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Bursting The Bubble: Borderlands, Identity, and Sexuality in Israel/Palestine

In the parking lot of my apartment complex is a car with a window decal that reads, “Free Palestine.” Of course, my neighbor’s sign of protest refers to Israel’s occupation of Palestine; such an occupation is merely one facet of the ongoing conflict between Israel and Palestine, which has been carrying on since the middle of the 20th century. Independently of this conflict, Israel has been in the news over the past decade because of its progressive legislation concerning LGBT+ rights—progressive perhaps in its views of members of the LGBT+ community, but not of those whose land the Israeli army is occupying. With its recent liberal developments, Israeli cinema has seen the release of several films showcasing the country’s progressiveness, often in contrast to Palestine’s backward views on sexuality, despite the two countries’ proximity. In the films *The Bubble* and *Oriented*, directors have depicted different ways that queer Israelis and Palestinians navigate through political borders and through different national, linguistic, religious, and sexual spaces. This paper will examine how *The Bubble*, a pro-Israel film, and *Oriented*, a pro-Palestine documentary, treat the mutability of different sexual and national identities in Israel/Palestine, and how these identities shape, and are shaped by, traversing the borders separating the two countries. In what follows, I will invoke the work of Gloria Anzaldúa and Michel Algier to help explore the various conceptions of “borderlands,” and I will examine a map of one segment of the Israeli/Palestinian border to show the geographic realities of crossing such a space.

The Bubble

The Bubble (הבועה) is a romantic drama created in 2006 and directed by Eytan Fox.¹ The film begins at an Israel Defense Forces checkpoint where the protagonist, Noam, is working after having been summoned from the reserves. While on duty, he distances himself from the other Israeli soldiers, who conduct searches on those wishing to cross the border. During a routine search, a young Palestinian woman goes into labor. It is this woman's labor that allows Noam to interact briefly with Ashraf, a young man from Palestine, who is traveling with his future brother-in-law, Jihad. Ashraf speaks Arabic and Hebrew, and is able to translate for the pregnant woman and Noam, who is acting as a medic until the doctor arrives. Unfortunately, when the Israeli doctor arrives to perform the delivery, the infant is stillborn. This bleak scene sets the tone for the progression of the film, one that is non-procreative, non-regenerative, and unviable.

The film is based mostly in Tel-Aviv—the title of the film is an eponymous gesture to one of Tel-Aviv's nicknames—and accompanies Noam and his two roommates, Lulu and Yali, on their respective romantic adventures. Shortly after Noam returns to Tel-Aviv from protecting the border, Ashraf appears at his doorstep to return Noam's ID, which he had apparently dropped and lost at the IDF checkpoint. Following their reunion, Ashraf and Noam leave the roommates behind and ascend to the building's room, where Noam "introduces" Noam to Tel-Aviv. The two begin to kiss, at which point Ashraf says, "So that's how Jews kiss," indicating a theretofore foreign, demarcated experience. They then make love, after which Noam says, "So that's how Arabs do it." So early in the film there is this distinction between, and exploration of, the cultural

¹ *The Bubble*, directed by Eytan Fox (Culver City: Strand Releasing, 2007).

difference in sexual acts, as if the characters almost expect each other to kiss and make love differently from themselves.²

In order for Ashraf to stay in Israel—because he does not have the proper documentation to remain long-term—he must adopt a new identity. Noam’s roommate Yali reluctantly agrees to let Ashraf stay in their apartment after Noam urges him to consider what “it’s like for them over there,” “them” referring to gay men, and “over there” indicating a seemingly far away Palestine. Ashraf begins his new Israeli life as “Shimi” working in the café that Yali manages. Shortly into his stay, however, one of Lulu’s ex-boyfriends, a television producer, identifies Ashraf as Palestinian because of his accent and expresses interest in running a story on Ashraf entitled, “Tel-Aviv Through the Eyes of a Palestinian.” This revelation causes Ashraf to flee Tel-Aviv and return to his home in Palestine, Nablus.³ Ashraf’s return is timely because his sister, Rana, is about to marry Jihad.

After several days of no communication, Noam and Lulu disguise themselves as French journalists and journey to Rana and Ashraf’s home under the pretense that they are documenting Palestinian weddings. Ashraf and Noam find a concealed place to talk, where Ashraf accuses Noam of “being crazy” and wanting him killed because he doesn’t “know what it’s like here.” Again, an overt reference to Palestine’s homophobia is contrasted with Noam’s relative sexual freedom in *The Bubble*. The men kiss, but are spotted by Jihad, who threatens to expose Ashraf unless he marries and has a child with one of Jihad’s cousins. Thus, what is at

² The morning after they make love, Noam describes their sexual encounter as “explosive,” which Ashraf does not understand. Since Hebrew is his second language, he only understands the adjective in its relation to bombs and other objects that explode. This denotes a type of violence in their shared act, which is relevant later in the film.

³ Nablus is the Arabic name for the city, but is consistently referred to as “Schechem” throughout the film, which is the city’s biblical Hebrew name.

stake in Ashraf's sexual deviation is a rejection of the perceived procreative heteronormativity of Palestine. Noam and Lulu return to Tel-Aviv with the hope that Ashraf will attend their anti-occupation rave in Tel-Aviv the following night.

Ashraf arrives yet again in The Bubble and remains there for several days with Noam before he is required back in Nablus for his sister's wedding. When he does return to Palestine, and in the climax of the film, Ashraf reveals his sexuality and desire for Noam to his sister, who is in disbelief. The audience is led to believe that Ashraf's confession has ruined his sister's wedding. We also learn that Jihad arranged a suicide bombing in Tel-Aviv, which subsequently injures Noam's roommate, Yali. The following day, and in reaction to the attack, several Israeli soldiers fire upon civilians and kill Ashraf's newlywed sister, Rana. In a surprising turn of events, Jihad prepares to go to Tel-Aviv and carry out a bombing of the city, but Ashraf decides to take his place. Ashraf returns one final time to Tel-Aviv and arrives at the café where he used to work, and where Noam is ordering food for the injured Yali. Noam happily sees Ashraf in the street and is instantly shocked when he sees his lover holding a detonator. Noam descends onto the street to meet and kiss Ashraf, but before they kiss, Ashraf detonates the bomb, killing them both.

Out of One Closet, Into Another

What *The Bubble* shows is the instability of any one identity category after a political border is crossed. Moreover, it shows that crossing such a border *necessitates* the adaptation of a self-identity that is foreign and affected. The most obvious example of disguise is when Ashraf decides to remain in Israel and adopts the name Shimi. He and Noam's roommates discuss his accent and Ashraf/Shimi says that he learned to cover his accent by interacting with "Jews" in his uncle's shop in Jerusalem. Ashraf/Shimi is better able to hide his Palestinian identity altering his Hebrew accent. Therein lies another identity modifier: Hebrew. Since Ashraf/Shimi's native language is Arabic, speaking Hebrew functions as a tool, allowing him to navigate through his

new “Israeli” identity. Unfortunately, however, he does not *pass* as Israeli because he is outed by Lulu’s ex-boyfriend. The discovery of Ashraf’s true identity forces him to retreat back to Palestine, where he must also hide his identity as a gay man.

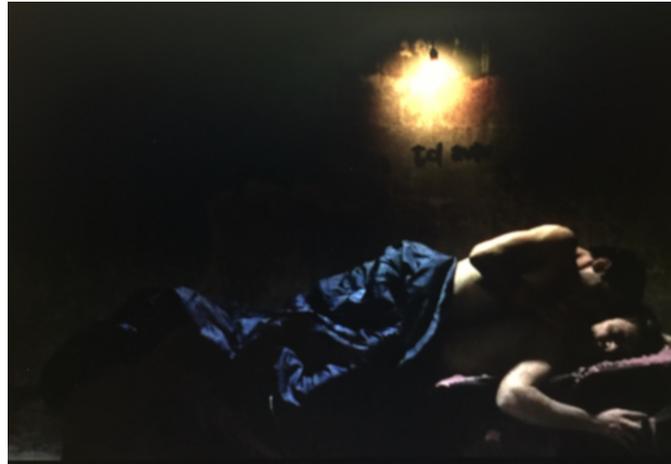


Figure 1: Ashraf (top) and Noam (bottom) make love for the first time under graffiti that says, "I love love tel aviv."

Noam and Lulu also adopt new identities when they visit Nablus to make contact with Ashraf. The two pretend to be members of the French press, because they do not wish to be recognized as Israeli. At first, they try to pretend to be American and Lulu says, “We should switch to English, we can’t use Hebrew there,” but they both concur that neither one speaks English well enough. Of course, Lulu and Noam recognize that it would be dangerous for Ashraf were they two show up at the family home speaking Hebrew, but their adoption of a new French/journalist identity is very different from Ashraf’s affected Israeli identity. Unlike Ashraf, Noam and Lulu are not illegally in the Palestine; Ashraf is limited by the Israeli government in his physical presence in Tel-Aviv, whereas Noam and Lulu are more or less free to move about Palestine. In its almost comedic presentation, Noam and Lulu’s Frenchness seems to trivialize, instead of reflect, the necessity for Ashraf to become Shimi. Like Ashraf, however, Noam is outed when Jihad, Ashraf’s brother-in-law, sees Noam and Ashraf kissing in the linen closet and

demands that the “reporters” leave. This is a moment of trite cinematic metaphor because Noam and Ashraf are quite literally outed from the closet in which they were being intimate; desire becomes demise. Ashraf’s home in this scene is a metonym therefore for Palestine as a homophobic state. Important to note here is the Westernized concept of coming out of the closet. I do not mean to suggest that Ashraf should be expected, under any circumstance, to reveal his sexual orientation or identity to his family. The closet scene in Palestine is therefore is an imposition of Western sexual expectations; in this way, *The Bubble* identifies Israel as far more “Western” than the dangerous, Othered Palestine it portrays. Upon further examination of the metaphor of coming out of the closet, it is clear that what is expected is the crossing of a border. The threshold of the closet divides the inside, the hidden sexual identity, from the outside/other side, where freedom of identity expression exists.

The constant shifting of identities in *The Bubble*, however, indicates a messy, confusion of identity categories in Israel and Palestine. Jason Ritchie recognizes this conflation when recounting the relationship between an Israeli and a Palestinian man: “Murad—a Palestinian Muslim from Jerusalem who was (legally, linguistically, and religiously) even further from Israeli ‘mainstream’ . . . —described the sometimes confused slippages among his queer Israeli boyfriend . . . between categories of *Palestinian*, *Arab*, and *Muslim*.⁴ Ritchie’s use of “slippage” is particularly poignant because this idea of movement strikes at the heart of identities, boundaries, and borders: elasticity. The ability to move around in a constellation of identities as one crosses political borders—as is the case for Noam, Lulu, and Ashraf—necessitates the hiding of certain other identities, be they sexual, linguistic, religious, or national. Ritchie argues, however, that for

⁴ Jason Ritchie, “Pinkwashing, Homonationalism, and Israel-Palestine,” *Antipode* 47, no. 3 (2015): 627. It is, of course, important to note that “Jew” is often used to refer to ethnicity, nationality and religion. I will discuss this confusion of identity below in reference to *Oriented*.

Palestinians, alteration and concealment of their identity as such “are not . . . purely strategic, pragmatic responses to an environment whose rules are clear to everyone—not, that is to say, just a means of getting through the checkpoint.”⁵ Hiding one’s Arabness, according to Ritchie, is “motivated as much by the avoidance of violence as it was by the pursuit of pleasure.”⁶ For the latter half, the pursuit of pleasure, Ritchie investigates cruising spaces and gay bars in Israel as loci of immense identity alteration. Although the pursuit of pleasure can be found in *The Bubble*, the focuses mostly on the prevention of violence. Such violence, however, is not ultimately avoided in the film because it is almost always a result of crossing the Israeli-Palestinian border: the bombing in Tel-Aviv, the shooting at results in Rana’s death, and Ashraf’s subsequent bombing.

Pink Washing

Ultimately, *The Bubble* is a deeply racist film, which is engaged in perpetuating anti-Palestinian sentiment, despite the ending of the film, where the narrator is hopeful for a day when the “stupid war” will end. Such racist discourse is not unfamiliar in the presentation of Israel and Palestine. In her book *Terrorist Assemblages*, Jasbir Puar cogently explains the oppressive behavior between the two states:

Ironically, the very logic that feeds the Israeli state’s rationalization and justification of its occupation of Palestine and its horrific treatment of Palestinians—the purported barbarity and unhumanness of the backward, fundamentalist Muslim-Palestinian suicide-bomber-terrorist—is reinscribed by OutRage!’s messaging at a Free Palestine rally. The differential treatment of

⁵ Ibid., 626.

⁶ Ibid.

queers in these transnational contexts is heavily dependent on national and racial belonging and dis/enfranchisement.⁷

What Puar describes as Israel's justification for Palestinian occupation is located directly in the treatment of Palestinian's in Fox's *The Bubble*. Even though Noam, Yali, and Lulu are part of an anti-occupation group, the discourse surrounding the otherness of sexuality in Palestine ("So that's how Arab's do it."; "Think of what it's like for them over there") throughout the entire film reinforces Puar's description of the suicide-bomber-terrorist.

The Bubble's representation of Tel-Aviv, and Israel, as a gay-friendly space coincides with the relatively recent branding of Israel as progressive and modern. With respect of LGBT+ rights in Israel, this type of publicity has been labeled "pink washing." According to David Kaufman, pink washing is "Israel's promotion of its progressive gay-rights record as a way to cover up ongoing human-rights abuses in the West Bank and Gaza."⁸ Emphasizing Israel's progressive and tolerant laws concerning the LGBT+ community serves as a trump card played against its occupation in Palestine. Pushing hard against pink washing, however, runs the risk of evoking anti-Israeli sentiment. An opposite movement known as "pink watching" was created by queer Palestinians who wanted to create a global movement against pink washing and raise awareness of the Israeli occupation.⁹ The pink watching movement has seen, in its ranks, the rise of anti-Semitism in North American and European cities likes London, New York, San Francisco, and

⁷ Jasbir Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007), 18.

⁸ David Kaufman, "Is Israel Using Gay Rights to Excuse Its Policy on Palestine?", *Time*, May 13, 2011. <http://content.time.com/time/world/article/0,8599,2070415,00.html>. See also, Sarah Schulman, "Israel and 'Pinkwashing,'" *The New York Times*, November 22, 2011. <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/11/23/opinion/pinkwashing-and-israels-use-of-gays-as-a-messaging-tool.html>.

⁹ Ritchie, 618.

Toronto.¹⁰ Thus, in their efforts to promote a certain type of tolerance, pink washing and pink watching have created a confused constellation of anti-Muslim, anti-Semitic, pro-LGBT+, anti-LGBT+, anti-Arab, anti-Palestinian, and anti-Israeli sentiments. Indeed, such confusion is commonplace in the description of borderland experience and identity.

Borderlands

Until this point, I have not provided a concrete definition of what a border is, and what constitutes a physical border. I resist including such a definition because this essay serves, in part, to explore the intersection between political, sexual, linguistic, and religious borders between Palestine/Israel. Indeed, even the forward slash that so frequently appears between the two country names creates a visual border that separates the nations and their citizens. Borders that have been created between these states are various and sundry. For Israel and Palestine, and particularly for *The Bubble*, Gloria Anzaldúa provides a cogent and appropriate definition: “In fact, the Borderlands are physically present wherever two or more cultures edge each other, where people of different races occupy the same territory, where under, lower, middle and upper classes touch, where the space between two individuals shrinks with intimacy.”¹¹ For Noam and Ashraf, whose relationship began at a border and whose relationship was consummated by shrinking—and entering—the border between them.

Anzaldúa’s notion of different races occupying the same territory is particularly relevant to Israel and Palestine because the West Bank and the Gaza Strip are known as the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Inherent in this name is an identity conflict; these Palestinian territories are occupied and controlled by Israel. Thus, identity presents itself as multivalent within the

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters, 1987), I.

borders of the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Jointly with the insertion and assertion of Israel's control of the OPT, it is necessary to consider the displacement of Palestinian bodies from Palestine. Michel Agier argues that “we see that every *emplacement* was preceded and will be followed by a *displacement*. The history of identities, that of humanity as a whole, is a succession of migrations, chances and accommodations”¹² Similarly, Jarrod Hayes, in his retracing the shared genealogy of Israel and Palestine through Abraham, notes that “Palestinians were removed from the site where Israelis were to be planted.”¹³ With the creation of borders, then, comes borders that displace and exclude where inclusion once was.

Israel itself is not removed from this confused constellation. Sarah Schulman comments that “Israel exists simultaneously as a colonial settler state in relationship to Palestinians, and as a semicolonized project of the Christian West, the very people who caused the Jews’ suffering to begin with.”¹⁴ Therefore, Israel exists within a state of identity crisis. Indeed, this confusion and conflict lie at the crux of border identities. To return to Anzaldúa, “It’s not a comfortable territory to live in, this place of contradictions. Hatred, anger and exploitation are the prominent features of this landscape. Such hatred manifests in *The Bubble* when Jihad arranges and Ashraf carries out suicide bombings in Tel-Aviv. Anger is palpable after the Israeli border guards fail to provide prompt and adequate medical assistance to the Palestinian woman in labor. Noam and Lulu exploit Ashraf, and endanger his welfare, when they arrive unannounced in Nablus disguised as French journalists in an attempt to lure him back to Tel-Aviv.

¹² Michel Agier, *Borderlands: Towards an Anthropology of the Cosmopolitan Condition* (Malden: Polity Press, 2016), 33. Emphasis in the original.

¹³ Jarrod Hayes, *Queer Roots for the Diaspora: Ghosts in the Family Tree* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2016), 39.

¹⁴ Sarah Schulman, *Israel/Palestine and the Queer International* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2012), 14.

Crossing the border between Israel and Palestine, as it is depicted in *The Bubble*, underscores examples of instability and mutability of identities. What *The Bubble* fails to do, is clearly portray traversal of political boundaries in real time. When Noam and Lulu drive to Nablus as French journalists, the journey appears short and unproblematic. After a *Google Maps* search, however, it became abundantly clear how difficult and lengthy it is to cross the border.

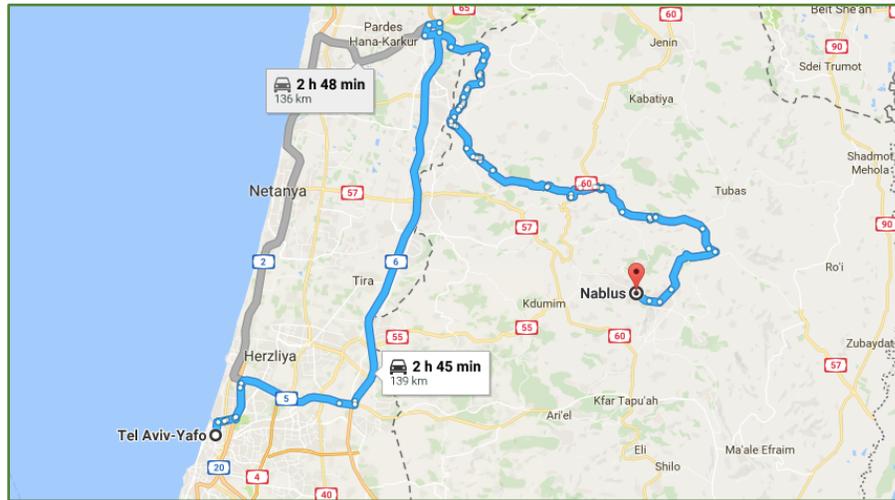


Figure 2: A map depicting the route from Tel-Aviv to Nablus.¹⁵

A close reading of this map will hopefully align the fictional experiences of Noam and Ashraf with the geographic reality of crossing the border between Palestine and Israel. The distance indicator on the map reveals that by car—this is how Noam and Lulu traveled—the drive of 139 kilometers (roughly 86 miles) will take under three hours.¹⁶ As the crow flies, the distance between Tel-Aviv and Nablus is around 48 kilometers (30 miles), which indicates that accessing

¹⁵ Google Maps, “Tel-Aviv-Yafo to Nablus,” 2016, <https://www.google.com/maps/dir/Tel+Aviv-Yafo,+Israel/Nablus/@32.18623,34.8107417,10.23z/am=t/data=!4m13!4m12!1m5!1m1!1s0x151d4ca6193b7c1f:0xc1fb72a2c0963f90!2m2!1d34.7817676!2d32.0852999!1m5!1m1!1s0x151ce0f650425697:0x7f0ba930bd153d84!2m2!1d35.2621461!2d32.2226678>

¹⁶ Multiple searches of this route revealed that the duration of the voyage varies and is dependent on traffic. I did not, however, see times fall below 2 hours and 45 minutes.

the border checkpoint nearly doubles the distance between the two cities. On the map, the border is represented by a grey dotted line, and the point of crossing at the checkpoint can be identified where the blue route line and the border line intersect. It is clear that the border checkpoint, which lies much farther north than either Tel-Aviv or Nablus, imposes spatial mobility restrictions; these restrictions certainly manifest themselves in the identity conflicts presented in *The Bubble*. The *Maps* search of the Tel-Aviv-Nablus route also reveals alerts that appear to any potential traveler: “This route has tolls;” “This route has restricted usage or private roads;” “This route may cross country borders.”¹⁷ Indeed, “restricted usage” relates directly to Ashraf’s experience with the border.

ORIENTED

Until now, I have examined borders and identity categories, and how these elements are illustrated in Eytan Fox’s *The Bubble*. The most disconcerting, albeit subtle, element of *The Bubble* is the anti-Palestinian sentiment woven into the narrative. In 2015, director Jake Witzenfeld released a documentary, *Oriented*, which is, in many ways, a response to *The Bubble*. *Oriented* is an account of three Palestinian young men, Khader Abu Seif, Fadi Demm, and Naeem Jiryas, living in Tel-Aviv.¹⁸ The three men, all 25 and 26 years old, identify as gay and tell the audience their respective experiences coming out: Khader, from Jaffa, came out of the closet to his family when he was 15; Fadi, from I’billin, came out when he was 16; Naeem, from Kafr Yasif, wants to come out to his family, but doubts his preparedness for such a big step. All three live in Tel-Aviv and each has an Israeli passport, which legally categorizes them as Israeli, but their self-identification is not quite so simple. Khader, whose partner is an Israeli Jew, labels himself as an Arab. Despite his Israeli passport, Fadi does not identify as Israeli; he would like to define himself as

¹⁷ “Tel-Aviv-Yafo to Nablus,” 2016.

¹⁸ *Oriented*, directed by Jake Witzenfeld (Tel-Aviv: Conch Studios, 2015).

“Palestinian,” but he does not believe he has the right.¹⁹ Naeem presents his various identities when says, “I’m Palestinian, vegetarian, atheist and feminist.”²⁰ Thus, the beginning of *Oriented* presents the complex relationship between borders, the state, and the individual that are not necessarily connected or embraced.

As in *The Bubble*, the young men in *Oriented* feel that Tel-Aviv is a safe space where they can express themselves freely, and come out. Naeem confesses: “When I’m in Tel-Aviv I feel like I’m ready, like I live in an environment that encourages [coming out].”²¹ This environment, even as portrayed in *Oriented*, can be considered a bubble, since Naeem reveals his doubts as to whether he can express himself freely in his home village of Kafr Yasif. This sentiment is a variation on what Ashraf feels in *The Bubble*: the incompatibility of rural, Palestinian life with the progressive acceptance of Tel-Aviv. Toward the latter half of the documentary, Naeem writes a letter to his parents, effectively coming out to them. Naeem’s revelation is very different from *The Bubble*, where Ashraf and Noam are discovered by Jihad: they were dragged across the threshold of the closet rather than walking across that border willingly.

Another motif that is prevalent in *Oriented*, much as it is in *The Bubble*, is erasure of Palestinian identity through the eyes of Israel. Fadi, in speaking with one of his friends, admits that he is “in love with the enemy . . . I am in love with everything I fight against.” He is referencing his recent tryst with an Israeli soldier, which seems to have shaken him to his core; Fadi takes serious issue with the fact that the soldier, Benjamin, does not believe there is an Israeli occupation, despite its very real presence. Indeed, following Fadi’s scene, Khader and his partner David seek shelter in a stairwell, a threshold, during a bomb scare. Thus liminality

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ibid.

provides protection during a time of conflict, much like the closet remains a place of succor for those who do not feel safe coming out. This scene reminds the audience of the present physical danger in the conflict between Israel and Palestine from a perspective not seen in *The Bubble*. In an interview regarding her very poignant graphic novel, *Exit Wounds*, Rutu Modan says, “Israelis prefer not to think about the context of the terror. For most of them the Palestinians are those bad people living far away who try to kill Israelis just for the fun of it.”²² Modan’s comment aligns well with the overall message of *The Bubble*. The reality, however, is that Palestinians are not “those bad people living far away.” Indeed, as *Oriented* shows, they are close and they are trying to navigate the borders that have been thrust upon them and designed to restrict them.

The conclusion of *Oriented* sees the development of two border crossings unmentioned by *The Bubble*. Firstly, the friends decide to make several music videos in an effort to bring about social change.²³ Having posted their videos to YouTube under the name “Qambuta Productions,” the friends are able to cross borders and express their identities throughout the world. Michl Agier comments that the Internet “make it possible to feel oneself ‘in’ the world thanks to a personal connection to multilocalized networks.”²⁴ Thus, identities are mutable and communicable through traversing the Internet’s borders. Secondly, Khader decides to remove himself from the locus of conflict: Israel/Palestine. He breaks up with his partner and moves to Berlin, Germany, where he believes he will be safer and freer to live his life. Escape, then, from the “uncomfortable territory” of the borderlands, as Anzaldúa says, will remove the conflict of identity.

²² Rutu Modan, *Exit Wounds* (Montréal: Drawn & Quarterly, 2014), 182.

²³ The video can be found here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x1BVhbDw5jI>

²⁴ Agier, 44.

Ultimately, both *The Bubble* and *Oriented* achieve a lack of finality at their conclusions: despite the violent deaths of the protagonists in *The Bubble* and the relocation, coming out, or reconciliation in *Oriented*, both films hopefully look forward to a time when Israel and Palestine resolve their conflict. There are too many factors at play in order to say with certainty that the imposition of borders is the cause of the turmoil in Israel and Palestine. What is clear through the fictional representations in *The Bubble* or the realistic accounts in *Oriented*, however, is that national identities created by political borders are mutable, and sometimes they are necessarily so, when these borders are crossed. What is also clear, is that identities (e.g. sexual, religious, ethnic, etc.), whether imposed by others or one's self, are not always compatible with national affiliation, and must be altered. This mutability is the key to survival. As Gloria Anzaldúa claims, "To survive the Borderlands / you must live *sin fronteras* / be a crossroads."²⁵ To survive, one's identities must be the means by which political borders are crossed and, perhaps, erased.

²⁵ Anzaldúa, 195.

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