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The settler colony officially designated as "the State of Israel" defines and identifies itself as "Eretz Yisrael," which translates to the land of Israel. This term encapsulates the profound Zionist ideology that violently pursues complete territorial dominance over historical Palestine, in order to attain state sovereignty and legitimacy and resource hegemony over as much land as possible. This conceptual framework has served as the foundational premise in the extensive body of academic work within the fields of settler-colonial studies and Palestine studies over the past decades. This scholarly discourse has examined the diverse array of political, historical, social, cultural, economic, military, ecological, environmental, and religious mechanisms employed by Israel to dispossess and exploit Palestinian bodies, lands, and livelihoods. Irus Braverman's *Settling Nature* is an addition to this scholarship and documents primarily Israel's nature management, both human and nonhuman, and its display of military power, underscoring the tight "coproduction" of nature and nation at the hands of the Zionist settler state (p. 4).

The book studies nature management through two lines of inquiry. The first one looks at the protection of land through its designation by the settler state as a national park or nature reserve. This line is covered in chapters 1, 3, and 5. Chapter 1 examines how the establishment and management of Mount Meron Nature Reserve has always been about the “Judaization” of landscape, that is, the encircling, containment, and dispossession of the Druze community from its lands and resources. Chapter 3 exposes how “urban planning,” “archaeology,” and many other such names are used as veneers concealing the systematic dispossession and degradation of Palestinians and their property in Jerusalem. Chapter 5 offers a comprehensive analysis of both green and blue grabbing, in the West Bank’s Wadi Qana Nature Reserve. The second line of inquiry, concerned with the biopolitical and versatile protection through animal and plant bodies, is covered in chapters 2, 4, and 5 in the contexts of the reintroduction of biblical animals, captive breeding, and necropolitics.

Braverman’s main contribution lies in her meticulous documentation of militarized accumulation by various Israeli institutions engaged in matters pertaining to the environment, ecology, nature preservation, conservation, and broader land management. Her work underscores the convergence of these entities into a unified military force whose overarching objective is the spatial restriction of Palestinians to the smallest possible land area. Braverman elucidates that a multitude of entities—including the Israel Nature and Park Authority (INPA); planning committees; the Min-
istry of Agriculture; the Society for the Protection of Nature; the paramilitary Green Patrol, originally established to conquer Jewish lands from the Bedouins; the Israel Land Administration; the Jewish National Fund; the Ministry of Defense; the Israeli Military; the Ministry of Environmental Protection; and their entire administrative cadre, encompassing park rangers, biologists, zoologists, bird keepers, veterinarians, and more—collectively constitute a machinery that legitimizes and standardizes the transformative restructuring of the landscape in accordance with the ideals and objectives of the Zionist enterprise. The second contribution of this book is showing how nature management is yet one additional tool used to erase the Green Line. Through an ethnographic study, Braverman shows that despite “Israel’s legal narrative that depicts the 1948 and 1967 spaces and respective administrations as separate and even diametrically opposed,” the book documents “the interplay between the Green Line’s enactment and erasure through nature management,” creating an ambiguity that is legal and strategic (p. 11).

An enhanced dimension to this scholarly work could have been achieved had Braverman explicitly interconnected her research analysis with the racialized nature of the Zionist enterprise. While she does reference settler-colonialism as her conceptual framework, her chapters would have benefited from a more explicit exploration of how her research intersects with the racialized nature of Zionism toward non-Jewish populations. The Zionist ideology, which regards Jews as possessing unique racial and genetic characteristics, consequently elevating Jewish life as superior and more valuable than non-Jewish life, is a pertinent factor in justifying the elimination of all non-Jews on all of historical Palestine in order to gain more land. An understanding of the racial and inherently racist nature of the Israeli state could have lent greater depth to Braverman’s chapter on the Druze community. The Druze refraining from overtly opposing the settler-state despite enduring dispossession serves as a telling illustration. This chapter does not tackle how a community, which, to safeguard itself amid Israel’s destruction of any traces of Palestinian existence during its creation in 1948, has alienated itself from the larger Palestinian collective to which it naturally belongs. Instead, it has chosen to align itself with the Zionist state, and yet, even after making significant political, social, and human sacrifices, it finds itself vulnerable to Israel’s policies of aggressive land appropriation and excluded as a community from the larger Israeli body for being non-Jews.

But the greater shortfall in Braverman’s work is her exclusion of the Gaza Strip, a territory that has, arguably, served as the arena for one of the most genocidal and inhumane military experiments in modern history. One cannot provide a study on Israeli settler ecologies without looking into Israel’s environmental apartheid in the Gaza Strip. The book—consisting of 267 pages—only mentions Gaza three times in passing and refers to it as the somewhat disengaged neighbor. This is by far a flagrant misrepresentation, as Israel has turned the Gaza Strip into its testing ground for all settler-colonial policies applied in the remaining of historical Palestine. Israel has annexed large areas of Gaza’s farmland, cutting into livelihoods, and reduced the space available to the densely populated strip’s two million residents. Since Braverman claims that she writes against the grain, one would have expected her to produce impeccable documentation to expose the distortive Zionist accounts regarding the Gaza Strip, given the access that she has as an Israeli settler.

While the author clarifies that she opposes settler-colonial Zionism, it remains a challenging task, even to settlers opposing their regime’s policies, to grasp the profound dangers faced by indigenous individuals, as well as nonhumans, as Braverman rightfully describes, who live on their ancestral land, while being compelled to perpetually navigate the arduous terrain of physical survival in the face of relentless settler-colonial viol
ence. Moreover, it is worth noting that this struggle is compounded by the enduring emotional toil inherent to inhabiting a space replete with reminders of the colonizer’s enduring presence. In an incident where a Palestinian zoologist was informed that two golden eagles were found poisoned near Nablus in the northern West Bank but having scarce resources to save them, Braverman proposed to serve as a liaison between him and an Israeli veterinarian, as she “found herself deeply upset that the political situation inflicted such violence toward the eagles.” The Palestinian zoologist told her that he “would never consider asking help from the Zionist colonizer” (p. 240). In a moment of self-reflection, Braverman asks if her intervention was in order or whether she repeated the same ecological elitism as her fellow settler-citizens. She leaves the question unanswered and follows with, “Could we care for nature in ways that do not perpetuate the unjust legacies of this place?” (p. 240). The answer is that, in the eyes of Palestinian natives, all Israelis embody the unjust legacies of this place and are directly (and indirectly) responsible for the harms of humans and nonhumans.

The book contains a plethora of rarely recorded information about Zionist ecological institutions and their intricate connection to the Israeli government and military, exposing how a myriad of land laws pertaining to nature reserves and national parks, land-use restrictions, tax laws, military zones, and so on come together to achieve the goal of maximum land accumulation, and would even deprive animals from their freedom of movement. This book rightly questions Zionism and Zionist-inspired Jewish settler ecologies, as the author plays the role of a Western anthropologist who is simultaneously sharing her own Jewish experiences and providing anecdotal information about severe moments of dispossession, yet moments that betray her blind spots. In the broader context of Palestine studies and for Palestinians living under the yoke of Israeli settler-colonialism, Braverman’s insights are not novel and simply resonate with their firsthand experiences of enduring systematic dispossession orchestrated by various institutional bodies within Israel’s colonial apparatus. The book would serve Western audiences and scholars, who would seek the “objectivity” of a white scholar, as well as those working in the fields of Israeli studies and environmental studies.
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