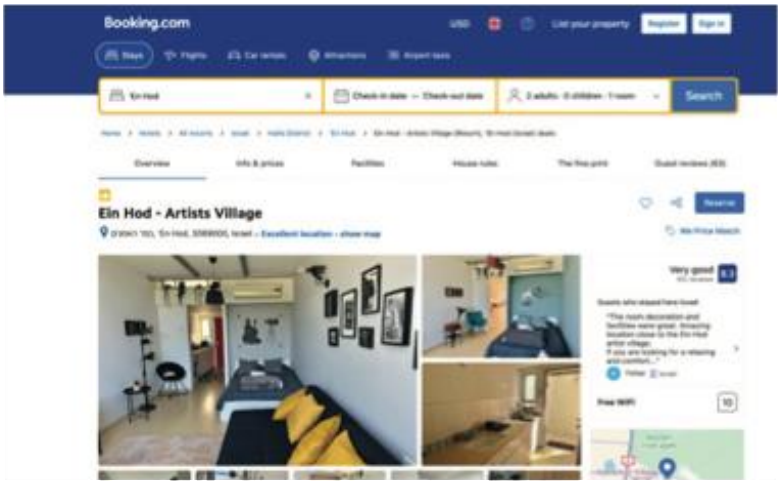


Figure 2: from Booking.com, showing the lodging listing for Ein Hod Artists' Village.

Airbnb. (n.d.). Homes in Ein Hod, Israel. Retrieved June 17, 2025, from https://www.airbnb.com/s/Ein-Hod--Israel/homes

Booking.com. (n.d.). Ein Hod Artists' Village. Retrieved June 6, 2025, from https://www.booking.com/hotel/il/ein-hod-artists-village-yn-hvd.en-gb.html

Ein Hod Artists' Village. (n.d.). Guest rooms [Lodging section]. Retrieved May 5, 2025, from https://www.ein-hod.org/en/guest-rooms/

Figure 3: Displays the interior and exterior of artist-designed guest rooms available for rent in Ein Hod, the artist village. Screenshot from the "Lodging" section of the Ein Hod Artists' Village website.

الملخص

في سياق الخطاب المعاصر حول الاستعمار الاستيطاني الصهيوني في فلسطين، يبرز مفهوم "المتحفة " (Museumification)كعدسة نقدية لتحليل آليات المحو الثقافي وإعادة تشكيل السرديات التاريخية، وبناء السيادة الاستعمارية الاستيطانية من خلال الوسائط الثقافية والمكانية. تستعرض هذه الأطروحة المتحفة بوصفها أداة مركزية ضمن المشروع الاستعماري الاستيطاني الصهيوني، مع التركيز على تجلياتها في تحويل القرى الفلسطينية المهجّرة إلى فضاءات معاد تخيّلها تخدم الرواية الرسمية الإسرائيلية، وتُكرّس بذلك ادعاءات الاستمرارية والشرعية الاستعمارية.

تُركّز الدراسة على قرية عين حوض، جنوب حيفا، كحالة دراسية تكشف الكيفية التي يُعاد من خلالها إنتاج الحضور الفلسطيني داخل سرديات فنية وسياحية تُخفي واقع التهجير والاستيلاء. فمنذ تحويل القرية في خمسينيات القرن الماضي إلى مستوطنة فنية تُعرف بـ "عين هود"، جرى تسليع المكان واستغلال رموزه المعمارية والثقافية لإنتاج مشهد بصري يُعزز محو الذاكرة الفلسطينية ويخفي سياسات الإقصاء خلف خطاب الفن والإبداع.

ترصد الدراسة آليات المحو الرمزي والمادي من خلال ممارسات مثل الغسيل الفني(Art Washing) ، حيث يُوظف الفن كأداة لتجميل المشروع الاستيطاني وإضفاء طابع إنساني أو تقدّمي على واقع الإقصاء. كما توضّح كيف تُسهم عمليات تحويل الأماكن الفلسطينية إلى معارض فنية وتغيير دلالاتها الرمزية في إنتاج سردية استعمارية تُعيد تشكيل الفضاء والهوية بما يخدم هيمنة المستوطن.

وتُبرز الدراسة الدور الحاسم الذي تلعبه الثقافة والفن في إنتاج الوعي والسيطرة على الذاكرة الجماعية من خلال تحويل قرى مثل عين حوض إلى مواقع تنازع بين الطمس والتذكّر، بين الإقصاء وإعادة الكتابة. كما تُبيّن كيف تتقاطع عمليات إعادة الهيكلة المكانية، وإعادة النقش الجمالي، والتلاعب بالتراث لتنتج محوًا للوجود الفلسطيني، وفي الوقت ذاته تُرسّخ الأسس الأيديولوجية والبصرية للسلطة الاستيطانية الصهيونية. إن هذه العمليات لا تقتصر على إخفاء الوجود الفلسطيني، بل تُعيد صياغته كأثرٍ ساكن من الماضي، مسهمةً في بناء هوية إسرائيلية إقصائية تُهمّش الرواية الأصلية وتُقوّض الذاكرة والحقوق الفلسطينية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دراسات الاستعمار الاستيطاني والشعوب الأصلية، سوسيولوجيا المعرفة، علم المتاحف، الذاكرة الجمعية، الغسيل الفني.