

Transcript

00:00:03 Speaker 2

Good evening everybody.

00:00:06 Speaker 2

Again.

00:00:07 Speaker 1

Hello.

00:00:09 Speaker 2

Such a pleasure to have you here.

00:00:10 Speaker 1

It really is such a pleasure.

00:00:13 Speaker 2

To see you all here, my name is professor of contemporary Arab studies and of the very great pleasure and honour you, as briefly as I.

00:00:22

Alright.

00:00:24 Speaker 2

Can.

00:00:25 Speaker 2

Because we're here to listen to you and nobody.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

Is here to.

00:00:27 Speaker 2

Listen to myself. So.

00:00:30 Speaker 2

You're a professor at NYU, Devi, currently based in New York City. You, we we met.

00:00:36 Speaker 2

We were in Cairo. You were a professor of pathology at the American University of Cairo. You're known for the first book. Yeah. And very soon for a second book, which so the first book is called Landscape of war, ecologies of resistance and survival in South Lebanon and.

00:00:56 Speaker 2

I guess we will hear some of these arguments.

00:01:00 Speaker 2

Right. And you're preparing. You're writing a book about Aramco. But I'm very, very excited about we've read. We have read some some arguments here and there that you wrote for in various forms. The book is about the heart of empire in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. It's called. Is it still tentatively called?

00:01:09 Speaker 1

Yes.

00:01:20 Speaker 2

Sort of. Black gold. Yeah. Such a great title.

00:01:23 Speaker 1

And.

00:01:23 Speaker 2

It's based on an archive coming down from your grandfather, who was one of the first Arabian employees at.

00:01:27

Yes.

00:01:34 Speaker 2

Tonight's talk is called after the end of the world. Thanks so much for.

00:01:39 Speaker 1

Being here. Thank you so much, beskar. Thank you.

00:01:41 Speaker 2

And please join me in welcoming.

00:01:44 Speaker 1

Thank you.

00:01:48 Speaker 1

Thank you so.

00:01:49 Speaker 1

Much.

00:01:50 Speaker 1

It's really such a pleasure and an honour to be.

00:01:52 Speaker 1

Here.

00:01:53 Speaker 1

And they only actually realised yesterday when I was looking at the date of the auspicious date of this.

00:02:01 Speaker 1

It's the 77th year of the net, the catastrophe, and the dispossession and the occupation of Palestine, which is ongoing the next day is not an event and was famously pointed out by Patrick Wolfe. Of course it's a structure.

00:02:19 Speaker 1

And I extend this insight in my work to describe war as hardly an event, but rather a structure, or better yet, an environment right in which defined life is.

00:02:32 Speaker 1

So the talk today will be delivered in the spirit of keeping Palestine centred in our hearts and in our politics.

00:02:43 Speaker 1

So this paper was written during the Israeli war on Lebanon and Gaza that began in Lebanon on October 8th, 2023, and that intensified in Lebanon on September 23rd, 2024. So almost a year later.

00:02:58 Speaker 1

The paper was completed during the shaky ceasefire in Lebanon between November 27th, 2024 and January 27th, 2025.

00:03:09 Speaker 1

This was 60 days where a cease-fire was declared A cease-fire was declared at the end of which the Israeli army was supposed to withdraw from its occupation of South left.

00:03:23 Speaker 1

So the last parts of this paper, so this paper was written in this context and the last parts were added after the second deadline of the ceasefire that was extended until February 18th. And then my first visit to the occupied Lebanese borderland shortly thereafter. During the writing, everything was unclear.

00:03:43 Speaker 1

The Israelis were constantly breaching the so-called ceasefire and continuing to occupy South Lebanon beyond the first deadline of the ceasefire and the.

00:03:54 Speaker 1

These mainly occupiers were systematically destroying agricultural and residential landscapes, as well as extensive Rd networks in the Lebanese frontline villages which are home to all kinds of resistant life and deep layers of histories. So I try my best in what follows.

00:04:12 Speaker 1

To hold my prose study and to make some kind of sense in this moment of ongoing destruction at the end.

00:04:20 Speaker 1

Of the world.

00:04:25 Speaker 1

This is this is the the map of the borderland. These are the five points of occupation where the Israelis remain in South Lebanon. So South Lebanon is once again and still under occupation.

00:04:38 Speaker 1

And the the village that I speak of is next to Jabal LeBlanc. It's called ramiah. So then the graphic passage that opens the stock mirrors the passage that opens my book that I researched in the two years after the last end of the.

00:04:51 Speaker 1

World in South Lebanon.

00:04:52 Speaker 1

The July 2006 war, or as we call it, had 10 moves.

00:04:58 Speaker 1

The book, a landscape of war, ecologies of resistance and survival in South Lebanon, was published in 2022. So already 2 plus years ago. But the book remains all too painfully relevant today. The village that centres my book, and it remained unnamed in the book, was along with 37, seven other frontline villages.

00:05:18 Speaker 1

Completely destroyed by the Israeli occupiers.

00:05:22 Speaker 1

The occupation and the methodical destruction of Lebanese villages at the hands of Israeli occupiers took place after the ceasefire. There was not a ceasefire came into effect on November 27th, 2024. The village remains occupied today after the Israeli withdrawal. That was not a withdrawal was implemented.

00:05:42 Speaker 1

On February 18th, like I just mentioned, and the village is called, Ramya and Israeli soldiers remain in this military outpost in Jaballah blah, which is across the marriage, the fertile plain of Ramya Jaballah Blatt is one of the five military points that is that Israel continues to occupy today within the Lebanese border.

00:06:00 Speaker 1

So where do I begin?

00:06:03 Speaker 1

In the beginning.

00:06:05 Speaker 1

Before the noon prayer and after the war, we're sitting outside in the cold December sunlight in plastic chairs in a circle, drinking hot sweet tea. Two weeks into a six sea day ceasefire, we gather in my family's garden and on a hill South of Beirut. Me and the family from the village who've been staying with us since the escalation of the war.

00:06:28 Speaker 1

Specifically, since the night of the assassination of Sayed Hassan Australia in Delhi on September 27, 2024.

00:06:36 Speaker 1

The Hajim sahan, her daughters, her son and his wife, their children and grandchildren slept that night of terror on the streets, along with thousands of others, and then came by my urging to stay with us. The.

00:06:49 Speaker 1

Next day.

00:06:52 Speaker 1

We sit together on a momentary lull this morning, only the House Buster head is missing.

00:06:59 Speaker 1

The Haji and the girls would call him fondly.

00:07:02 Speaker 1

Stalwart in the Southern village he loved in the home that he built, the trees that he planted.

00:07:09 Speaker 1

The animals he cared for resisting until the end.

00:07:13 Speaker 1

The huge his village, his home, his beasts and trees are all memories now.

00:07:19 Speaker 1

It materialised, perhaps, is a sharp pain in the heart, an intake of breath or the sting of salty tears that has died in the spring of 2021 at the age of 92. He took with him like all those who died, the many stories that he lived, the wisdom he gathered more than anything Hasbro said took with him.

00:07:40 Speaker 1

His idiosyncratic and level headed view of and rooted response to endless seasons of war.

00:07:47 Speaker 1

The Hatch is buried in the village, but the village, the garden we're in, although under the same sun and sky, is far from the village. The village we know and we love so well. Sitting pretty on the hill in Jabalia Ahmed, which is also Galilee, hugging the border with occupied Palestine ceaselessly.

00:08:07 Speaker 1

Weathering seasons of Devastation, invasion, occupation, and resistance by remaining the home of the Hajj, the hedge their children and grandchildren is no more.

00:08:20 Speaker 1

The Haji silently bows her head and covers her eyes with a bent and her wrinkled hand. When she looks up again, her eyes shimmer with tears. She struggles to her feet, leaning on her cane. Her daughter's watch as she looks limps away and a feeble attempt to hide her sorrow. Our mother can't stop crying.

00:08:40 Speaker 1

They say.

00:08:43

Shy.

00:09:09 Speaker 1

On the morning of October 20th, 2024, Israeli soldiers detonated explosives they had wired throughout the village forcibly and gradually emptied their life since October of 2023, blowing it up completely. Videos by the young Israeli soldiers.

00:09:22 Speaker 1

Their audacious active destruction circulated on social media.

00:09:26 Speaker 1

The video showed the olive green clad soldiers, counting them in Hebrew and shrieking with laughter and hoots of machismo in the wake of the explosion that pulverised their village.

00:09:34 Speaker 1

The village, like many others in this ancient land, has been continuously inhabited since the Neolithic, moulded by the constant presence of humans and their companion species, and so many empires. This is one of the planets oldest anthropogenic landscapes alive with all kinds of beings laced with lively spirits.

00:09:54 Speaker 1

And studded with ruins, an image of the village disappearing into a pink pillow of smoke under a glowing early morning moon was shared on the villages WhatsApp group.

00:10:06 Speaker 1

Members of the group responded with crying, angry and broken heart emojis, expressions of disbelief, praising the heavens.

00:10:13 Speaker 1

I juxtaposed the haunting image of the villagers destruction with a photo that I took during field work in 2008, when the village had defiantly reemerged from the last

punishing war of July 2006 and had just been rebuilt, shiny and new, along with a few words, I posted the heartbreaking collage on social media. The post was widely shared.

00:10:34 Speaker 1

At some point, the New York Times actually took my photo off of X or Twitter, and then repurposed it for an article about the destruction of the villages.

00:10:45 Speaker 1

Helplessly trying to fathom the world ending loss of the place that centres my ethnography of life and war in South Lebanon, I sent a voice note to my friend Rita, asking how she feels about the erasure of her village, including the home that she had just completed building and in, in which she had not yet lived, and now she never will.

00:11:04 Speaker 1

She responded.

00:11:07 Speaker 1

I don't know. It's as if we've become numb.

00:11:11 Speaker 1

It did feel like we couldn't feel.

00:11:14 Speaker 1

How does one feel at the end of?

00:11:16 Speaker 1

The.

00:11:16 Speaker 1

World and how does one write at the end of the world again?

00:11:21 Speaker 1

Far from the complacent perch of northern theory, confident of its very grounds and of a sun little rise to Morrow, this talk is written from another world. The time and the place of devastation after the end of the world.

00:11:37 Speaker 1

Drawing on my theorising of war as a place of life, not merely of death and destruction, this talk stays insistently within the blasted existential groundlessness of the moment and its unknowable temporal arc.

00:11:52 Speaker 1

This act of genocidal of ecocidal terror, this ending and erasing the world, is monstrous. And yet it's nothing new under the sun. It has happened time and again, perpetrated across the planet in recent centuries, largely by settler colonisers.

00:12:11 Speaker 1

Here it's been happening across South Lebanon and Palestine, perpetrated by the settler colonial state of Israel since 1948.

00:12:19 Speaker 1

Right now, alongside the the ongoing genocide in Gaza and the ongoing erasure of the rest of historical Palestine, one of the latest chapters of Israel's expansionist settler colonial project is being realised in South Lebanon.

00:12:34 Speaker 1

Habib bleeder.

00:12:37 Speaker 1

Miss Jabal furcula, Liam Aytar, Shab Aitara, Yun Yun, Hanin Mehin, Dhara and Ramia, the village I speak of here are but a few of the 37 Lebanese villages wiped off the face of this.

00:12:57 Speaker 1

In November and December of sorry in in, in, in October and November of 2024 by the Israeli invaders and occupiers ancient villages.

00:13:11 Speaker 1

With layers upon layers of material and immaterial past, and presence such as Roman and Crusader ruins, olive Groves, mosques and churches, multifamily homes, hearts, stables, kitchen, gardens, graves of loved ones and ancestors, shrines of the prophet of prophets such as the more.

00:13:32 Speaker 1

Notable one of the 2000 year old shrine of Prophet Benjamin, son of Jacob in Maybin, which was actually pulverised by the Israeli invaders and occupiers, Habib was one of the first villages to be exploded and the shrine.

00:13:48 Speaker 1

And with it friendly and naughty spirits, fertile fields and terraces, plants and animals, both domesticated and wild.

00:13:57 Speaker 1

Resistant life is in the land.

00:14:01 Speaker 1

UM, rooted deeply and This is why the Israeli war machine said on destroying resistance destroys life. It destroys everything. This is a drone footage of the village done by some of the Shebab from the village, the documents, the extensiveness of the destruction.

00:14:21 Speaker 1

Of ramya.

00:14:28 Speaker 1

Here are some images from the vibrant life.

00:14:32 Speaker 1

In the villages prior to their annihilation.

00:14:38 Speaker 1

Take note of this wedding of of the wedding scene. You will see it's something related to it later in the.

00:14:48 Speaker 1

Slideshow.

00:14:52 Speaker 1

These border villages are now once again occupied by the same settler colonial entity occupying adjacent Palestine, the same that has since 1948 erased Palestinian and Lebanese villages from maps and from history. The same that has annihilated indigenous life across generations and continues to do so now with a chilling, methodical intensity.

00:15:11 Speaker 1

Audacious, shameless and unbound, Lebanon and Palestine, historically entwined landscapes that were in 1917 rudely riven by a line drawn by Sykes and Picot, British and French colon.

00:15:24 Speaker 1

Risers are one continuous landscape of ongoing Israeli settler colonial violence that is happening right now under our watch. Well, we need to comprehend and what we need to centre in our outrage and analysis is the intentionally ecological environmental nature.

00:15:44 Speaker 1

Of this military violence that is realised by American made bombs, the settler, the colonial imperial entity, eradicates indigenous life in all of its heterogeneous forms in order to dominate, control, replace, rule.

00:16:01 Speaker 1

Of course, this ecocidal and genocidal violence is not violence that is inhabited passively by its human and non human receivers. This world ending violence is violence that is necessarily, continuously, actively resisted militarily and otherwise by all of its targets.

00:16:21 Speaker 1

I intentionally refrain her from using the word victim in order to really highlight the agency of those who live and face up to it.

00:16:29 Speaker 1

Stand up to these ongoing and enduring structures of annihilation.

00:16:35 Speaker 1

I've called these collectives waging lives in the face of intentional annihilation, resistant ecologies, while we're living now and trying to make sense of through mortal faculties struggling at the limits of rational and emotional comprehension is another end of.

00:16:49 Speaker 1

The.

00:16:49 Speaker 1

World this is not a metaphor, nor is it a clever theory crafted to convey an intellectual.

00:16:55 Speaker 1

Thrill or a slight existential Zing to the curious reader.

00:17:00 Speaker 1

Unlike many authors that are confronting what is being called the Anthropocene.

00:17:04 Speaker 1

I'm writing this or I'm trying to from the thick of a deliberately destroyed world. My world and the world of those that are closest to me, that has just been destroyed again.

00:17:15 Speaker 1

This makes it hard to write to speak because there is no stable point from which to observe to capture, to recount or clarify as the bombs rained down, lives are violently

ended and fires rage. It's hard to maintain a scholarly voice, a commitment to abstraction and analysis to calmly parse details.

00:17:36 Speaker 1

At a distance from a world that is never at a distance from me.

00:17:40 Speaker 1

So note this House as well, because you're going to see it again. The presentation, this is by no means the first time, but it is the most intentional, brazen, unfettered and ongoing Israeli effort to annihilate everything this round. The homegrown Lebanese military resistance, Hezbollah, which emerged in the wake of the bloody 1982 Israeli invasion.

00:18:02 Speaker 1

And occupation of Lebanon, honing its asymmetrical fighting skills over decades of guerrilla warfare in South Lebanon and in May 2000, successfully ending the 22 year Israeli occupation of the Lebanese border land.

00:18:15 Speaker 1

So they occupied South Lebanon for 22 years and in 2000 they were. They unilaterally withdraw, withdrew because the resistance had prevailed. So this is a point in which to also point out that occupations do end.

00:18:32 Speaker 1

So in May 2000, the Hezbollah, which was the resistance that grew up out of the 82 invasion, they successfully ended the 22 year Israeli occupation of the Lebanese border land. But this this war, it has suffered a major.

00:18:48 Speaker 1

Although the resistance remained tenacious on the ground in South Lebanon, repelling the Israeli army's advances until the ceasefire came into effect, Israel managed through relentless bombing campaigns in residential areas with bunker blaster bombs and incessant drone attacks striking everywhere to systematically assassinate all of the military resistances top leadership.

00:19:08 Speaker 1

Including the much loved Secretary General Sayyed Hassan Musallah, who led Hezbollah.

00:19:13 Speaker 1

For 32 years.

00:19:16 Speaker 1

It is this.

00:19:19 Speaker 1

Shattered and shattering moment that we're in with their resistance in abeyance, will the resistance rise again? Of course. As long as there is occupation, there will be resistance in Lebanon, as in Palestine, as anywhere but in the meanwhile, and that is now. We try to absorb this reality and to find the ground beneath us.

00:19:40 Speaker 1

To recollect ourselves and to carry on living.

00:19:43 Speaker 1

So much is unclear, and yet one fact is as clear as day. Israel has invaded Lebanon again and continues to occupy and destroy the entire border. Land again.

00:19:54 Speaker 1

The latest Israeli invasion of Lebanon and its continued occupation is a political problem. It's a social problem, a moral problem, and considering the overwhelming and complete nature of the destruction being carried out.

00:20:08 Speaker 1

It's an environmental problem. It's a planetary problem, just like Palestine.

00:20:15 Speaker 1

It was unhinged war in Lebanon. Pastime is certainly not just a local affair involving the killing and the dispossessing of people who do not qualify as humans in the eyes of the civilised world. Civilised if we shift the grounds of our writing and thinking, analysis and politics to the actual grounds of life in these worlds of war, what I call in my World War from the South.

00:20:35 Speaker 1

We get it clearer and environmental and ecological picture of the lived realities that fellow humans must actively navigate to stay alive in those.

00:20:44 Speaker 1

Upon further reflection, we may realise that those wretched beings living through the end of the world again might be able to teach us a thing or two about resistance and survival. In the end, in our end.

00:20:58 Speaker 1

That's something to also countenance.

00:21:02 Speaker 1

For more than two decades, I've researched life and war in South Lebanon and of course I've also lived it for longer because I grew up in Lebanon during its very many years.

00:21:12 Speaker 1

But I've researched it or been actively kind of like witnessing wars in Lebanon since the liberation of South Lebanon on May 2000, where I witnessed the collapse of the 22 year Israeli occupation. I was a young journalist at the time, and I was there during the July 2006 war and its aftermath.

00:21:31 Speaker 1

And then I did field work in the now destroyed villages on life in a landscape of seasonal war and destruction. So since I'm a sort of a, you know, a long term inhabitant of war.

00:21:44 Speaker 1

I really wanted to look not at the spectacular sort of dimensions of war that we kind of see when we're at a distance from it, but to look at the way in which life is ways in.

00:21:53 Speaker 1

The world so life has always been my focus.

00:21:58 Speaker 1

So I did field work in those destroyed villages on life in a landscape of seasonal war and destruction.

00:22:03 Speaker 1

I have together with my friends, human and otherwise, in the line of fire in the eye of seasonal war storms in front line villages illuminated the standing fight to stay alive beyond the end.

00:22:17 Speaker 1

Of the world.

00:22:20 Speaker 1

The latest, an ongoing season of war in South Lebanon, resumed in the olive season after 17 years of relative calm.

00:22:27 Speaker 1

So the olive season in in our part of the world are in October and November. Those are months that have both had the name Tishreen. So they're called the Tishreen. Tishreen 1 and Tishreen 2. So the war began in October.

00:22:43 Speaker 1

So it it began after 17 years of relative calm in South Lebanon, one day after the Israeli war and Gaza began in solidarity with Gaza under attack. Hezbollah, which was the military resistance in Lebanon, fired across the dormant frontline, which even has all kinds of life resurged along. It had remained in a state of expectant preparedness since the last war.

00:23:03 Speaker 1

Waged there in July 2006.

00:23:06 Speaker 1

Immediately, Israel began to rain down a season of devastation upon the living landscapes of South Lebanon. Beginning on October 8th, 2023, Israeli bombs fell daily on Lebanese Galilee, destroying villages and lighting fires. And the olives, the laurels, The Woodlands and fields, killing and wounding civilians, and their companion species alongside fighters in the Lebanese resistance.

00:23:27 Speaker 1

Like in Hazit the target, the target of this vicious assault is ostensibly military, but in actuality, what is being destroyed are the vital ecologies underwriting life in this borderland, multispecies alliances, including human, animal, and plant life forms and even spirits.

00:23:47 Speaker 1

In South Lebanon, many prophets that remain in the land are also.

00:23:53 Speaker 1

Considered a part of the social world there.

00:23:58 Speaker 1

So friends who are farmers and frontline villages and depend for subsistence and income on the agricultural seasons of tobacco, olives and subsistence crops, as well as on livestock such as goats, told me that they were being intentionally targeted in the orchards by in their orchards by the Israeli military across the nearby borderline 1 friend from the village said to me during the days of relentless.

00:24:19 Speaker 1

White phosphorus rain in the early phase of the war. They see us tending to our livelihoods, and they shoot at us because we're out in our orchards harvesting our olives and living our lives while they cower in shelters.

00:24:32 Speaker 1

As has been extensively documented, the Israeli army along the border was firing white phosphorus and harvesters in the olives, setting their trees on fire and then targeting the firefighters when they rushed in to douse the flames.

00:24:44 Speaker 1

Harvesting under the bombs and not fearing war is a defiant posture, but still in the first year of the war, more than 100,000 villagers fled the Lebanese border land to greater safety in the villages and cities outside of the line of.

00:24:56 Speaker 1

Fire.

00:24:57 Speaker 1

But on September 23rd, 2024, the fire caught up with them.

00:25:03 Speaker 1

On that day, almost 600 people were killed in an Israeli aerial bombing campaign of unprecedented intensity and 1.5 million were displaced. About 1/4 of the Lebanese entire Lebanese population in the first year of the war. Because of the constant drain of bombs across South Lebanon, there were no profitable seasons of harvest, such as tobacco.

00:25:23 Speaker 1

And olives nor subsistence farming that crucially eases the cost of living for most villagers. And I need to underline this, that most of the folks who live in those borderland villages are the vulnerable poor who really rely on the land to get by.

00:25:42 Speaker 1

So there were no winter crops, no foraging of wild herbs in the spring, no fresh bounty of the seasonal kitchen gardens, appended to every village home, no hectic and rhythmic summer tobacco harvests, as the were precipitously escalated into a war of annihilation at the end of September 2024, entering its second year, the olive crop went unharvested.

00:26:02 Speaker 1

Again, the orchards. The orchards were incinerated again.

00:26:06 Speaker 1

According to satellite imagery and field surveys analysed by [White phosphorus.info](http://Whitephosphorus.info), over 4500 hectares, which is of around 11,000 plus acres of agricultural and forested land in South Lebanon, was directly affected by white phosphorus contamination. The numbers are still being compiled, but images and reports of ecological.

00:26:26 Speaker 1

Damage in the borderland are horrifying.

00:26:29 Speaker 1

The ancient olive Groves of Alma Shab, and thereby mass with 1000 year old trees, builders and uprooted the storied pine forests of Yaun scorched.

00:26:39 Speaker 1

The Woodlands of Rehab Hill denuded missus rehab before the ecocide missus Rahab held after the ecocide.

00:26:50 Speaker 1

The steep gorge of white is aged and salute where the Litani River, whose waters have long been desired by the Israelis, runs pummelling and poisoned by all kinds of incendiaries and explosives and ravaged by Earth moving machines.

00:27:07 Speaker 1

Of course, the seasons keep turning, so they don't only kill nature, they also destroy infrastructure, like quite meticulously as you can see in this image.

00:27:18 Speaker 1

Of course, the seasons keep turning even as the the deadly season of human wrought annihilation battering down remained steady.

00:27:25 Speaker 1

In the second year of the genocide in Palestine and of the Ecocide in South Lebanon in the Mediterranean, we're back, wars notwithstanding, in the green season Museum and Chad.

00:27:37 Speaker 1

The meadows and hills of Jibrael Galilee are covered in a bright green carpet with speckles of wild flowers.

00:27:44 Speaker 1

And the tender herbs like Basith or Yun Hinde.

00:27:49 Speaker 1

Shumar Zatar isani there that are forged by all villagers, are plentiful in The Woodlands, in the Quay and fruit trees are in tender flower.

00:27:59 Speaker 1

As the rainy season ends and the sun shines hotter, the earth should be ploughed and ready for the summer crops, especially tobacco. But given the utter ruin that the Israeli war machine has systematically laid upon the landscape of South Lebanon, it'll be another season of immense loss even for those who can access their fields and their orchards.

00:28:20 Speaker 1

Again.

00:28:22 Speaker 1

So the planting season is usually in February and March and April, and then the seasons of Harvest begin in May, June, July, August, September, October, right. So we're once again in the season of loss.

00:28:39 Speaker 1

My work as an anthropologist and as a human on a war ravaged planet, explores how do those who are relentlessly besieged and who continue to inhabit such embattled landscapes live in such conditions? This isn't an easy question to ask, because we all know that no one should live like this.

00:28:57 Speaker 1

For fear of normalising war as an environment and a living condition, which it is for too many beings on this.

00:29:03 Speaker 1

Planet.

00:29:04 Speaker 1

We tend to postpone or to resist asking this difficult question, but ask it we must.

00:29:10 Speaker 1

For the harsh fact remains is.

00:29:12 Speaker 1

That for the so.

00:29:13 Speaker 1

For the harsh fact is that too many beings on this planet to live in war, and almost all of those wars are in the global South. And that's also why these wars are hardly visible.

00:29:24 Speaker 1

Or only occasionally visible?

00:29:27 Speaker 1

Landscapes and life worlds of wars such as South Lebanon and Palestine and Sudan, Syria, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Congo, Somalia, Colombia, Sri Lanka, Haiti, to name a few, make clear that war is no passing event.

00:29:47 Speaker 1

Wherever war unfolds, it shapes those environments where multitudes of beings resistant. They pursue living by understanding more as a structure rather than as a passing event. We're pushed to consider it.

00:30:00 Speaker 1

Of qualities, albeit deadly ones, for living environments. In many ways similar to other living environments, to other lethal environments associated with capitalism, nation states, and empire. However, by paying attention to how people actively resistant, they live in war and death, and this.

00:30:20 Speaker 1

Ordinary resistance is often deeply enmeshed with military resistance. We can also find hope, defiant, angry, bitter, but hope never.

00:30:30 Speaker 1

Plus, and sources of creativity practise of life as resistance within extractive, contaminated or world annihilating conditions. And not only despite them. So this this stance of living in a deadly environment, I consider it agential and resistant.

00:30:50 Speaker 1

So I I'm very.

00:30:54 Speaker 1

Dismissive of framing such as resilience, which takes on a more like passive, sort of like cowering stance to those to those conditions.

00:31:06 Speaker 1

So at the end of World War 2, war was outsourced to the global South by the Powers who won that war as part of the same history and geography war has been sidelined as an exotic elsewhere by northern theorists of war, capitalism, modernity, the nation state.

00:31:22 Speaker 1

Inequality, migration, the environment war is always this exotic. Elsewhere, somewhere that's not here.

00:31:29 Speaker 1

Since war largely involves life worlds inhabited by distant others, prominent Anthropocene preoccupations routinely neglect the ravages of ongoing war. In the present, focusing instead on more familiar because closer to home, or relevant to life in the heart of empire, calamities such as fossil fuels, nuclear weapons.

00:31:51 Speaker 1

Plantations indigenous genocide and climate change.

00:31:55 Speaker 1

If war enters theories of the disastrous present at all, it's usually at a savage distance, and most it's brought home through the experiences of imperial soldiers.

00:32:08 Speaker 1

So when you think of, you know, infamous wars such as Vietnam, which is this year celebrating or commemorating, let's say the the 50th anniversary of.

00:32:20 Speaker 1

Or Afghanistan or Iraq would say often it's the figure of the Imperial soldier, right, that looms large in those narratives and hardly the lives of millions of others that have been decimated and destroyed through these imperial adventures.

00:32:37 Speaker 1

The living world environment and ecosystems that are blasted apart, eradicated and lethally contaminated through the ceaseless invasions, occupations, and heavy weaponry of imperial armies are largely absent from northern.

00:32:49 Speaker 1

Theory. So too are they still actively resistant lives of humans and non humans waging life in these deadly conditions. So I propose fixing this problem by intentionally, mindfully, defiantly growing theory from southern experiences of the world. You can call this a decolonizing move if you must.

00:33:09 Speaker 1

I prefer to describe it as unsalvageable in homage to my first teacher, Michelle Rolf Trio, who called for the destruction of what he called the savage slot in anthropology and in hegemonic northern theory.

00:33:26 Speaker 1

If you dare study it as a life world and not as an exotic elsewhere, war has much to offer from an ethnographic perspective. The experience that is closest to what theories of the Anthropocene described, which is the relentless, reckless and methodical destruction of the world by people and projects that should know and disingenuously.

00:33:45 Speaker 1

For us to know better is also the experience of living in and through my book.

00:33:54 Speaker 1

Eliminate some of these multi species collectives that through many cycles and seasons of war have sprouted in the war-torn landscapes of South Lebanon. Making life here possible. I call these ecologies resistant for they have actively taken root in this war season region where invasions, bombardments, minefields and white phosphorus are ordinary challenges.

00:34:14 Speaker 1

Facing inhabitants every day inescapable like the weather, so I seek to show what we can learn about war and about survival on a deadly planet from those who must face the end of the world while pursuing their daily bread.

00:34:28 Speaker 1

By cultivating tobacco on a seasoned battlefield or by keeping goats in an explosive landscape, or by tending to spirited and fire resistant trees.

00:34:38 Speaker 1

As an example, let's take tobacco, a cash crop that was introduced to South Lebanon during the Ottoman Empire and then taken over by the French colonisers in 1960. It became a Lebanese monopoly under the regime. Ibanez de Tabaka tombak.

00:34:56 Speaker 1

This Hardy plant grows in the arid Highlands of the Lebanese border. Land tobacco is a dry land crop that needs no irrigation and has a brief lifespan in the fields it's planted in February, transplanted in March and April, and harvested in May, June, July, and August. It requires no storage facilities.

00:35:15 Speaker 1

Apart from the village home, it's worked by the many hands of village households, the women and children and the elderly.

00:35:24 Speaker 1

Those who have not left the village to earn a living or to fight through their cultivation of tobacco and the income that it brings steadfast people hold on to home and land.

00:35:34 Speaker 1

Flexible, fleeting and Hardy tobacco thrives in adverse conditions such as war and occupation, poverty, marginalisation and neglect.

00:35:44 Speaker 1

The long-suffering villages of this borderland have always relied on the profit guaranteed by tobacco as a key supplemental.

00:35:51 Speaker 1

And although it has a tumultuous history, they call it the Neptune mudra, the bitter crop. Tobacco remains a steady lifeline to those who stubbornly remain in their villages through ever returning seasons of war and devastation. Tobacco therefore roots life in war season in the war season landscape of South Lebanon.

00:36:10 Speaker 1

It also does so actually in northern Palestine because of the similar qualities of hardiness and and.

00:36:19 Speaker 1

Its ability to thrive amidst large families and new infrastructure so everyone knows that tobacco roots life. The Israelis also know this.

00:36:29 Speaker 1

So in South Lebanon, tobacco, the bitter crop is also lionised as ineptitude. Mucho mean the the copper resistance by those who plant it and who live from it as a source of life.

00:36:42 Speaker 1

Underwriting late in poverty and neglect in war and occupation, tobacco vividly exemplifies the resistant ecology. So this last war, it's the resistant ecologies that have come into the centre of the frame of destruction. So the military element is almost the collateral damage. What's really interesting, what's really interesting to the war?

00:37:02 Speaker 1

Machine is a destruction of those ecologies that underwrite life.

00:37:08 Speaker 1

So.

00:37:09 Speaker 1

Nobody's been allowed to return to their homes to plant their.

00:37:12 Speaker 1

Crops.

00:37:13 Speaker 1

Tobacco, I mean, especially the the tobacco farmers.

00:37:17 Speaker 1

In Warren survival, the landscape is not a bystander. It's an active participant, A partisan and resistant and resistant, and an ally to resistant life. Inhabitants of landscapes plagued by seasonal war and other disasters understand this in practical terms, they find ways to survive and even thrive in deadly conditions that endure what I'm calling the structure or the environment of war.

00:37:37 Speaker 1

Navigating a landscape that's both the source of life and the place of war. They do this because they have to.

00:37:44 Speaker 1

There is no easy exit.

00:37:46 Speaker 1

Resistant ecologies, then, are the life making practises that grow on such landscapes. They are creative multispecies responses to systems designed to kill and destroy life. Resistant ecologies are diverse ecological relationships and practises that defy necropolitics realities by centering and underwriting life instead of succumbing.

00:38:06 Speaker 1

To the death prescribed and desired by predatory war machines.

00:38:14 Speaker 1

Go to another example of resistant ecologies in South Lebanon. Heartbreaking scenes or starving horses stumbling through the streets of southern villages circulated on

social media during this war, abandoned by their owners, and the rush to safety, terrified and disoriented by the constant shelling, larger livestock like horses, cows, mules and donkeys.

00:38:34 Speaker 1

Are tragically vulnerable to any change in the environment.

00:38:37 Speaker 1

Or to the structure of.

00:38:38 Speaker 1

There.

00:38:39 Speaker 1

Likewise, domesticated animals like cats and dogs and borderline villagers were starving and kind. Humans were literally braving death to feed them.

00:38:48 Speaker 1

Goats, on the other hand, are known for their abilities to thrive in landscapes of war. They're able to nimbly browse across the hills and valleys of the border land, defying the explosives in the ground because they're too light to spring.

00:39:00 Speaker 1

Yeah. So mines are designed to kill humans. They're measured at the weight of a human step. So when you have a light 4 legged creature, the mind is not triggered. So they defy the explosives in the ground because they're too light. Spring them. And this is well known. And although it's not a fail safe strategy, it it has allowed goats.

00:39:20 Speaker 1

And their humans, human companions who make a living alongside them to continue to thrive, to Israel in a deadly landscape and to resistance.

00:39:29 Speaker 1

Preoccupy land that has been made deadly and unusable by us made in Israeli planted mines because goats are light and nimble. They don't spring mines. They're resistant beings who can proliferate in the explosives through meadows of South Lebanon. The meadows that followed due to mines grow, grow, luscious and nutritious and plentiful to the happy goats who tapes through these explosive.

00:39:50 Speaker 1

Landscapes snatching them back for the living from the realms of death. And it's for this very reason that goats are targeted directly by Israeli drones.

00:40:00 Speaker 1

Mortars. This last war in the summer of 2024, for example, an Israeli attack on a farm in Jazin killed 300 goats and ruined the livelihood of a livestock farmer and ramia my village. The village that I work in, the family of shepherds, lost their entire flock of 1500 goes to this war, and only 30 or so remain.

00:40:20 Speaker 1

When I went back to the village, the two boaters were just sitting there in the middle of the metres in the middle of the fields, just sitting there.

00:40:27 Speaker 1

And and there was nothing to do because there was nothing to plant. The Israelis were on the hill right next by and and and the the the sisters that I was with that I was with they were postulating as to why they were there. And they said well those guys are just kind of they're used to being outside with their goats and and that's what they're doing now they're just outside even though they don't have their goats so.

00:40:49 Speaker 1

I mean, it's this kind of the groundlessness of this moment, people don't know really what to do with this sort of level of loss.

00:40:57

Off.

00:40:58 Speaker 1

Anyway, so the the goats are being targeted this time, and this pattern actually of attacking livestock is has a long genealogy beginning in British and French colonial times, and it's very well documented throughout the Israeli and and also throughout the Israeli occupation of Palestine. And it continues across South Lebanon and Israeli war machine.

00:41:18 Speaker 1

Intentionally targets those resistant ecologies that have defiantly sprung up and taken root in necro political worlds resistant ecologies that have enabled life to continue in a place that they want to empty your life.

00:41:30 Speaker 1

Life is the target of a predatory war machine that desires to settle and to occupy an empty land.

00:41:38 Speaker 1

The landscape of South Lebanon is no stranger to fire. The wildfire season usually begins at the end of the dry season, before the 1st September rains. But fires have been raging constantly in South Lebanon, intentionally ignited by white phosphorus and flare bombs rained down by Israel on Lebanese villages and Woodlands. This is not a new development.

00:41:59 Speaker 1

Israel has been shown.

00:42:00 Speaker 1

South Lebanon, with white phosphorus and napalm for decades, attacking the life source of those who live here with the aim of emptying the land of life.

00:42:08 Speaker 1

These seasons of human made fire fold into the natural the anthropogenic rhythms of the arid Mediterranean Mickey landscape, whose native flora and fauna are both drought resistant and capable of regenerating after fire. Indeed, the rain fed landscape depends on seasonal fire.

00:42:26 Speaker 1

But not all white phosphorus fire.

00:42:29 Speaker 1

In South Lebanon, the orchards, and in particular the olives, whose fruits are both a source of subsistence and not profit to local farmers, are vulnerable to wildfires.

00:42:39 Speaker 1

Although olives, which are native to the Mediterranean and thrive in arid landscapes and thus are acclimated to fire, do eventually regenerate after fire, they're not fruitful. In the years that it takes for them to recover. This impacts the vulnerable communities who rely on them for subsistence, and for and and and income. And This is why, over years of war, many farmers in South Lebanon have shifted.

00:43:00 Speaker 1

Tobacco and goats as their main sources of agricultural income. In this picture, you see the tobacco planted amongst the olives.

00:43:08 Speaker 1

In the amazing book by Sheridan Molavi entitled Environmental Warfare in Gaza, which was just recently published, she describes a similar transformation of the agricultural landscapes in Gaza in Gaza, where settler colonial violence that she calls a settler colonial climate to underline ecological dimensions.

00:43:28 Speaker 1

Has forced Palestinians to shift from citrus and olive cultivation to low growing cash crops with a speedy turnover such as strawberries, broccolis and pineapples, so they plant crops that are for export that are cash crops.

00:43:42 Speaker 1

And that are low lying and and that are sort of allowed within the sort of the topographical restrictions of asymmetrical centric colonial violence and warfare.

00:43:57 Speaker 1

So how will the multi species landscapes of South Lebanon regenerate through fires that are not seasonal but that burn?

00:44:03 Speaker 1

Here these human made fires in Lebanon, but also I mean if you had noticed recently there were fires around Jerusalem that were that were raging unchecked and those landscapes, ironically, are even more vulnerable to fire than the sort of indigenous flora and fauna of the Lebanese landscape.

00:44:24 Speaker 1

LA, Another settler colonial Biome that has been extremely vulnerable to fire.

00:44:32 Speaker 1

But these human made fires wherever they rage, burn through and destroy human and more than human worlds. Those fires rage while we're in the green season, at the height of summer, during the life giving harvest of tobacco in South Lebanon and across the lush meadows where goats grazed peacefully in Israeli laid minefields.

00:44:50 Speaker 1

I think of the olives, the laurels, the Pines, the Oaks, The Woodlands of wild pistachio and capers and thorns. The birds, the boars, the foxes, the hyenas, the bees, the medicinal and edible herbs that people forage in the.

00:45:09 Speaker 1

I think of the world sees and Southerners of this earth.

00:45:13 Speaker 1

Living through yet another season of war.

00:45:16 Speaker 1

How will they live through constant fire? Will these fire resistant life worlds regenerate after this kind of fire? The fire on the Lebanese side of the border were ignited by white phosphorus Cellars lobbed by the Israelis at the Lantic concept of resistant life before the cease-fire, the resistance on the Lebanese side counted by igniting fires and the settlements and the orchards across the border and front and occupied.

00:45:37 Speaker 1

Palestine.

00:45:39 Speaker 1

Everything is burning and the implications for and the possibilities of resistance and regeneration may be different after a certain threshold of destruction.

00:45:48 Speaker 1

So here we're also like kind of edging again into this like planetary affair.

00:45:53 Speaker 1

So looking at those who continue to inhabit those landscapes through and after seasons of conflagration may give us some clues what resistance resistant life on this planet might look like in its latest or its last fiery chapter. So here you see a an ancient all of that has been uprooted has been burned and uprooted. This is one of many.

00:46:14 Speaker 1

And you can see here in this picture how big that olive tree is. It's a it's an ancient tree. They call them millennial trees and locally made. Then they call them like, meaning like this.

00:46:27 Speaker 1

They've passed thousands of years and during this last war, they didn't only burn an up and didn't only burn and cut down, they also uprooted them and many, many of them were actually taken away, were stolen, taken talking by Palestine. And I don't know what they're done with. Maybe they're sold. I'm sure they're sold.

00:46:48 Speaker 1

But there's an active attention like a really kind of mindful attention to uprooting and beyond destruction to just kind of attend to the ways in which people will be not allowed to return.

00:47:02 Speaker 1

When the first ceasefire went into effect on November 27th at 4:00 AM, the roads heading South were already jammed with traffic. The minute that they thought they could, everyone rushed back to the rubble of their homes, their fields and trees, their livestock, their lives. But the inhabitants of the frontline villages were turned back. Marianne, who lives in one of the front line villages, told me.

00:47:22 Speaker 1

I was on the road by 4:00 AM. We were so many, we couldn't fit into the van that stopped for us. We had him drop us off on the line and and to go back for the rest.

00:47:30 Speaker 1

I finally made it back to my village. I didn't leave for that whole first year of war. I was only forced to leave at the end of September 2024 during the escalation. But when we got to the village, the Israelis immediately started shelling us and we had to leave again. As of this writing, the occupation is ongoing and the future, if there is one, is unknown.

00:47:50 Speaker 1

When I drove through the villages and towns of South Lebanon in mid-december, this was two weeks after the first first end of the so-called ceasefire.

00:47:58 Speaker 1

I beheld the familiar site, so the first time I visited, 2 weeks after the first end of the ceasefire, I was only able to go to the secondary row of villages because they weren't allowing anybody to get closer to the 2nd to the 1st row of frontline villages. So this is in the area around number.

00:48:18 Speaker 1

For those of you who know, I love.

00:48:22 Speaker 1

When I drove to the villages and towns of South Lebanon in December, 2 weeks after the end of the first call of the so-called ceasefire, I beheld the familiar sights, rubble ruin rebar, shreds of life and notebook, a teddy bear, a scorched tree. It feels both deeply familiar and astoundingly impossible to comprehend.

00:48:41 Speaker 1

How is it possible? But this is the end of the. This is the world or the end of it, and there is an explanation.

00:48:49 Speaker 1

On the 27th of February, 3 months after the first ceasefire and a few days after the funeral of Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, which about 1/4 of the Lebanese population attended, we travelled together to the end of the world. My sisters, me, Rita and her family Chola Zahra, Noel, the three sisters and my book the Daughters of Bushel.

00:49:10 Speaker 1

As we entered the village, me at the wheel, my sister beside me, the three sisters sitting in the back, began to pray together, uttering snatches of verses by way of protection from bullets.

00:49:22 Speaker 1

From drones, from anguish and heartbreak.

00:49:26 Speaker 1

Their home is the first in the village.

00:49:30 Speaker 1

It's a best scooter, as Zahara put it, as flat as a cookie now.

00:49:34 Speaker 1

Others described their accordion or their sliced through houses as cakes.

00:49:39 Speaker 1

Here in the dust in our at our feet is the robe that Bushyhead would put on his strong shoulders on cold winter nights.

00:49:48 Speaker 1

The trees, Zahra, the younger sister, exploded in anger and heartbreak. Who cares about broken cement? But those trees are all uprooted. The white fig, the plum, the almond, that my father planted, she spied a young sapling still valiantly upright in the ravaged orchard.

00:50:07 Speaker 1

And rushed to it.

00:50:09 Speaker 1

She's alive, she cried. Zara fussed around the ZAP, the saplings roots pulling away the weeds and clutter of this war of intentional annihilation, propping her up to ensure her continued existence and thus resistance.

00:50:23 Speaker 1

There.

00:50:26 Speaker 1

Later, standing beside me in the middle of endless piles of rubble extending as far as the eye can see, and there on that hill, the sinister machinations of the occupation digging in, I heard my my sister whispered to herself in a voice of bewilderment.

00:50:45 Speaker 1

This is apocalypse.

00:50:51 Speaker 1

Hi.

00:50:55 Speaker 1

That, the sister said. This is the village, the village that was.

00:51:02 Speaker 1

So this is Rida and the house where the picture of the wedding was at the beginning that I showed you. And she found this, this picture of the newlyweds from the wedding.

00:51:14 Speaker 1

And she held it up. And then I took it and I photographed it in front of the rubble of the house. And that's also the house that I was sitting in front of with the family that I told you to note.

00:51:28 Speaker 1

In the garden to day we sit in an awkward moment after the end of the world, we sit suspended in the space of limb. A time of cease-fire after two months of Hell unleashed after more than one year of occupation by fire and intentional, methodical, mechanical ecocidal devastation in South Lebanon.

00:51:48 Speaker 1

And genocide in Palestine.

00:51:50 Speaker 1

Every conversation today in this momentary respite from the incessant devastation of this past year of war, where so much was destroyed and so much lost, addresses this stupefying existential predicament. What is now and where do we go from here?

00:52:06 Speaker 1

In the aftermath of the massive blows to the leadership and capabilities of Hezbollah, the military resistance in Lebanon, ordinary people are realising more than ever that the resistance ongoing is them. Their very lives are resistance. This is not an overblown or ideological formulation, but it's a very prosaic.

00:52:26 Speaker 1

1.

00:52:28 Speaker 1

It's terrifying this reality that we're confronting, that we're currently inhabiting. It feels like because it is the end of.

00:52:36 Speaker 1

The.

00:52:36 Speaker 1

World. And yet it's hardly the first end of the.

00:52:39 Speaker 1

World.

00:52:40 Speaker 1

As we sit together, many voices mingle, discussing life in wars. So today on the memory of or the commemoration of.

00:52:48 Speaker 1

The ongoing that the 77th year right there are many wars in the interim. So as we sit together in the garden and many voices mingle and they're discussing their lives and all those wars and.

00:53:00 Speaker 1

And then how asks do you remember in 1967 when the whole village ran and took refuge in Salhani? It's a nearby ruined village next to their village.

00:53:15 Speaker 1

She was referring to the Seven Day War with Israel when the West Bank, the Golan Heights and the Sunni Peninsula were all invaded and occupied by Israel.

00:53:23 Speaker 1

Munia says yes, that's where I took my first steps. So these are like the life memories, right, that come out in relation to those many seasons of war.

00:53:34 Speaker 1

Amidst the laughter, the old Hagee turns to me, her eyes still red with tears, and she puts a warm hand on my arm.

00:53:43 Speaker 1

I've been living in war since I was 6, she says matter of Factly looking into my eyes.

00:53:50 Speaker 1

The first word that she means.

00:53:53 Speaker 1

Is the Palestinian Mecca.

00:53:57 Speaker 1

The gathering in the garden, that's not the village, cannot go back to the village. Their village has been turned to dust. And as one of the completely destroyed front line villages was still occupied until the end of the ceasefire, which ended on January 27th, the first time and then again on February 18th. South Lebanon is still under occupation.

00:54:16 Speaker 1

Sahel, the son of the Hajah, once told me at the close of another war, the end of another world back in 2000 and.

00:54:23 Speaker 1

He said my love for this land is not ideological. It is this way.

00:54:30 Speaker 1

A practised presence, actual and placed feeling, that's what it means, more or less this very ordinary but also very powerful practise is key to resistant life in this Reg.

00:54:44 Speaker 1

And it is what the war machine and empire cannot comprehend in their cold and calculated metrics of annihilation, punch drunk on power. So you have Trump saying, who wants to go back to Gaza? It's all destroyed. We'll build you a lovely Riviera, you know somewhere else where you can go to.

00:55:02 Speaker 1

And the Palestinians?

00:55:04 Speaker 1

Inhabitants of Gaza, who also I mean, who who love their homes but who have also been displaced there, right since in the many years of the nebula and the many waves of the neck, but that have been ongoing.

00:55:15

Right.

00:55:16 Speaker 1

They say we don't want to go anywhere, we want to go back to Gaza, right? So this is the disconnect between the the calculation and the metrics of of the war machine and those who are resistant, they living within it.

00:55:31 Speaker 1

So this is what the war machine and empire cannot comprehend in their cold and calculated metrics of annihilation, punch drunk on power in an asymmetrical battlefield. This matters even when all hope appears to be lost. It's not because life remains.

00:55:48 Speaker 1

I grew up with this phrase and I still defiantly believe it and will continue to repeat it again and again beyond the end of the world. As Shemsu Toshiko Menechino.

00:55:59 Speaker 1

Where shemsu, testicle and Shannon Philistine, the sun rises from the South and the sun will rise from Palestine. Thank.

00:56:07 Speaker 1

You.