

Made of ten chapters, in turn divided into three sections (plus a fourth one serving as a short appendix), and marked by the guiding words of Aimé Césaire, Joseph Conrad, and Susan Abulhawa chosen as epigraphs, Luigi Cazzato's *Palestina fra Oriente e Occidente. Anglosfera, ferite coloniali, re-esistenza decoloniale* ("Palestine between East and West. The Anglosphere, colonial wounds, decolonial re-existence") attempts to combine the scholarly reasons for a study undertaken since 2016 (35) with the timely passion imparted to him by the cruel reality of present times, which are also commented on in the preface written by Tomaso Montanari and the afterword authored by Nabil Bey Salameh.

The volume begins with what is intended to be almost an indictment, or rather, an ironic observation concerning the *status quaestionis* on the history of the Palestinian people from the perspective of postcolonial studies, which the author feels are deficient, perhaps because Palestine "is not enough post [despite being] the land [of their] inspirer Edward Said" ("non è abbastanza post [nonostante] la terra [del loro] ispiratore Edward Said", 20). At the same time, the reader is made aware of what may be the potential limitations and constitute "risks/disadvantages" ("rischi/disagi", 21) encountered when attempting to describe a foreign culture as an outsider.

Another challenge acknowledged right at the beginning of the book is due to the perceived need not to forget what is happening in the present, although, perhaps, the best way to serve the contemporary world, as scholars, is precisely to attempt to frame recent and even very recent events in their proper context, acting both rationally ("*ragionatamente*") and emotionally ("*emozionalmente*") (22), i.e. without sacrificing a fundamental part of what makes the researcher a human being and not an automaton. The invitation extended to the community of readers, therefore, is to be able to feel and see again ("tornare a essere sensibili, tornare cioè a sentire e vedere", 35).

The second chapter immediately introduces the idea of the 'Anglosphere', described as a space of "*Prosperian power relations*" ("*relazioni di potere prosperiano*", 48) "*acted ... suffered ... reacted*" ("*agito ... subito ... reagito*") and mediated by the language dominating intercultural communications, English, which, after a long series of political and cultural developments, rose to the rank of "*lingua franca*" (44) at the beginning of the 20th century. By virtue of this, a broader definition of the phenomenon is offered as that perimeter which includes "not only the Atlantic world extended to the former British colonies (Australia, New Zealand and South Africa), but also all those English-speaking peoples who are (or were) subordinate to the 'special relationship' referred to by Churchill" ("non solo il mondo atlantico allargato alle ex-colonie di insediamento britanniche (Australia, Nuova Zelanda e Sudafrica), ma anche tutti quei popoli anglofoni che sono (stati) subalterni rispetto alle 'relazioni speciali' di cui parlava Churchill", 48), thus making it a true "*Calibanian* 'imagined community'" ("*comunità immaginaria 'calibanesca'*", *ibid.*).

The Palestinian concept of *sumud* is then explored in its dynamic and multifaceted configuration of non-violent resistance to Israeli occupation; it is stated that *sumud* is not just a theoretical stance, but a *praxis* aimed at renewing existence by giving new meaning to everyday actions from the moment they are animated by the determination to persevere in adversity, giving rise to a combination that is summarised in the formula "exist to resist" ("*esistere per resistere*", 53).

A synthesis is reached by limiting the object of the research to those cultural and artistic forms that *sumud* can take in the proposals "English-speaking Palestinians, or those who, in English, in various parts of the Anglosphere, dare to resist oppression and have the entire planet as their audience" ("*dei palestinesi di lingua inglese, o che in lingua inglese, in diverse parti dell'anglosfera, osano resistere all'oppressione avendo come audience il pianeta intero*", 48).

The second part of the book begins with an attempt to interpret the long-standing bond between the two great English-speaking powers of the last two centuries and the region named Palestine through the tools of postcolonial and decolonial criticism: consequently, by presenting both well-known names (Balfour, Sykes, Churchill above all) and other lesser-known figures, the worldview of the British

ruling class between the second half of the nineteenth century and the first half of the twentieth century is investigated, and it is shown how it centered on an imperial master narrative that, while extolling the paternalistic civilizing mission of the white man, underlay the transformation of the Middle East from the Ottoman order to its contemporary geopolitical constellation, thus sanctioning the transition from the logic of imperial difference to that of colonial difference (66), which consists of a vertical syntax, a semantics straddling the space in between the two poles of civilization and barbarism, and a pragmatics of unquestionable domination as the purest manifestation of an historical becoming oriented towards a constant and unstoppable progress. It is then depicted the change at the helm of the region from His Majesty's mandatory power to the democratic thalassocracy of the United States after World War II, with the establishment of "special relations" (77) between America and Israel, corroborated by an apparent commonality of interests that has now proven capable to endure the test of time for at least six decades. The author's opinion is that Zionism as a political doctrine was deeply influenced by the dominant ideologies of the time in which it was developed, which made it both the perpetrator and the victim of a 'paradox', namely that, "born in opposition to racist Europe, it inherited its main harmful ideologies: nationalism, imperialism and colonialism" ("nato come opposizione all'Europa razzista, ne ereditò le sue principali ideologie nefaste: nazionalismo, imperialismo e colonialismo", 63); but this is precisely what led the Anglosphere states to welcome and support the project to establish a Jewish state in Palestine, as – in the eloquent phrasing of Balfour cited in the text – it was "rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes of far profounder import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now [1919] inhabit that ancient land" (76).

In the fourth chapter, the Palestinian question and Arab-Israeli relations are reexamined through the lens of the decolonial option. In particular, the operation carried out consists in linking, by analogy, the respective 'catastrophes' suffered first by the European Jewry (the Shoah) and then by the Palestinian people (the Nakba) to the "logic of coloniality" ("logica della colonialità"), although this often remains implicit as it is "hidden by the rhetoric of modernity" ("nascosta dalla retorica della modernità") (82). The focus of the analysis offered here lies not so much in the events themselves as in their socio-cultural preconditions, namely the processes of dehumanization and deculturation (epistemicide) that precede and accompany acts of violence committed by humans against other humans in the context of intergroup conflicts, just up to the extreme cases of ethnic cleansing and genocide. The current, exasperated turn of events, therefore, could be said to have been made possible "thanks to European legacies" ("grazie ai lasciti europei", 64) that have contributed to building an idea of the world based on a peculiar strain of nominalism, capable of conquering minds and reshaping reality in a distorted way (see 96-100), generating mechanisms of unequal attribution of value to groups in theory, which subsequently translate into potentially genocidal practices of domination once integrated into the collective imagination of the populations involved in those processes.

The fifth chapter revolves around the object named "coloniality of semiosis" ("colonialità della semiosi"). The jumping-off point, in this case, is one of the basic assumptions of Peirce-derived semiotics, namely that "reality certainly exists" ("la realtà ... certamente esiste", 108), but it is accessible and, above all, expressible and interpretable only through the mediation of signs; the incessant occurrence of signs gives rise to a potentially infinite chain of interpretants. Drawing on Stuart Hall's reflections on the event-representation nexus, the question of the role played by persuasion is raised, that is, "of the battle for *meaning* and *consensus*" ("della battaglia per la costruzione del *senso* e del *consenso*", *ibid.*). This agonistic conception of the processes of meaning production and consensus-building filters the subsequent review of some passages taken from the Italian (but also international) press, in which cases of distortion (e.g., by means of role reversal or omission of agents) can be identified in the presentation of news about the ongoing conflict in the Gaza Strip, which the author does not hesitate to define as genocide. The examination conducted on the selected texts leads to the conclusion that "[i]n Italy ... the fog of misinformation (the unwitting dissemination of false news) and disinformation (the deliberate dissemination of incorrect news) shows no sign of lifting" ("[i]n Italia ... non si dirada per nulla la nebbia della *misinformazione* (la diffusione *inconsapevole* di notizie non vere) e della *disinformazione* (la diffusione *deliberata* di notizie non corrette)", 116). The remainder of the chapter describes "two tools through which (pro-)Palestinians, challenging the coloniality of semiosis (its digital version), strike the *imagination of the world*: the defensive creativity of *algospeak* and the offensive creativity of memetics" ("due strumenti attraverso i quali i (pro)palestinesi, sfidando la colonialità della semiosi in versione digitale,

colpiscono l'*immaginazione del mondo*: la creatività difensiva dell'*alghospeak* e la creatività offensiva della memetica", 125).

The sixth chapter continues to examine the apparent discrepancy between the 'gifts' of modernity and the 'thefts' of coloniality (133), denouncing "a fake universalism" ("un universalismo fasullo", 137) modeled on strongly culturally connoted parameters and increasingly used as an immaterial weapon to inform hegemony and legitimize the domination of one part of the world over another, as well as the self-conferral of a sort of "licence to kill while remaining unpunished" ("licenza di uccidere rimanendo impuniti", 133). Taking up a proposal advanced by the American philosopher Richard Rorty, however, the possibility of basing human rights on a kind of sympathy mediated by the power of the arts is subsequently explored (see 141-144).

The third and final part of the book could be considered a collection of case studies of decolonial poetics and practices of re-existence in Palestine/Israel. Beyond the means of expression selected in each case, all these artistic attempts to denounce "the imperial complicity between the rhetoric of modernity and the logic of coloniality" ("la complicità imperiale fra retorica della modernità e logica della colonialità", 153) share some commonalities: they are rooted in popular culture "as the site of the struggle for hegemony between dominant and subordinate social groups" ("come il luogo della lotta per l'egemonia tra gruppi sociali dominanti e gruppi sociali subalterni", 150); they are anchored in 'border thinking' as a manifestation of an alternative (meridian) way of thinking as opposed to the North Atlantic intellectual tradition; and their approach is based on the juxtaposition and mixing of forms and the interweaving and reorientation of content. Therefore, in the vast "archive of transnational imagination" ("archivio dell'immaginazione transnazionale", 160), we move from the "code switching" (156) present in the hip hop music of the Israeli-Palestinian group Dam (155-157) to the "cyberorature" of Rafeef Ziadah (161-175), from the brutalist visual *détournement* of Amer Shomali, Wiz, Banksy, and Mohammed al Hawajiri (187-194) to the anti-nationalist and anti-statist 'pessimistic future' underlying Larissa Sansour's *The Nation Estate Project* (194-200), ending with some rather impartial considerations on the "graffiti/murals appearing on the wall" ("graffiti/murales che appaiono sul muro", 210) (see 205-224).

Finally, remarks are offered on how this "nuova intellettualità organica" (158) seemingly finds in a dimension of "'estetica di confine' o ... 'estesica'" (203) the most effective way to involve and give voice to the oppressed, silenced, and masses made invisible ("invisibilizzate") (see 144 and 160), urging the advancement of collective demands aimed at achieving a shared autonomy of a potentially post-national nature (200-204) in an uninterrupted movement of "produzione/condivisione/consumo" (160) that "has to do with a counter-power of enunciation and the acquisition of the possibility of narrating and, therefore, the power to (make) know(n)" ("ha a che fare con un contro-potere dell'enunciazione e l'acquisizione della possibilità di raccontare e, dunque, il potere (di far) sapere", 161).

In conclusion, the author does not express any certainty about the direction future events will take, nor does he declare himself in favor of any kind of oversimplified panacea. However, he identifies a core set of issues, he raises questions, he presents arguments. And he reminds us, in particular, that what happens in Palestine concerns us all, even if we keep turning our backs on it.