



**Deep(er) mappings of Palestinian and native
American homelands in *Lisa Suhair Majaj's* poem
"Fifty years on / stones on an unfinished wall" and
Deborah A. Miranda's "Indian cartography"**

التخطيطات الخرائطية (الأعمق) للأوطان الفلسطينية والأمريكية الأصلية في
قصيدة ليزا سهير مجاج "خمسين عامًا لاحقًا / حجارة على جدار غير منتهي"
وقصيدة ديورا أ. ميراندا "الخرائط الهندية"

**Cartographies (plus) profondes des terres natales
Palestiniennes et Amérindiennes dans le poème de
Lisa Suhair Majaj "Cinquante ans après / pierres sur un
mur inachevé" et dans "Indian cartography" de
*Deborah A. Miranda***

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ملخص

يتناول هذا البحث دراسة تحليلية لقصيدتي الشاعرة الفلسطينية الأمريكية ليزا سهير مجاج بعنوان "خمسون عامًا لاحقًا / حجارة على جدار غير منتهي" و الشاعرة الأمريكية الأصلية ديورا أ. ميراندا بعنوان "الخرائط الهندية". يتمحور البحث حول كيفية إبراز هاتين القطعتين الشعريتين تفاعلاً ديناميكياً بين الحنين الترميمي والتخطيط الخرائطي الأعمق، حيث يتم التركيز على إعطاء "المعرفة الأصلية" الأولوية على التفسيرات الغربية عند فهم ورسم خرائط المواقع الأصلية. تعمل هذه القصائد بشكل فعال كسجلات جغرافية لأوطانها، معتمدة نهجاً وثائقياً يمزج بين الحنين والرسم الخرائطي، وذلك لتقويض الجهود الاستعمارية المستمرة التي تهدف إلى محو أي علامات أصلية على الأراضي المستولى عليها.

الكلمات الدالة: التخطيط الخرائطي الأعمق؛ الأوطان المسلوقة؛ شعر السكان الأصليين؛ الحنين؛ الشعر الفلسطيني الأمريكي.

Abstract

The present article analyses Palestinian-American poet Lisa Suhair Majaj's poem "Fifty Years On/Stones on an Unfinished Wall" and Native American poet Deborah A. Miranda's "Indian Cartography". It examines how these two poetic pieces evince a dynamic interplay between restorative nostalgia and deeper mapping, which focuses on prioritizing "Indigenous knowledge" over Western interpretations when understanding and mapping indigenous locations. Through deeper mapping and restorative nostalgia, we argue that these poems serve as cartographic records of indigenous homelands, employing a cartographic-nostalgic documentation approach that takes a decolonial stance against persistent colonial efforts aimed at erasing indigenous markers of the dispossessed lands.

Keywords: deeper mapping; dispossessed homelands; Native American poetry; Nostalgia; Palestinian-American poetry.

Résumé

Le présent article analyse le poème "Fifty Years On/Stones on an Unfinished Wall" de la poétesse palestino-américaine Lisa Suhair Majaj et le poème "Indian Cartography" de la poétesse amérindienne Deborah A. Miranda. Il examine comment ces deux pièces poétiques révèlent une dynamique entre la nostalgie réparatrice et la cartographie plus profonde, qui privilégie le "savoir indigène" aux interprétations occidentales lorsqu'il s'agit de comprendre et de cartographier les lieux indigènes. À travers la cartographie plus profonde et la nostalgie réparatrice, nous soutenons que ces poèmes servent de registres cartographiques des terres ancestrales, en adoptant une approche de documentation cartographique-nostalgique qui prend une position décoloniale contre les efforts coloniaux persistants visant à effacer les marqueurs indigènes des terres spoliées.

Mots-clés : cartographie approfondie ; terres spoliées ; poésie amérindienne ; Nostalgie; Poésie Américano-Palestinienne.

Introduction

The Zionist occupation of Palestine and the European colonization of North America stand as significant examples in the history of settler colonialism, characterized by systematic genocide and the cartographic erasure of Indigenous homelands. An inherent aspect of colonial expansion and domination is the practice of colonial mapping, which serves the dual purpose of demarcating and controlling territory while also circumscribing specific geographical areas for colonized indigenous populations, thereby exerting authority and control over them. Due to their shared history of settler colonialism, the literary traditions of the Palestinian and Native American communities converge at a thematic juncture marked by the



intertwining narratives of dispossession, settler colonialism, and an enduring yearning for their occupied homelands.

Most interesting to note, both literatures exhibit a streak of nostalgia, evoking a longing for a pre-colonial status quo ante of their dispossessed lands. In his article entitled "Nature in Arab-American Literature: Majaj, Nye, and Kahf," Ismet Bujupaj explores the intersection of nature, identity, and displacement in the works of three prominent Arab-American authors—Suhair Majaj, Naomi Shihab Nye, and Laila Halaby Kahf. Bujupaj predominantly engages with the idea of "deep mapping," a term rooted in ecocritical theory that aims to study the relationship between literary texts and the environment (Glotfelty, Fromm, 1996, p. xviii).

Within the paradigm of ecocriticism, deep mapping involves the detailed naming and personal engagement with a place achieved through narrative (Roberts, 2007, p.6). While Bujupaj identifies Majaj's work as employing deep mapping to chronicle Palestinian displacement, he does not extend this analysis to explore how Majaj, specifically, integrates restorative nostalgia into her reclamation of homeland. In contrast, this article proposes that Majaj's approach goes beyond the Western concept of "deep mapping," which emphasizes the physical and sensory aspects of place, to include the revised notion of "deeper mapping". This concept of a "deeper map" can be understood as a form of Indigenous mapmaking that acknowledges the significance of narratives—particularly local ones—in shaping the history of Indigenous cartographic practices (Johnson, 2007, p.114).

This article undertakes an unprecedented comparative study of Palestinian-American poet Suhair Majaj's poem "Fifty Years on and Stones on an Unfinished Wall" and Native American poet Deborah Miranda's "Indian Cartography". It builds on Svetlana Boym's concept of restorative nostalgia and the idea suggested by Tasnim Qutait that proposes "examining nostalgia's role in constructing cultural memory" (Qutait, 2021, p. 19).

Crucial to the close reading of the poetic works is the notion of "deeper mapping," as articulated by Kelli Lyon Johnson. Specifically, the research addresses the question: How do Majaj and Miranda integrate Indigenous knowledge and cultural memory into poetic cartography, and what implications does this have for decolonizing the maps of their respective colonized homelands? By effectively using restorative nostalgia and deeper mapping, we argue that Miranda and Majaj construct a cartographic



documentation of homelands which, in turn, stands in the face of consistent colonial endeavours to erase of any indigenous existence.

1. Deep (er) mapping narrative

The notion of “deep map” gained prominence through the writer William Least Heat-Moon, who introduced it in his 1991 book *Prairy Erth: (A Deep Map)*. This style of environmental writing is characterized by its intertextual, interdisciplinary, and multi-perspective approach of psychogeographical excursions that explore the interpersonal connections with places, interweaving biography, archaeology, memories and anecdotes, oral history, folklore, natural science, and anthropological traces (Pearson, Shanks, 2001, pp. 64-65). Henceforth, deep maps serve as a means of presenting the multifaceted histories of a place, weaving together the intersecting narratives of natural and human history (Maher, 2005, Country, p. 55).

Kent Ryden, the author of *Mapping the Invisible Landscape: Folklore, Writing, and the Sense of Place* employs a metaphorical concept of “depth” to emphasize that a place's true essence goes beyond its physical and sensory aspects. This depth is a complex amalgamation of human experiences, history, memories, associations, and emotional attachments that accumulate over time in a specific location (Ryden, 1993, p. 91). Deep map is also deliberately cartographic, involving the creation, exploration, and revision of maps. Deep mappers simultaneously question the reliability of maps while depending on them, as they seek to challenge the conventional grid-like standardized representations of landscapes (Maher, 2014, *The Biome*, p. 1).

In her book *Deep Map Country: Literary Cartography of the Great Plains*, researcher Susan Naramore Maher emphasizes that what sets the deep map narrative apart from other place-based writings is its focus on collecting a multitude of interconnected narratives from a specific locale, making that place and its landscape an intricate and complex subject. Deep maps aim to encompass various stories in an attempt to capture the very essence of the place, (p.56) along with its anthropological and archeological strata. Furthermore, these deep maps have a vital role in resurrecting lost worlds and illustrating ways to pay homage to spaces that have diminished over time.

Indeed, deep maps' significance attests to their multi-layered orchestrations of historical accounts, cultural nuances, environmental details, and personal stories. However, the aforementioned theorists overlook the role of indigenous knowledge pertaining to a geographical area which adds more

depth to its representation. In this regard, Kelli Lyon Johnson suggests renaming “deep mapping” to “deeper mapping” (Johnson, 2007, p.114) with the goal of underlining the significance of valuing indigenous knowledge over Western perspectives when exploring indigenous terrains. Indigenous maps diverge from the standard European approach, prioritizing context and historical elements rather than adhering to a uniform scale. Indigenous North American mapmakers accentuate the cultural importance of topographical features, frequently depicting them on a larger scale to accentuate their significance. As an example, these mapmakers could choose to exaggerate the size of a culturally significant lake in comparison to other bodies of water on the map, emphasizing its paramount significance (p.106).

In embracing Kelli Lyon Johnson’s notion of “deeper mapping” as a means of valuing indigenous knowledge and perspective over Western colonial ones, we can explore how this approach enriches the portrayal of dispossessed lands in Majaj and Miranda’s poetry. Through “deeper mapping” in their poetry, the emphasis shifts from purely geographical or environmental attributes to a profound exploration of the cultural and historical significance of homelands.

2. Nostalgic discourse: limitations and shift in perspective

In their poems, Majaj and Miranda navigate a complex blend of nostalgia for the lost indigenous traces in Palestine and the United States, along with a desire to remap colonized places from an indigenous perspective. However, their poetic evocations of nostalgia are not idealized or overly romanticized. Instead, they present the colonial changes that have erased indigenous contours, oscillating between the past and present conditions of these lands. Nostalgia, as commonly understood, often represents a desire for the past to remain unchanged and idealized. Linda Hutcheon describes nostalgia as a force that idealizes the past, making it appear static in contrast to the uncertainties and complexities of the present (2000, p. 195).

In her article “From Nostalgia to Critique: An Overview of Arab-American Literature”, Tanyss Ludeschert critiques such a parochial conceptualization of nostalgia and calls for a shift in perspective that encourages experimentation with the concept. In response to this call, Qutait, in her book *Nostalgia in Anglophone Arab Literature*, highlights the innovative and constructive applications of nostalgic expression in Arab Anglophone literature. She argues for a kaleidoscopic lens through which we can see nostalgia as instrumental to the construction of the cultural memory (Qutait,

2021, p.8), as a psychosocial strategy for shoring up fragments of identity (p.9), and a psychological comfort for the uprooted and the displaced.

We concur with Qutait that the re-conceptualization of nostalgia as a nuanced emotion encompassing creative and celebratory dimensions is imperative and that nostalgic discourse extends beyond mere romanticism. Nostalgic diasporic writing possesses the potential to not only reminisce about the homeland but also map out its intricate layers of history, culture, ecology, memory, and personal experiences associated with it. It does this by borrowing elements of “deeper mapping”. Qutait references Svetlana Boym’s concept of restorative nostalgia to highlight the nuanced understanding of longing in non-European literary traditions.

In *The Future of Nostalgia*, Boym categorizes nostalgia into two primary tendencies: restorative and reflective. Restorative nostalgia is focused on nostos, or the idea of home, striving to reconstruct a timeless vision of a lost homeland. It often reframes itself not as nostalgia but as a pursuit of truth and the preservation of tradition. Reflective nostalgia, on the other hand, centers on algia, the experience of longing itself, lingering on the complexities and ironies of yearning without resolving them. It embraces the contradictions of modern existence, often questioning notions of truth and belonging (Boym, 2001, p. 21, 79).

These two forms are not strict opposites but exist along a spectrum, leaving room for nuanced interpretations and blurred boundaries in how people imagine and narrate their connection to home and history. That being said, relevant to our analysis is restorative nostalgia as it seeks to mend the fractures of memory and envision a return to a national or cultural past, often projecting this vision into the future. Majaj and Miranda take this creative route and render nostalgia as a map-making tool that charts memories and oral history of indigenous lands that used to be homes for Palestinians and Native Americans. Their poems draw deeper maps of pre-1948 Palestinian villages and California city in ways that reflect their deep connections to these lands. Via this cartographic approach, nostalgia can be utilized to decolonize maps of Palestine and the U.S.A.

3. The interpenetration of deeper map and restorative nostalgia in Majaj and Miranda’s poetry

The title “*Indian Cartography*” directs attention to indigenous perspectives and narratives that intricately connect the cartography process with memory



and identity. This framing encourages a reading that goes beyond surface-level geography to explore the profound interplay of place, cultural heritage, and historical experience within Native American relationships with their ancestral lands. By defining the act of cartography as specifically “Indian,” the poem transcends conventional mapping practices, emphasizing a mapping that is inherently cultural, historical, and personal. Thus, we contend that the poem operates within the paradigm of “deeper mapping,” as articulated by Kelli Lyon Johnson, prioritizing indigenous knowledge and relationality over the reductive, objectifying tendencies of traditional “deep mapping.”

The setting is California City, the birthplace of poet Miranda who is an enrolled member of the Ohlone/Costanoan-Esselen Nation of California (Miranda, 2013, p. 407). California is a city rich in indigenous history and subject to extensive colonial influence. In “Indian Cartography,” Miranda uses restorative nostalgia to engage with the theme of the forced displacement of indigenous tribes from California by emphasizing the longing for a lost homeland and the desire to rebuild or recover what was taken. Miranda explores how the traumatic experience of displacement disrupts not only physical territories but also cultural identity and continuity. Restorative nostalgia, as defined by Svetlana Boym, focuses on the desire to return to a lost home and to reconstruct that home, often in a way that emphasizes a return to a pre-colonial state.

“My father opens a map of California--”, Miranda begins her poem, recounting her father tracing the geographical features and county borders of California as though they were “family bloodlines”. This initial act highlights the intimate connection between the indigenous people and their ancestral lands. The specific places mentioned, “Tuolomne, Salinas, Los Angeles, Paso Robles, Ventura, Santa Barbara, Saticoy, Tehachapi,” carry significance, representing locations where the father experienced both happiness and tragedy:

*A small blue spot marks
Lake Cachuma, created when they
dammed the Santa Ynez, flooded
a valley, divided
my father's boyhood: days
he learned to swim the hard way,
and days he walked across the silver scales,*

*swollen bellies of salmon coming back
to a river that wasn't there.*

The government paid those Indians to move away (Miranda, 1999, p. 1)

Miranda's father used to be happy while freely wandering the aforementioned Native places in California before the government took over some reservations of Native tribes in these locations to build the Bradbury Dam near the Santa Ynez River in the 1950s (Latousek, 1995, p. 8). The dam project was succeeded by the construction of Lake Cachuma, a water reservoir in the Santa Ynez Valley. According to Miranda, this lake exacerbated the harm inflicted on indigenous territories by regularly inundating them, effectively wiping them out. To add insult to injury, part of the lake was also designated for recreational purposes (p. 20), generating even more profits at the expense of Native peoples' homes, traditions, and ways of life, leaving a legacy of displacement and loss.

Miranda's observation that the land beneath the water's surface is "not drawn on any map" emphasizes the sheer invisibility of native lands on any standard map. As Akins and Bauer assert, when you examine a map of California that highlights reservoirs, what you are really seeing is a visual representation of the appropriation and obliteration of Native American land (Akins, Bauer, 2021, p. 246).

Miranda adds another layer to her deeper mapping by describing the once-vibrant ecosystem of the Santa Ynez River's natural fauna. Her father longs for the time when he used to stumble upon silver scales of fish and see the salmon fish, which are known to be a migratory species, returning to the Santa Ynez River that "wasn't there"; because it has been so tragically transformed by the dam to the extent that it is no longer the natural native habitat it once was, due to the government's removal of its inhabitants. The extra space after "a valley, divided" serves as a poetic device that mirrors the void created by the altered landscape and the loss of a particular way of life Miranda's father used to enjoy during his boyhood. Nostalgia in the poem is not just a personal sentiment but also a reflection of a larger cultural memory, as Qutait suggests. When her father visits the valley, he sees the shadows of his ancestors who used to inhabit it encouraging him to continue sharing "the stories of [their] home" because telling the indigenous stories about the land is instrumental in deeper mapping it.



As Miranda reimagines and redraws the indigenous map of California through her father's nostalgic memories, highlighting the stark changes brought about by colonial-industrialized intervention and displacement, Majaj's poem similarly seeks to reclaim and memorialize the Palestinian map before Nakba. Majaj was born in 1960 (Majaj, Encyclopedia) and her poem titled "Fifty Years On/Stones on an Unfinished Wall", which was published in her poetry collection *Geographies of Light* in 2009, marks her fiftieth birthday anniversary, hence the fifty years she refers to throughout her poem:

*Fifty years on
I am trying to tell the story
of what was lost
before my birth (Majaj, 2009, p.1)*

In the first section of the poem, Majaj describes the destruction of Palestinian homes and the scattering of families' lives following the devastating event of the Nakba (1948). The mention of "the oranges bowing in grief" (Majaj, 1) symbolizes the impact of the events of the Nakba on the agricultural and cultural landscape of Palestine. Oranges, particularly Jaffa oranges, have deep roots in Palestinian agriculture and culture. They are not merely a commodity but an emblem of the land, its people, and their agricultural heritage. When Israel usurped Jaffa city (now part of Tel Aviv), it seized everything the city was renowned for, including its emblematic fruit. In a manner akin to how the salmon can no longer find its way back to the river in Miranda's poem, the oranges in Majaj's work mirror this sense of loss and sorrow. Oranges feel the grief of their land and their Palestinian farmers due to the fact that Israel rebranded Jaffa Oranges as an Israeli product and made them its main, if not the sole, provider and exporter (Cavendish, 938) instead of the occupied Palestine.

Stones populate the poem, as well as its title, and are used as integral elements in her cartography of Palestine, providing both physical and metaphorical markers that help define the Palestinian landscape and its people's experiences. They are not mere building materials; they symbolize the bedrock of Palestinian identity and heritage:

*the houses of Dayr Yasin
were built of stone, strongly built
with thick walls (Majaj,4)*

The houses of Dayr Yasin were a testament to the robustness of Palestinian life. Constructed with sturdy stone walls, they stood as a testament to the



enduring presence of the Palestinian people in their homeland. The line “all that remains a scattering of stones and rubble across a forgotten landscape” (3) echoes Miranda’s “with eyes open, [my father] looks down into lands not drawn on any map”. The forgotten landscapes of erased Palestinian villages and Native American lands are absent from official cartography, leaving only remnants and memories. The act of tearing down homes and walls may erase physical structures, but the stones serve as a reminder of what was once there (Majaj, 9). Remembering stones recalls the memory of the land, wherein in the concluding lines of the poem, Majaj creates a picture that taps into nostalgic sensory memory:

*someone remembers
how stone holds dew through the summer night
how stone
waits for the thirsty birds (Majaj, p.9)*

The mention of dew on the stone during a summer night triggers a sensory experience, reminding the Palestinians of the serene summer days, the weight of the dewdrops that provide a source of moisture for birds, and the earthy scent that often accompanies such nights in Palestine. This, in turn, fosters a sense of nostalgia for a time when these natural elements played a more prominent role in the daily life of Palestinians before Israel’s razing of entire villages to the ground.

In her effort to counter the consistent erasure of the Palestinian toponyms of villages and to decolonize them from Hebrew appropriation, Majaj references the names of villages in the Jaffa district including Al-'Abbasiyya, Abu Kishk, Bayt Dajan, al-Khayriyya, al-Mas'udiyya, al-Mirr, and al-Muwaylih (Majaj,3). Al-'Abbasiyya land, for instance, was razed and then reconstructed between 1948 and 1954 as different Hebrew sites of Yehud, Magshimim, Ganne Yehuda, Ganne Tiqwa, and Savyon (Khalidi, 1992, p. 232). Here, Majaj’s deeper mapping of Palestinian villages works through the reclamation of their Indigenous Arabic names, thus restoring the memory of Palestinian spaces. This is different from Ismet Bujupaj’s ecocritical approach to Majaj’s poem in his paper “Nature in Arab American Literature Majaj, Nye, and Kahf”. Bujupaj (2015, p.12) borrows the Western concept of “deep map”, which does not acknowledge such indigenous markers of a place.



Majaj goes on to portray the topography of the Dayr Yasin village that endured one of the bloodiest massacres in history during the Nakba by Irgun and Lehi, an extremist Jewish militia (Mc Gowan ,1999, p. 13).

*a girls' school a boys' school a bakery
two guest-houses a social club a thrift fund
three shops four wells two mosques
a village of stone cutters
a village of teachers and shopkeepers
an ordinary village
with a peaceful reputation
until the massacre
carried out without discriminating
among men and women
children and old people (Majaj,4)*

In her nostalgic evocation of the village, Majaj paints a contrasting image before and after the massacre. It was an ordinary village, known for its peaceful reputation and once-thriving, harmonious community until the massacre unfolded, killing children, women, and elderly people without discrimination. Still, the destruction of villages does not obliterate Palestine's deeply rooted ecology like cacti and poppies. Majaj employs them as metaphors for the resilience of the land, and by extension its people, as "fierce as the poppies" (6) and as enduring as "cactus still rims the perimeters" (3) surviving and resisting Israel's genocidal actions of razing. Majaj's cartography, then, is not just one of geographical reclamation but also a mapping of Palestinian identity through nostalgic memory, ecology, and resistance. By memorializing the lives and landscapes of villages like Dayr Yasin, she contributes to a broader decolonial project that refuses to allow Palestinian history and geography to be overwritten by colonial narratives.

4. Discussion

To reclaim the cartography of Palestine and Native California, both poets harness such a form of nostalgia known as restorative nostalgia to revive the erased histories and cultural identities tied to their lands. Miranda's "Indian Cartography" portrays the intimate connection between her father and the Californian landscapes he once knew before displacement. Her poetic imagery, such as the salmon returning to a river that "wasn't there," highlights the disruption of cultural and ecological continuity caused by

colonial industrial projects like the Bradbury Dam. This nostalgia is not merely a longing for the past but a critique of the historical violence that severed Indigenous communities from their territories.

Similarly, Majaj's "Fifty Years On/Stones on an Unfinished Wall" evokes the landscapes of Palestine before the Nakba (1948). She depicts the topography of Dayr Yasin, a Palestinian village that suffered a brutal massacre during the Nakba, contrasting its once-thriving and peaceful community with the devastation that followed. Through her ancestors' recollections, she memorializes the lives and landscapes of villages like Dayr Yasin. Her portrayal of "oranges bowing in grief" symbolically connects agricultural heritage to the broader cultural devastation inflicted by settler colonialism. The act of naming Palestinian villages, erased or renamed under Israeli occupation, resists the erasure of Indigenous toponyms and reclaims these spaces within the cultural memory of Palestinians.

Both poets also employ the concept of deeper mapping to emphasize the indigenous and historical dimensions of their landscapes. In "Indian Cartography", Miranda's references to locations like Tuolumne, Ventura, and Santa Ynez highlight the layered histories of these places, connecting them to the personal and collective experiences of displacement endured by California's Indigenous communities. This approach transforms the poem into a cartographic record that critiques colonial attempts to render Indigenous lands invisible. Majaj's deeper mapping operates similarly, as she reconstructs the erased geography of Palestine by naming depopulated villages like Al-'Abbasiyya and Dayr Yasin. These places are not presented as static coordinates but as sites of cultural and historical significance. Majaj's deeper mapping also incorporates references to Jaffa oranges, a symbol of Palestine's agricultural and cultural heritage. These indigenous fruits represent the deep connection between the land and its people. Majaj reclaims Jaffa oranges as integral to Palestinian ecology, thus countering their colonial appropriation into Israeli identity. The interplay of restorative nostalgia and deeper mapping in Majaj's and Miranda's works illustrates how these tools complement one another in decolonial poetics. Restorative nostalgia revives emotional and cultural ties to the land, while deeper mapping contextualizes these ties within historical and ecological frameworks. Together, they construct multidimensional representations of Indigenous homelands that resist the flattening effects of colonial cartography.

The article, by following a comparative approach, bridges Native American and Palestinian literary traditions, revealing shared methodologies in resisting settler-colonial narratives. By situating the poetry of the said Indigenous authors as both cartographic and “restoratively nostalgic”, the article expands the scope of Indigenous studies and decolonial criticism, providing critical insights into how poetry can reclaim Indigenous spaces, identities, and maps. By bringing these elements together, the article contributes to a thorough understanding of how such new decolonial literary practices can aid in the reclamation of Indigenous homelands.

Conclusion

The two poets succeed in rendering such an overwhelming sense of nostalgia into a cartographic expression of a collective yearning for their respective homelands, while simultaneously breathing life into the invisible narratives of Indigenous existence. Majaj's poem not only serves as a poetic archive, memorializing the names of the dispossessed individuals and the obliterated Palestinian towns following the 1948 Nakbah, but also conveys a palpable portrayal of the effaced landscape of Palestine, ecologically and historically. This erasure, resulting from the demolition of villages and farms, is further compounded by the Israeli policy of renaming these demolished locations in Hebrew, thus obliterating their Palestinian identity.

Along the same vein, Miranda's poem captures the poignant recollections from her father's perspective, offering insights into a nuanced lived experience that encompasses both idyllic periods when California thrived as a significant Native Indian habitat, as well as the subsequent transformations that unfolded following the intrusion of foreign nationals. Through her poetic rendition, Miranda conveys the profound consequences of human-induced ecological devastation and the resultant displacement of Californian indigenous communities, signifying a profound rupture in the natural order. The geographical locations depicted in the poem transcend their mere spatial coordinates, assuming the role of touchstones to which memories of a once-sacred indigenous land are irrevocably attached. Blending nostalgia with deeper mapping polishes the re-mapping discourse with a heightened sense of emotional connection. Through their poetic works, Majaj and Miranda reinvigorate these narratives and recollections, effectively contesting the colonial interpretations found in the maps of Palestine and the United States. Together, they lend their voices to the wide literary chorus actively engaged

in the decolonization of the colonial mappings of their respective dispossessed homelands.

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