

## Books in Space: Contested Territories and Memories

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*Archives, “are not passive storehouses of old stuff, but active sites where social power is negotiated, contested, confirmed. By extension, memory is not something found or collected in archives, but something that is made, and continually re-made.” (Cook and Schwartz 2002: 172).*

While this paper principally looks at the fate of an individual book associated with war and booty, rather than an archive, Cook’s quote is apt. The issues that arise because of this particular book go to the core of one of the most contentious conflicts of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, one that is still unresolved: the conflict between the state of Israel and stateless Palestinians.

### Context

The context for this paper requires some explanations.

The paper is a work in progress because it is intended to develop its theoretical implications further in the coming year with other colleagues. Thus, its conclusions are not completed and various points tempered.

Such a paper also requires something of a political explanation. First, this paper will be viewed by some who detest criticism of Israeli nostrums and hold vendettas against those who do critical academic research, analysing their viewpoint as a result of pathological self-hatred or other personal deficiencies. Thus, according to one critic of a controversial report, “one recognizes in their writings passions of anger and indignation, bitterness and repudiation that transcend those associated with mere politics. (Rosenfeld 2006). For many in the Zionist movement, its nostrums are sacred and discussion of, or recognition of Palestinian rights is not dealt with lightly. This can be as can be seen in the vitriol served up by offended Israeli academics defending the official received wisdom (Karsh 1996; Shapira 1999). Israel suffers from the same infection and blindness caused by zealous and self-serving nationalism as many other countries (Ignatieff 1993; Ron 2003) and this blinds the official narrative to the rights and presence of the other—that is, Palestinians (Kimmerling 2003; Pieterberg 2010).

Second, the dominant narrative in Zionist politics is that the circumstances of the Jewish experience and its nationalism are unique. I don’t accept that narrative, and thus, fall into what is known as the non-Zionist or post-Zionist camp though many of my views are very similar to those expressed by dissident Jewish Israelis on a daily basis. I am not speaking here of political extremists or sloppy popularizers like Shomo Sand (Goodman 2010; Sand 2012), but serious academics, known as the “new historians” in Israel (Greilsammer 2012), internal social critics, or thoughtful non-Israeli critics, from moderate to strongly left backgrounds (such as Tony Judt or Antony Lerman). They are critical of the politics of Israel, not the right of Israelis to life in safety and security with Palestinians in a fair political solution whatever the final border agreement. Their point of difference is that they have moved beyond sloganistic Zionism (Judt 2003; Shulman 2007; Lerman 2008; Gorenburg 2011). One doesn’t even need to enter into Palestinian criticisms of Israeli historians to see just how contested the past has become (Masalha 2010)

That said, the paper has several purposes. First, to outline the history of a book as an artefact imbued with contested meaning in the context of the Israel-Palestine Conflict. While it is only a peripheral, even marginal example of the contest for ownership of heritage, its life as a contested item is relevant to many thousands of other books and documents now held in the Israel National Library or the Israeli State Archives.

Second, the life of the artefact as a transformed and contested object by different players (including, myself) in the context of contested property, memory, and interpretation, will be explored theoretically. The key means for doing this will be through a re-working of what is known as the Monash Information Continuum.

Third, in the interests of restorative justice, some suggestions are made about what might be done to satisfy the rights of Palestinians to reappropriate and reappropriate and even actually re-inscribe their ownership and heritage back through activity by Israeli archivists and librarians to compensate for past wrongs. Of course, as an outsider, both Israelis and Palestinians are free to modify or reject my suggestions.

## Introduction

One of the results of the collapse of Palestinian society with the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948 was the dispersion of hundreds of thousands of people and the subsequent loss of property under the Israeli Alien Property laws<sup>ii</sup> which by and large, removed ownership of goods and access to property (including books and papers) from their refugee owners in the Custodian of Absentee Property, even if they relocated within Israel as “present absentees”. This loss of property particularly affected the Palestinian Christian upper middle-class in areas such as the Qatamon quarter in West Jerusalem (Radai 2007) who had fled the violence. The collapse is now called in Arabic the Naqba, and the role of the pre-Israel forces in expelling or forcing residents to leave, once disputed in Zionist historical circles, has now been established as part of the accepted historical record, painful that it is in the popular Zionist imagination (Morris 1987). Whether or not the policy was circumstantial or deliberate is also subject to considerable and highly personalized debate (Morris 2011, March 17), such is the centrality of a justifiable nationalist historical record of importance in Israeli circles.

The loss of historical documents and personal property, on top of the effect on cultural heritage and community memory is deeply felt by Palestinians who have not had their own national cultural institutional network to take control of records and books. Many valuable records have disappeared into the Israeli state archive and National Library system, and are virtually inaccessible to outsiders. Thus, “archives in Jerusalem or Israel are totally inaccessible to Palestinians with West Bank or Gaza identity cards. Due to the occupation, Palestinians under PA- or Hamas-administered areas cannot enter Israeli territory or East Jerusalem without a military permit. Their ability to undertake academic research into documents that preserve their own history is denied, and foreigners and Israelis must make up the difference”. (Banko 2012: online). Furthermore, the state of archives in the Occupied Territories is it appears, parlous with a lack of national cultural institutions able to undertake such activity. Even the creation of history and access to historical records of the 1948 war even within Israeli circles as with so many other issues is full of symbolism and contestation and bitter infighting between insiders and outsiders on the “truth” of a historical record that is so critical to justify actions taken by one side or the other as the case may be (Shlaim 2004). Furthermore, where Palestinians remained, either in West Bank or Jordan, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan did little to allow Palestinians to preserve their particular identity “the King did all he could to erase Palestinian national consciousness and encourage a ‘Jordanian identity’, not least by decreeing that official textbooks should replace the term ‘Palestinians’ with ‘Arabs’” (Mendel 2013: 38). In the Gaza Strip, Palestinians became a powerless, “camp society”, in Lebanon, barely tolerated outsiders, and elsewhere in the Arab world, a marginal minority (Kimmerling and Migal 2003).

The result of this massive physical and psychological blow is that Palestinians are forced to preserve memory in other ways, Edward Said, one of the most famous Palestinian intellectuals, said that:

‘...if you look in every Palestinian household, into the third generation after 1948, you’ll find such objects as house keys, letters, titles, deeds, photographs, newspaper clippings, kept to preserve the memory of a period when our existence was relatively whole....[it is a strategy] against historical erasure. It is a means of resistance’ (Said, cited (Butler 2009, p. 63)).

Poetry and song became important to Palestinians, and “in his home a Palestinian child, whether born in Beirut, Amman, or Damascus, would be instructed to identify himself as a Palestinian from Haifa or Lydda or any other town that had been his parents’ birthplace, and his own experience would constantly remind him of this” (Fawaz Turki, cited in (Kimmerling and Migal 2003: 232) and this feature of self-identification is true of any Palestinian one meets today.

Thus Kimmerling and Migdal also wrote that “social institutions of the camp created this invisible wall, drawing the refugees away from confrontation with larger Arab society, into a world of memory—and, as memory itself dimmed, into their mythological Lost Garden of Palestine” (Kimmerling and Migal 2003: 233), and because of the continuing conflict, Palestinians continue to be unable to connect with their homes and property. What Palestinians lack with respect to the collections now in the National Library in Jerusalem, and books and documents in many other collections, is the capacity to engage in “counter-factuality” (Grossman 2007: 51).

### **My book, their missing story**

In 1977 or 1978 in a second handbook shop in Jewish West Jerusalem, I bought *A Dictionary of Modern English Usage* by Henry Fowler. It is one of those blue clothbound Oxford University Books that were easy to find years ago. I had never really thought much about the book’s previous owners of which there were at least two. One owner’s name appeared in English on the inside cover as “George Khamis”, without a date, accompanied by a number (perhaps a lot number), and the name of the used book shop. On the right-hand page, in Hebrew, were the other owner’s details reading “from the library of Margalit Anda”.

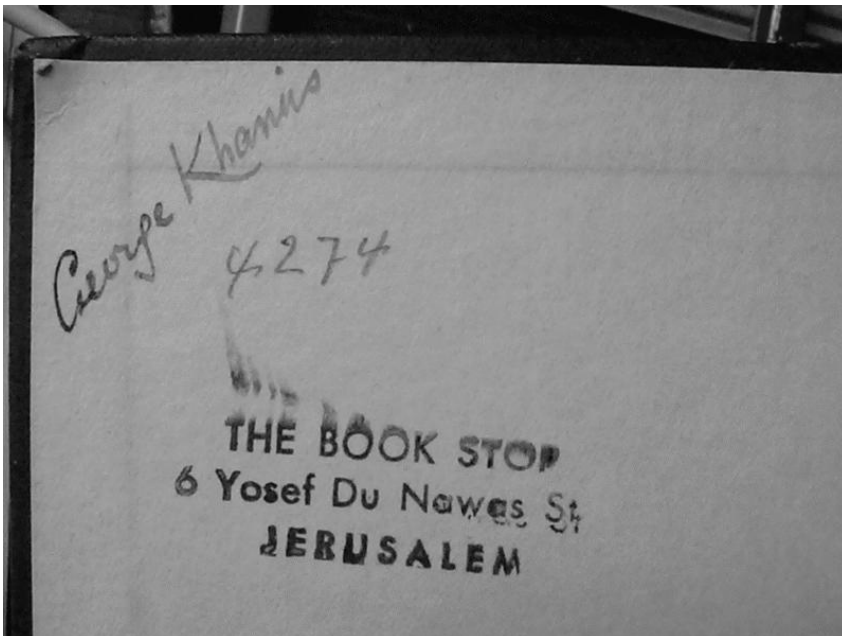


Figure 1. Inside cover of *Fowler's*

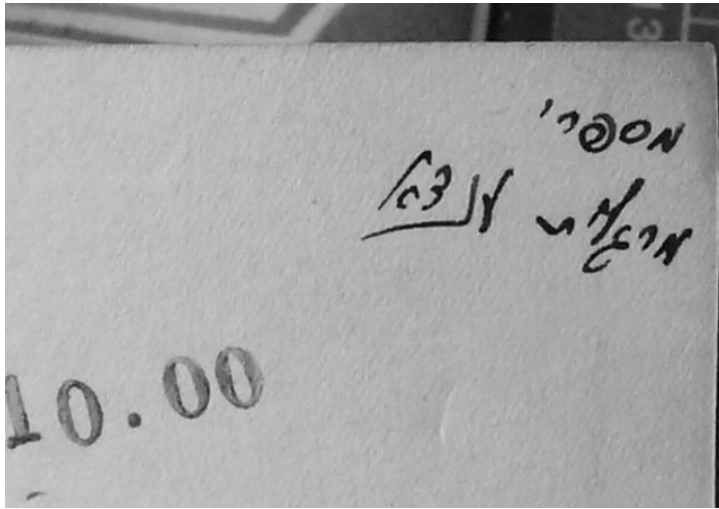


Figure 2. Fly leaf of *Fowler's*

Nearly 35 years later, I had been writing for a local Jewish website Galusaustralis.com.au (an English-Ashkenazi Hebrew calque meaning Australian diaspora), from a left perspective on a variety of issues connected to the Israel-Palestine conflict. One of the strong reactions to my views on Zionism—that the game was up-- was denial, particularly that Palestinians exist or existed. It was then I began to think about my *Fowler's*. Who was George Khamis? And who was Margalit Anda?

In May 2012, after a few searches on Google, I was amazed to find Gorge Khamis mentioned in an account of the intellectual life of late Ottoman and British Mandate Jerusalem. He was part of an active circle of mostly Greek Orthodox Palestinians who lived in the new, predominantly Arab south-eastern suburbs of Jerusalem (Davis 1999). These local intellectuals gathered around the well-known figure of Khalil Sakakini, who formed the 'Vagabond Café' and cultural group (Tamari 2008). Sakakini and his comrades were also educators teaching at the Dusturiyyah (Constitutional) school which he founded. A cultural centre in Ramallah is also named after Sakakin today. Hala Sakakini, Khalil's daughter, talked about George Khamis living in the then semi-rural Katamon neighbourhood as follows:

*"...[he would take us around proudly showing us the different flower-beds and pointing out to us his prize carnations, or his huge azaleas with the pointed petals, or his velvety wine-coloured roses. From the main gate a wide walk paved with flagstones led between long lines of lavender bushes up to a large porch with smooth round columns. In one part of the garden stood a few fig trees from which we were invited to pick the fruit." (Davis 1999: 34)*

This is extraordinary, because this very bourgeois, cultured, and Europeanized way of life was in complete contrast with life of poorer Palestinians in the Old City or in villages around Jerusalem. It certainly contrasts with the widespread impression amongst Israelis and diaspora Jews that pre-Israel Palestine's population was unsophisticated. Hala Sakakini also mentioned that Khamis entertained her family with records from his large collection of European music (Radai 2007: 963).

But not only did I find documents about Khamis, there was also a photo of these very Europeanised gentlemen.



Figure 3. Private collection.

In this photo, George Khamis is on the far left, with Khalil Sakanini sitting on the far left in 1919.

### The Great Book Robbery Project


Somewhat inspired by these finds, I posted my finds on Facebook while looking for more information on the internet. On May 28 2012 I found another reference to George Khamis that could not be coincidental. I discovered that there was an ongoing project “the Great Book Robbery” [<http://www.thegreatbookrobbery.org>] to identify books which had been collected by the prestigious Jewish National and University Library in 1948 and stamped as ‘Alien Property’ (AP). I also got in touch with a librarian in the US active with the project.

Overdue Books: Returning Palestine's "Abandoned Property" of 1948, Part 2

Overdue Books: Returning Palestine's "Abandoned Property" of 1948, Part 4

.....

2 Comments (+add yours?)

 **Larry Stillman**  
May 28, 2012 @ 08:52:37

Please contact me about George Khamis. I am positive that I have one of his books. Are you in contact with any of his family?

Figure 4. Image from: <http://thedeskset.org/overdue-books-returning-palestines-abandoned-property-of-1948-part-3/>

The Great Book Robbery project aims to put online the catalogue of 6,000 Alien Property books with titles translated as an independent source. The project includes a video documentary about attempts to gain access to the AP collection in the National Library (Mermelstein 2011).

The source of the National Library's AP collection can be summarized as follows. Approximately 30,000 books were collected from abandoned Palestinian properties in Jerusalem and more from other cities in the period May 1948 and February 1949 by librarians and soldiers after their Palestinian owners had fled, but it should be noted that theft was also carried out by local Palestinians (Amit 2011). Thousands of books were disposed of by the Israeli authorities because they were considered as irrelevant or hostile material and only 6000 were deemed valuable enough to belong in the National Library and it was likely that my book was one of the ones deemed as having no collection value. The intellectual prestige of the private collections now held by the National Library is well known in the Palestinian community.

Initially, in the late 1940s, the National Library had some discomfort at the being engaged in such a form of book collection. Even Israeli Palestinians who worked on cataloguing books believe that intentions were originally benign. (Amit 2011: 10-11).

Thus, the Great Book Robbery project is creating a kind of cut and paste counter-catalogue (Grossman again) by using the database material from the National Library catalogue for new purposes. Although the specific owner's name is not indicated in the new list, theoretically, it should be possible to rebuild the individual libraries based on the AP memos or checking of the physical items themselves for signatures or other notes. A new database could therefore be annotated and reinscribed in any number of ways through community-preferred metadata, and the addition of text or multimedia narratives to rebuild context. Despite the ambitions of the project, it appears that only 600 books have been "reclaimed" through the project and it is short of funds.

**THE GREAT BOOK ROBBERY**  
Chronicles of cultural destruction

HOME PROJECT **LIBRARY** BLOG TOUR ABOUT PRESS

Follow us:

**BUY DVD**

**BOOKSHELF MAP**

**THIS PARTIAL LIST IS A TRANSLATION OF THE "COLLECTED" PALESTINIAN BOOKS AS THEY APPEAR ON ISRAEL'S NATIONAL LIBRARY ONLINE CATALOGUE.**

In time we intend to translate their entire online catalogue - close to 6000 - of these books. We are looking for volunteers who can translate from Arabic to English in order to complete this work. Please [contact](#) us if you are interested.

Record number	Author	Title	Classification	Publisher	Year of publication
2139659 AP 10		A-Dur Al-Nadid: Basics of Quran Intonation	Quran Studies	Jaffa: Al-Samhura	
2167451 AP 65		Collections of Classical Letters	Arabic Prose	Cairo: Mustafa Al-Babi-Alhalabi	1913
1920384 AP 69		1001 Nights	Classic Literature	Egypt: Muhammad Ali Sabih Library	
2233577 AP 93		Kalila wa Dumna	Classic Literature	Egypt: Khazandar Publishing	1934
2086467 AP 130		Book of Literary Tips: For Students of Arabic	Literature Studies	Egypt: Al-Saada Publishing	1907
1999411 AP 428		Book of Intonation for Worship	Arabic literature	Beirut	1857
2320174 AP 402	Abdallah, Tawfiq	Al-Qissas Al-Hadithat (The Modern Stories)	French fiction	Egypt: The Modern Printing Press	1924
2322242 AP 129	Abdel-Raziq, Haroon	The Constructive Didactic Principles	Education	Alexandria: The Publishing House of Egypt	

Figure 5. <http://www.thegreatbookrobbery.org>

It needs to be remembered that cultural institutions in Israel have a specific mandate that even goes back to before the time of the establishment of the state of Israel. In fact, the idea of a national Jewish library goes back to the late 19<sup>th</sup> and early 20<sup>th</sup> century, in line with the idea of national libraries that were current in Europe at the time. The difference here of course, is that diaspora Jews were thinking of a library to be established in what was then Palestine for Zionist purposes as “an archival depository for the preservation of the spiritual heritage of the national in all its forms” (Schidorsky 1989: 47), with all sorts of documents relevant to Jewish intellectual history and presence over the millennia, including priceless manuscript collections, rare books, incunabula, books rescued from the Holocaust, as well as being a reference library for the general public. Obviously then, other materials, while of interest, are of secondary ideological importance. But in this context,

*after a while, no one was willing to seriously discuss returning the books to their owners, who were already far from Jerusalem at that point, until this option had gradually become inconceivable. The people of the National Library did not pre-plan the pillaging; in the course of the war they learned from soldiers about the existence of the books, and they went to take them. Perhaps they sincerely believed they were saving them, and maybe they seriously considered returning them to their owners once the fighting ended. However, they very quickly fell in love with their plunder, and the possibilities which this plunder presented pushed away every other thought from their mind”. (Amit 2008: 5)*

In the 1950s, it appears that the National Library (logically) recorded the books along with their owners' names, since in theory at least, the library was not the owner, but the custodian of the books.

It is clear that Palestinian patrimony was considered fair game and that depersonalising the property was a further step in removing the books from any claim to personal ownership. Thus by the 1960s:

*the cataloguing system was dramatically altered, erasing the names of the owners and replacing them with a new signature, "AP" ("Abandoned Property"). This was a significant change: the books' connection to their owners was severed, but the new signature prevented the books from becoming an integral part of the library's collections – defacto preserving the Palestinian memory" (Amit 2008: 9).*

However, a March 1949 memo listed the names of 60 Palestinians whose books had been collected – included amongst them the name of George Khamis, and the documentation of the period also records the considerable excitement at the acquisition of rare material that was important for students of Arabic culture (Amit 2008; Amit 2008: 15 ; Amit 2011). There has been at least one past attempt to reclaim seized property, as documented by Amit. An Israeli Arab member of parliament also wished to reclaim books belonging to Khalil al-Sakakini, but received the response “We are unable to discuss your request until the list of books is handed to us.” As Amit notes, it was in fact the Library that held the list of books via its catalogue system and archives (Amit 2008: note 20). Furthermore, the National Library appears to have attempted to wipe out consciousness of the true origin of such collections. In 1965, during 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration, the Library’s exhibition publication recorded blandly ““During the Liberation War, many abandoned Arab books were found.” (ibid., note. 22). Furthermore, as of May 2013, it appears that there is a law suit to attempt to bring the matter to a head through the courts<sup>iii</sup>. The news item reporting this also has this quote “The Israeli finance ministry, which includes the Custodian of Absentee Property, a body formed after the 1948 war which seized Palestinian refugees' abandoned property, including the books, declined to comment on why the books have not been returned”.

### **My Fowler’s—part of the Great Book Robbery.**

In a blog post by researcher and librarian Hannah Mermelstein on the Great Book Robbery Website she told the story of one person, also from a family that had to flee Jerusalem who gained went with her to the National Library “... the very first book we opened together had the name “George Khamis,” to which my comrade said, “George! Let me tell you about George! He also drank tea every morning with my grandfather and Khalil Sakakini.”<sup>iv</sup> I was provided with a photo of the book they had located in the National Library (see the image below).<sup>v</sup>

I was stunned. This was a real person, and a connection to someone living, and there were other books that belonged to him. I sent a query, saying that I thought I had a book of Khamis’ as well.

I was sent a photo of one of Khamis’ books and from comparing the signatures in the *Fowler’s* with his Arabic text, there can be no doubt that I had his *Fowler’s*.

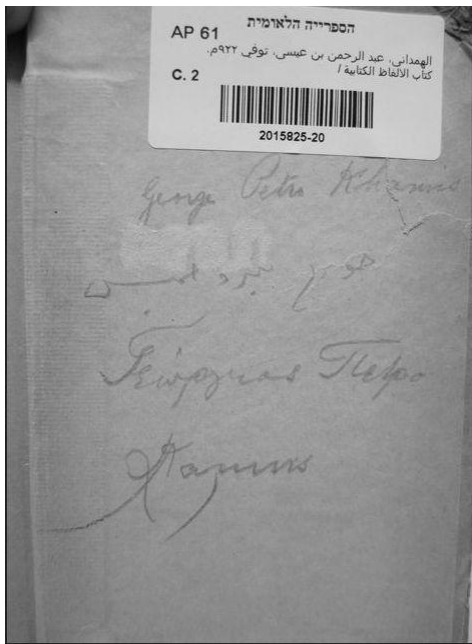


Figure 6: The Alien Property information on George Khamis' book.

The barcode label at the top contains the AP (Alien Property) number and the author and title of the book (The Book of Idioms) which is by Abdul Rahman bin Issa Al Hudmani, died 922 AD, edited by Louis Cheiko and the book was published in 1898 in Beirut. This is a book in the Arabic lexicographic tradition. Most remarkable for me however, was the signature – there is no date, but it is clearly that of a much younger George Petro Khamis, written in English, Arabic and Greek – thereby showing his literacy in three languages.

I also closely watched the video of the Great Book Robbery, and I saw a few frames of a Hebrew language memo. This was a video of March 1949 memo discussed above by Amit in his article. Khamis' name appeared in the list along with other people such as Khalil Sakhanini.

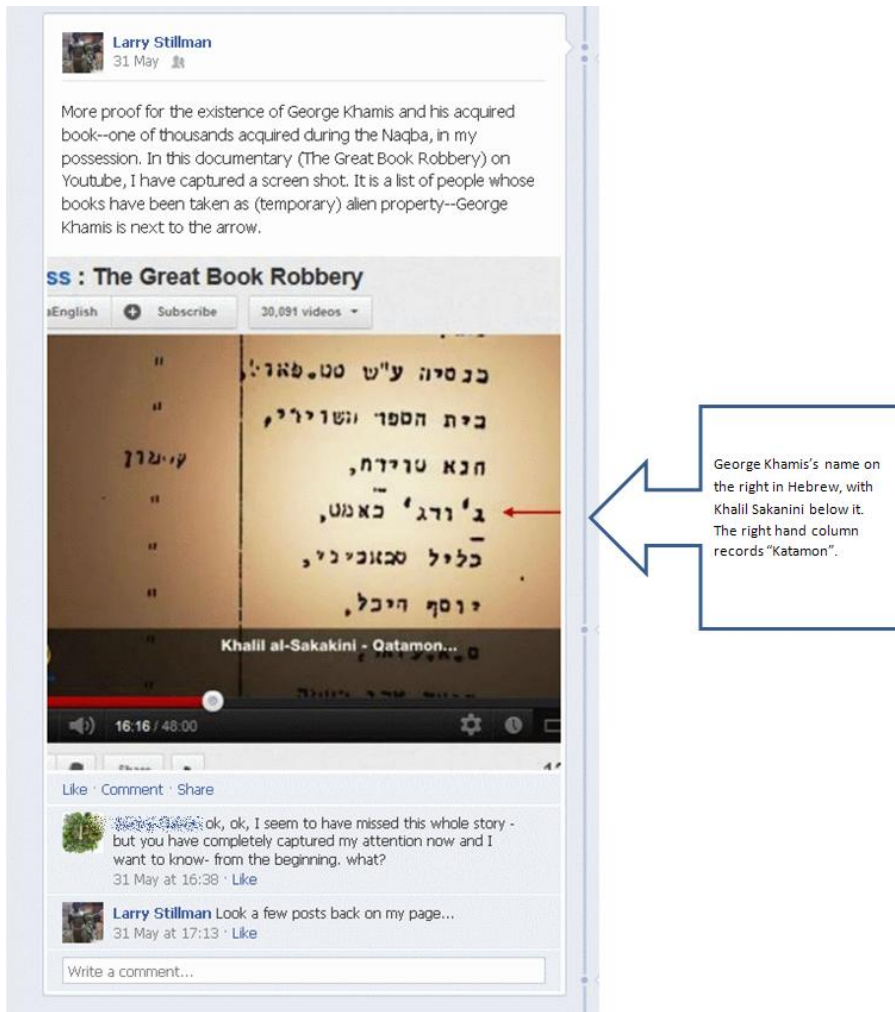


Figure 7. Screen shot of Facebook page.

With increasing excitement, I also emailed Hannah Mermelstein if she knew if there were still any other family alive. I was in fact put in touch with relatives in a very short amount of time and a productive email exchange ensued. Because of the their sensitivity of not wanting to be seen to be involved in anything political, they do not wish to be named, but the following information adds more to the story of dispossession and loss of patrimony.

Some of the family were living in Katamon during the attacks and well remember having to flee at very short notice and join the Palestinian diaspora. In this regard, their accounts exactly confirm the experience of other refugees from late April and May of 1948. George Khamis, who was one of nine children, though he never married he died in Lebanon years later. The family was connected to a prominent builder and developer in the area. A family member has been back to the area and revisited one house which was being used as a hospital, and I have been able to identify a number of other houses from Google Street View. From a video that was taken, other family recognised a large table and grandfather clock from their childhood.

One of the extended family wrote to me that this “all brought back heartfelt memories and tears”, but it was equally distressing for me. The reality of the Naqba had been brought home in my old neighbourhood in Jerusalem, and my despair at the effects of the Naqba reinforced. I knew exactly

where the family's houses were, and yet, the people who now live there know nothing and events by groups such as Zokhrot (Memories) in Israel to even put up old street names get a violent reaction. When I told the story of the book and the hospital to Sahar Vardi, a Jerusalem peace activist who was in Australia in 2012, she said that she was born in that hospital. The inner part of Jerusalem is a very small and connected place.

But why did I have the signed copy of *Fowler's*? As noted, thousands of books were disposed of because they were not relevant to the Library's collections—they may have had a few copies of *Fowler* already. Another alternative is that the book was just looted when it was collected. And who was Margalit Adna? I have not been able to yet find a record of him, but he well may have come from a long-established Ashkenazi Jerusalem family. Clearly, he came into possession of my *Fowler's* and then he or his family sold the book to the second-hand bookshop by 1978—about 30 years after the Naqba and perhaps 40 years after Khamis came into possession of it himself. Of course, it is possible that Adna had possessed the book first, but either way, it had come from Khamis' collection in 1948.

Now, how do we understand this book as evidence of the politics of cultural transfer, books, archives and other records, and contested memory and ownership? This can be solved through a deeper theoretical exploration.

### **Theorizing loss and gain via the Monash Information Continuum**

The electronic interrogation of my book's relationships served to highlight different aspects of the books existence and effects as transformed into a political-archival object despite part attempts to neutralize its history and location.

With the removal of the metadata attached to the Jerusalem books—the names of the owners, it is difficult to know their cultural history unless there is a conscious attempt to create a counter- archive or counter-catalogue or counter history. Otherwise, they become normalized “naturalized” books, and unless one paid attention to what the prefix “AP” meant, these books assume a “simple truth” as Cook and Schwartz (Cook and Schwartz 2002: 174) have put it through the at first benign and then conscious work of librarians and archivists, to strip the booty of its original identify and provide it with a new one as precious and rare research materials dedicated to another narrative and experience (that of Jews and Zionism), rather than as Palestinian objects.

Thus, these librarians and archivists are far from being passive guardians of evidence or neutral guardians of truth (Cook and Schwartz 2002: 175), but deeply influenced by what Foucault has termed the “capillaries of power” of a dominant ideology (Foucault and Gordon 1980: 96) via which people put self-imposed and not necessarily conscious constraints on their activity. This form of governmentality—the practices of self-control, social control, the administrative rationality of the state, and its controlling parcel of different types of knowledge (Foucault, Faubion and Hurley 2000: 201-222)—helped to determine what was acceptable within their particular archival social system, and they were active agents in the cover-up. As Foucault has said, “the fundamental codes of a culture – those governing its language, its schemas of perception, its exchanges, its techniques, its values, the hierarchy of its practices – establish for every man (!), from the very first, the empirical orders with which he will be dealing and within which he will be at home” (Foucault 2002: xxii). And this pervasive effect of governmentality, rather than a baseball bat or cosh explains how institutions like the National Library have functioned as agents of a particular ideology, over and above the formalities or archival or cataloguing rules.

### **Representing the problem in archival theory**

Is there a way of representing this process within archival theory?

The Monash Information Continuum (MIC) is a way of understanding the transformation of information objects through time and spaces developed by a number of people associated with library and archives thinking at Monash University. Key statements were made in the late 1990s the

following decade (Upward 1996; Upward 1997; McKemmish, Piggott, Reed et al. 2005; Upward 2005), though the concepts associated with it have been regularly taught to students. It has been particularly responsive to calls for “post-custodial” responses to the activity and understanding of the activity of the archivist in society. Rather than just being concerned about the physicality of the archiving process within the normative procedures and understandings of archives, it has looked to both understanding the “habitus” or the ideological locale of the archive/archivist and the particularly, the reconstitution of objects through time and space. This occurs in a period when there is a recognition, in line with the post-modern or linguistic turn “if the ideas of a ruling class were once the dominant (or hegemonic) ideology of bourgeois society, the advanced capitalist countries today are now a field of stylistic and discursive heterogeneity without a norm” (Jameson 1984: 65; Toews 2001), and even post-Newtonian cosmology, where the idea of one firm reality has been replaced by evidence-driven speculation and theorization (Greene 2005). Archives and other information objects are now understood to be a social formation or series of actions capable of having multiple forms, existences and interpretations, and quoting McKemmish “traditional custodial role takes on another dimension when it is accepted that the physical record is only partly manifest in what is in the boxes on the repository shelves” ((Upward 1996: online, no pagination). Furthermore, this transition is hastened when there has been a “technology-driven post-custodial paradigm shift” (McKemmish 2001: 33).

Those associated with the MIC are also aware that the concept of the control of the archive in the post-modern era needs to be completely unpacked and control and commentary are no longer completely in control of the “official archive”. Concepts such as possession, ownership, guardianship, control, authorit/ies, warrant or even originality can be problematized in completely new ways particularly from the point of view of those who have been outsiders or marginalized or colonized. The very language used to describe activity needs to be re-examined and understood, because of the power of language to form judgements and characterizations though the performative naming of things in particular ways, thus being the “citation and reiteration of a set of existent norms and conventions” (Barker 2004: 142). When considering the problem fact above—a traditional institution and its particular guiding ideology being challenged in how it possesses cultural heritage—this exploration is very necessary. Obviously, in the internet era, these ideas have become particularly relevant, not just for formal institutions that have a legal responsibility, but as much for the creation and the opportunity to create counter-archives, counter-histories, counter-narratives ((McKemmish, Faulkhead and Russell 2011): 232 ff.), and counter-facts (Grossman), counter-possession, counter-controls, counter-guardianships, or counter-authority which while standing outside “legitimate” or suspect authority, can have tremendous community authority, or at least authority and standing to communities who take a contra-authority seriously (Adams and Faulkhead 2012). One’s institution’s valuable archive can be another’s stolen goods.

In 2006, Frank Upward and I wrote a dense paper for the Prato Community Informatics Conference which tried to connect the ideas which had been swirling around in archive circles to the putative goals of Community Informatics. The paper exists in two versions—the longer version as the conference paper, the shorter version in the published book (Upward and Stillman 2006; Upward and Stillman 2007), and a similar position is taken in the paper written with McKemmish (Upward and McKemmish 2006). One of the difficulties with the paper with Upward is the complexity of some of the ideas of various thinkers such as Bergson about the concept of multiplicity of forms of memory and his presentation of this issue in the form of a cone (Lawlor and Moulard Leonard 2103; Bergson n.d.: 197). I had in fact come across the same form of representation independently as a useful way of representing action/structure issues across time and space, so what I am trying to do here is present in a simpler way some of the ideas which Upward had (with myself as a novice) applied to the case of my book and Palestinian archives as highly contested and archival spaces.

Both Anthony Giddens, the British sociologist and Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist, developed ideas concerning how people, ideas, and objects exist and are (Giddens 1984: Chapters 3&4; Bourdieu 1990: Chapter 8). Time and space are critical here, because it is through the medium of time and space that social order comes into being and is continually recreated (or transformed) though the exercise of different forms of social power. However, it is also impossible in this paper to do justice to the differences in emphasis between Giddens and Bourdieu (and the contribution of post-modern theorists) and the philosophical disputes over structure/action in philosophy and sociology

**Comment [LS1]:** This is the stuff I really need help with, drawing out the technical, post-custodial language etc in a succinct form and explaining why they have come into being from articles such as McKemmish, S. (2001). Placing records continuum theory and practice. *Archival science*, 1(4), 333-359

I find it hard to do!

(Archer 1982), but this summary therefore only intentionally highlights what is relevant to understanding the issue of artefacts as “things that are made, and continually re-made” to paraphrase Cook and Schwartz. Of the two, Giddens has been of particular interest because of his delineation of different regions of human and institutional behaviour spread or positioned through different forms of activity, responsibility, and power relationships across time and space, and this insight is taken up in archival writing with respect to the power and position of archivists, including factors such as gender and colonizing/subaltern status (McKemmish, Gililand-Swetland and Ketelaar 2005).

**Comment [LS2]:** Cf the book on software

**Comment [LS3]:** Sue uses positionality in a paper.

As well as this, he has seen modern technologies having a key role in affecting the character of these relationships effect of modern communications technology on information creation and storage. And because humans have memories and a capacity to think into the future, we also refer backwards and forwards through different media. Ever since earliest times we have recorded and valued what appears to have been important (whether cave paintings in late stone age France or dream time recording in Australia), written things down (cuneiform onwards) and used all sorts of recording media, our memory and our capacity to speak, sing or act to emphasise what is important—or downplay or destroy what is regarded as not important. These are systems and technologies for the communication or transformation of information, knowledge and symbolic products across time and space. These transformational systems and technologies are also demonstrations of power across time and space in particular “habitus”.

Consequently the “habitus” according to Bourdieu (and this is similar to Giddens’ concept of structural principles of social systems),

**Comment [LS4]:** Also generative structuralism—see Upward/stillman paper.

*is at once a system of models for the production of practices and a system of models for the perception and appreciation of practices. And in both cases, its operations express the social position in which it was constructed. As a result, the habitus produces practices and representations which are available for classification, which are objectively differentiated; but they are immediately perceived as such only in the case of agents who possess the code, the classificatory model necessary to understand their social meaning. Thus the habitus implies a “sense of one’s place” but also a sense of the other’s place (Bourdieu 1990: 131)*

Now, how are these practices and models for a “sense of place” socially embedded and reproduced across time and space?. The three key dimensions of structuration as expressed by Giddens are the structures of signification, domination, and legitimation.

Dimensions or modalities of structuration—the theoretical elaboration of how power is used—include patterns of communication (signification), use of power (the capacity to dominate), and norms of behaviour and conduct (means of legitimation and morality). Power is the regular and routine mechanism for achieving sets of transformations based on the above dimensions.

The discussion could take up many more pages and become very abstruse, but as a practical analytical tool, Giddens’ theory of structuration has been taken up in many disciplines including information systems (Jones and Karsten 2008). For the purpose of understanding structuration in the context of the work undertaken in the spheres of libraries, archives or cultural heritage, this chart sums up social processes which are undertaken in activity. What is emphasised here is how to represent competing domains around the interpretation of objects and memory, and particularly their institutionalisation as found in the conflict between the Israeli possession of contested Palestinian materials. These are truly contested and political regions in which in which to a substantial degree, beyond the physical object itself “software does work in the world to project new subjects, practices, mobilities, transactions, and interactions” (Kitchen and Dodge 2011: 12). Records and archives (and their agents) in this space are not neutral, but highly political.

Structuration and Archiving	Theoretical Domain	Institutional order open for empirical investigation
Signification	Theory of coding	Custodial and postcustodial modes of discourse. The language and ideography used to convey particular forms of knowledge. Not only does this concern the form of utterance (for example, the priority put to one language over another), but the message and symbolism provided through architecture and placement of institutions (e.g. the meaning of 'National Library' as contained within a particular theory of nationalism).
Domination	<p>Theories of Power; positive, negative, generative.</p> <p>The theory behind the traditional or post-modern archive as an exercise in information control or release</p> <p>Theories of gender, race, power, nationalism</p> <p>Theories of authoritative and allocative resources (including ICTs)</p>	<p>In this context, how resources (material, personal) and used to provide access to particular things (eg books, institutions), but also the barriers that might be put in place: citizenship, security.</p> <p>The forms of legitimization and delegitimization for the control/release of information.</p> <p>Allocative resources: ICTs and other physical resources drawn upon to achieve the above</p> <p>Authoritative resources: The organisation of social time-space (temporal-spatial constitution of paths and regions); for the above: how access is controlled physically or virtually to information, data, metadata etc.</p>
Legitimation	Theories of normative regulation, but also illegitimate activity.	<p>Institutions or community warrants.</p> <p>'Social rules, institutional rules for authority and higher level norms (laws): who and how it is permitted to create /produce information and data, have access to information/objects data or not have such access.</p>

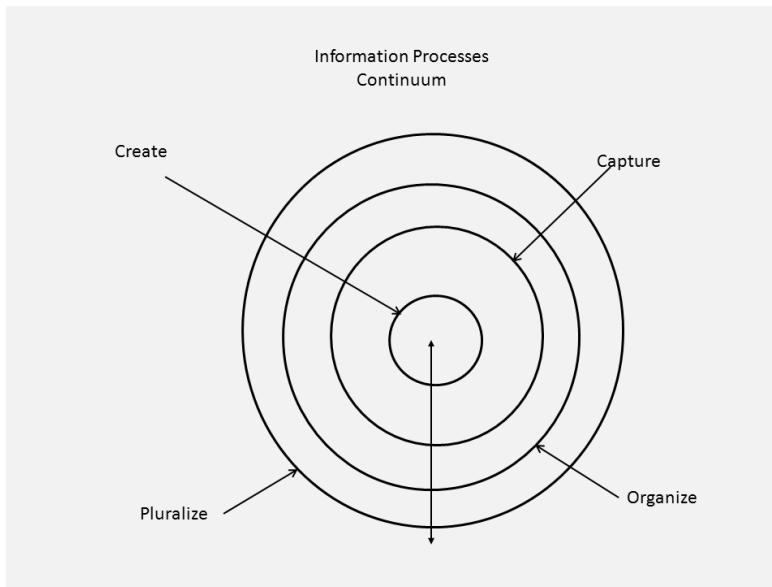
**Table 1. Structuration and Archiving**

**Comment [L55]:** Need to work on this.  
Do we focus on cultural c ontinuum, archives, records or what, or hybridize?

Of course, the competition between Israelis and Palestinians is an extreme example, but if probably applies to many other circumstances where there are official and non-official or counter-stances, whether it be underground newspapers or samizdat, Wikileaks or other emerging disclosure activity by individuals motivated by a different view of state security.

Upward and colleagues considered the activity in the general information sphere (including archives, records management and so on) to be a series of concentric circles representing different "layers" of specialised activity, though Upward began with what he called "master sets of points for continua" of activity around records management. Their Information Continuum used a simple diagram to represent what were seen to be four key information processes on the basis that records "are always in a process of becoming" (McKemmish 2001: 334) and mutable, in their transitions through time and space through different media and different interests. The double headed arrow shows that the process is not meant to be one way and is dynamic and of course in reality, stages can

be congruent or in different sequences. At each of these stages, the structuring qualities associated with the particular play of the dimensions or modalities of structuration come into play. Thus, for example, archives which are processed according to particular legislative requirements in Australia are subject to the discourse or signification in a legal act, as well as normative legal requirements).



**Figure 8: Basic Information Continuum, adapted from (Upward 1996: Figure 1)**

If we consider an information object (such as an archival record or a book or even a record of a sale that began as an imprint at a cash register) at the very centre of the concentric circles, then informationally-speaking, there are at least 4 key activities in its “life”. It can be created (at the very centre) for example, by a publisher on the basis of an authorized manuscript or by a shop assistant; it can be captured (metaphorically, or physically), as an object in a collection, or photographed legally (or illegally) ; it can be organised, catalogued, described, commented upon, and it can be pluralised—that is shared, or perhaps not (hidden away, the name of the original owner removed or not made public on a catalogue, subject to a censorship order or security restriction and on). For each of these processes, many stages and sub-processes and qualifications can be outlined (hence the concentric circles), subject to the social rules and systems or habitus that exists for a particular structure and the behaviours and procedures associated with it (e.g. a library, a shopping centre sales system linked to a bank and marketing services) around the use of authoritative and allocative resources for the distribution of power.

Upward and his colleagues have consequently developed specific vocabularies for different specialisations of interest to them within the information management and archiving professions and applied the continuum model to different problems, such as that of the archival record, or publications, or cultural heritage continuum, and each of these could be specifically deconstructing the struggle over possession and ownership of Palestinian records and their incorporation or subordination into the Israeli narrative and archival system or alternatively, their reappropriation into a Palestinian system. Of course, specialists could develop a similar take for their particular professional interest, but the principle is the same here, to illustrate conflicts and contrasts. Doing this work then allows us to, as Derrida to engage in theorization so that “a science of the archive must include the theory of this institutionalization, that is to say, at once of the law which begins by inscribing itself there and of the right which authorizes it” (Derrida and Prenowitz 1995: 10).

Critical here are a number of points point which Upward took up, but remained underdeveloped or under expressed in the paper, almost certainly because social conflict of the type being discussed here was not in mind. In the paper, he said “Cultural heritage as a term refers to the conditioning factors that social agents might or might not respond. It involves the attempt of different communities to build up, in Bourdieu’s terms, their ‘cultural capital’” (Upward and Stillman 2006: 6).

Now, we can take into mind the “conditioning factors” within the Israeli library and archival system, as well as the “conditioning factors” for the (non-existent or potentially emergent counter system and viewpoint of Palestinians interested in recreating their heritage, we immediately see that there are conflicting agendas at work, and Upward appears to have been very aware of this when also notes that the understanding of the totality of social world being an “area of competition” (Upward and Stillman 2006: 10-11) This was certainly the view taken by Grossman when she tried to bring together community informatics and archiving in her 2006 paper, when she suggested for “counterfactuality” a new “cut and paste zone” as “recovery of subject positions, ensuring meaningful access by reducing distance and foregoing neutrality; for not only is the *creator* of the record situated, the *reader* of the record is also situated, both positions demanding the opportunity to place themselves historically” (Grossman 2007: 52.)

Whether it is archives or items held by a museum is not important. What is important is the unplugging of notions such as authority, credibility and trust and the “path” to which the record is held to in situations of power loss or power abuse.

**Comment [LS6]:** And all those other key words and terms

At this point, the conflicting narratives and dispositions of the National Library and those interested in a re-appropriation of Palestinian heritage can be represented through a re-working of the Information Continuum in what could be called the Region of Competing Archives (even though the Palestinian archive is only in formation in a sporadic way). Elements of this are taken from the representations of what Upward developed for the Cultural Heritage Continuum, based on what he considers the most relevant aspects of a cultural continuum in relationship to the what we believed to be the orientation of community informatics. But I would like to further “layer” this with the embedded conflict that exists in the region of competing cultural heritage/archives/memories between institutions and “counter institutions” and individuals such as those involved with the Great book Robbery project or other initiatives I also try to indicate the cultural opportunities and constraints that exist because of the political conflict.

However, one of the weaknesses of the concentric diagrams is that it does not indicate the possibility of “dimensionality” across time and space, nor that time and space can be manipulated via technology. The problem of the object in time and space should not be considered as a linear, but rather a multi-dimensional and possibly uneven activity with difference emphases, even lapses. I had developed an ‘ice-cream cone’ which interested Upward because to his eyes, it was reminiscent of Deleuze’s take on Bergson’s Platonic Cone that had been used to represent memory flows into the past and present. Here, however, the Cone can be seen to have infinite possibilities as an abstraction or model of information activity of any size or any space. It is also not restricted to any one action. My own interest in this form of representation was from Hagerstrand’s language for the visual representation of movement flows, extensively discussed by Giddens (Giddens 1984: especially Chapter 3).

Several diagrams below therefore summarize counter-points or oppositional possibilities when considering the life of information and objects in a political space like the Middle East, though of course, it is adaptable to any number of situations where archives and objects are in dispute. The ‘right’ way of representation has not been found yet, but it is interesting to compare them to some representation of problems in cosmological theory. The idea of rough gravitational ripples is of interest as well—sociologically, or topologically, the struggle over power (as exerted by means of powers of domination, legitimization, signification, is not ‘flat’ –it can have hiccups and bumps. Think of the behaviour of any institution or social relationship and in particular, the complexities of the Foucauldian ‘capillaries of power’ discussed above This is always a problem when ‘modelling’, we are looking for generic (replicable) forms and the warp and woof of reality is flattened out.

The diagrams below need to be re-worked and reconsidered to reflect the dimensionality and complexity and depth of the political and power relationships that result in particular structural formations. Thus, the two dimensional ‘pies’ in the competition diagram particularly need to be thought of as 3-dimensionally, roughly surfaced and unevenly internally patterned, reflecting the

vagaries of class, competition, power, gender and other salient social and technological factors and how different activities attract, repel, compel, and otherwise influence each other. The result of this reworking could be what an archival development of the “relations of information (re)production” (Stoecker 2012).

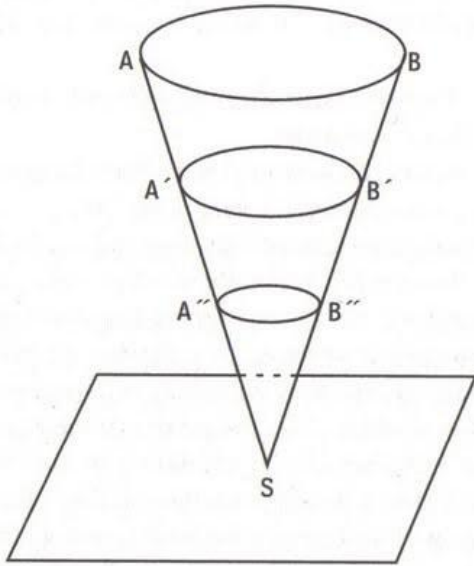


Figure 9. Bergson's original cone

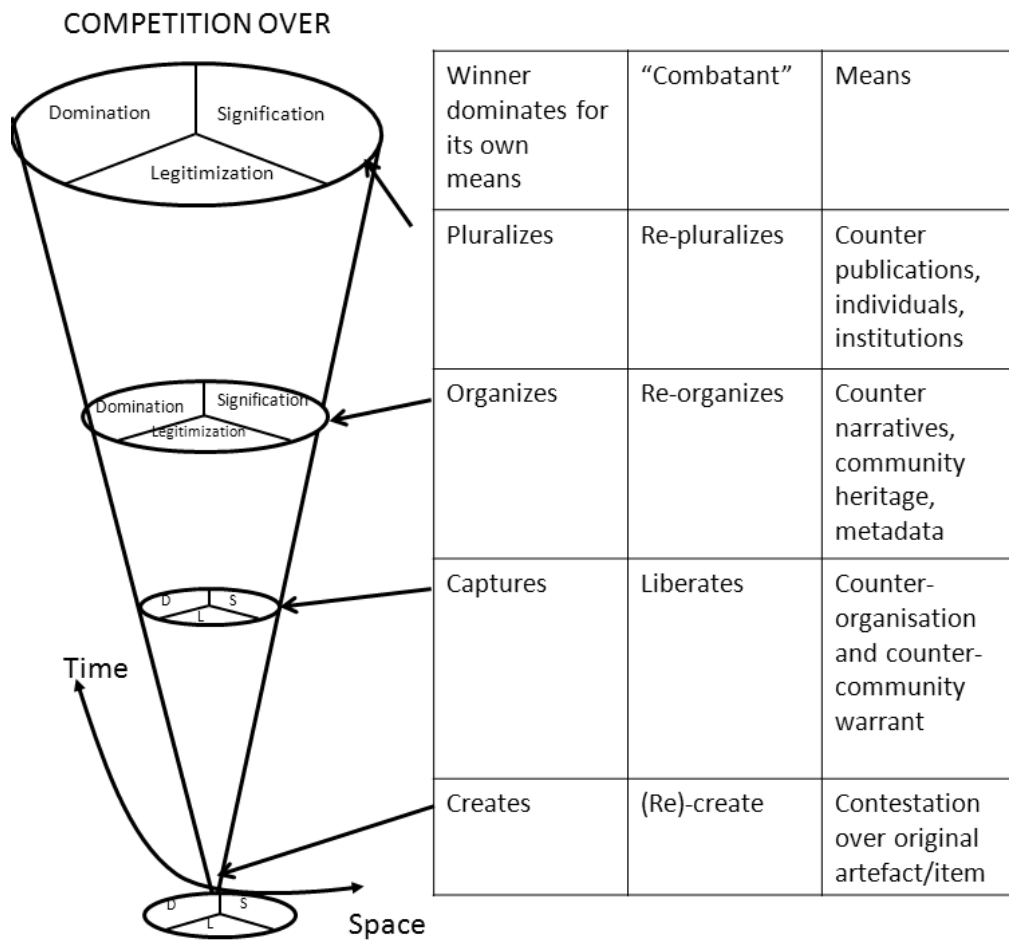


Figure 10. The Competition Cone

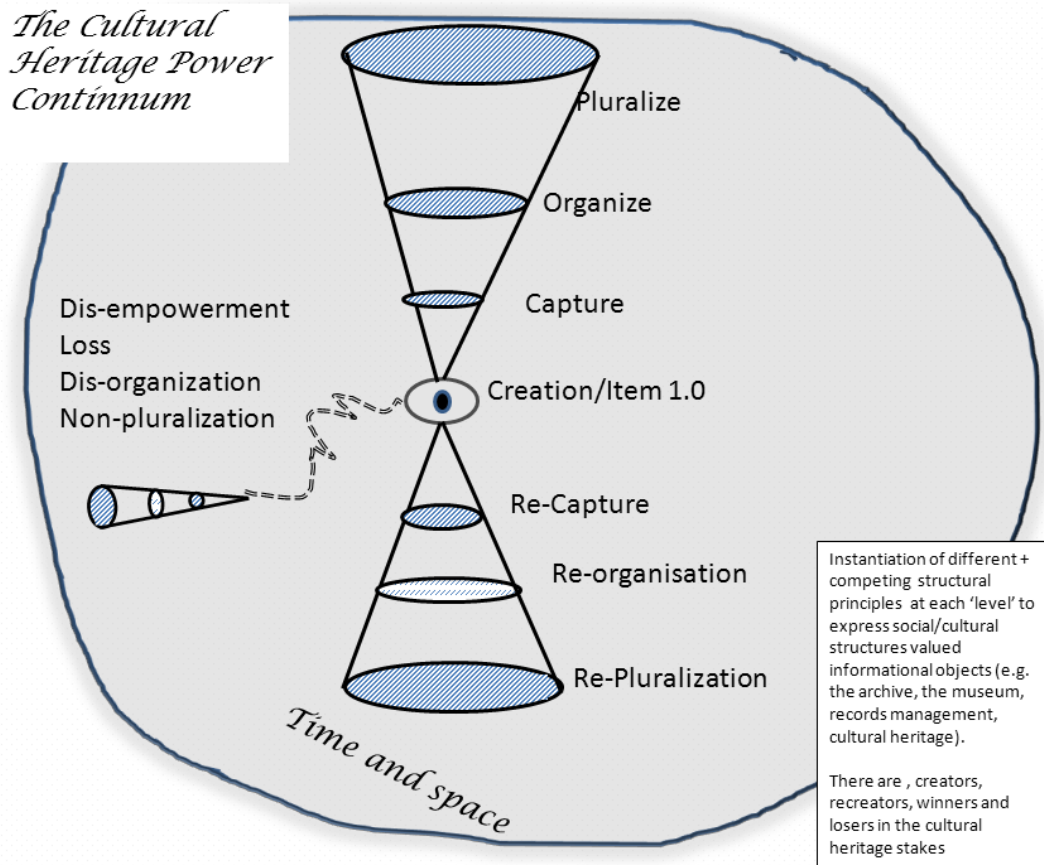
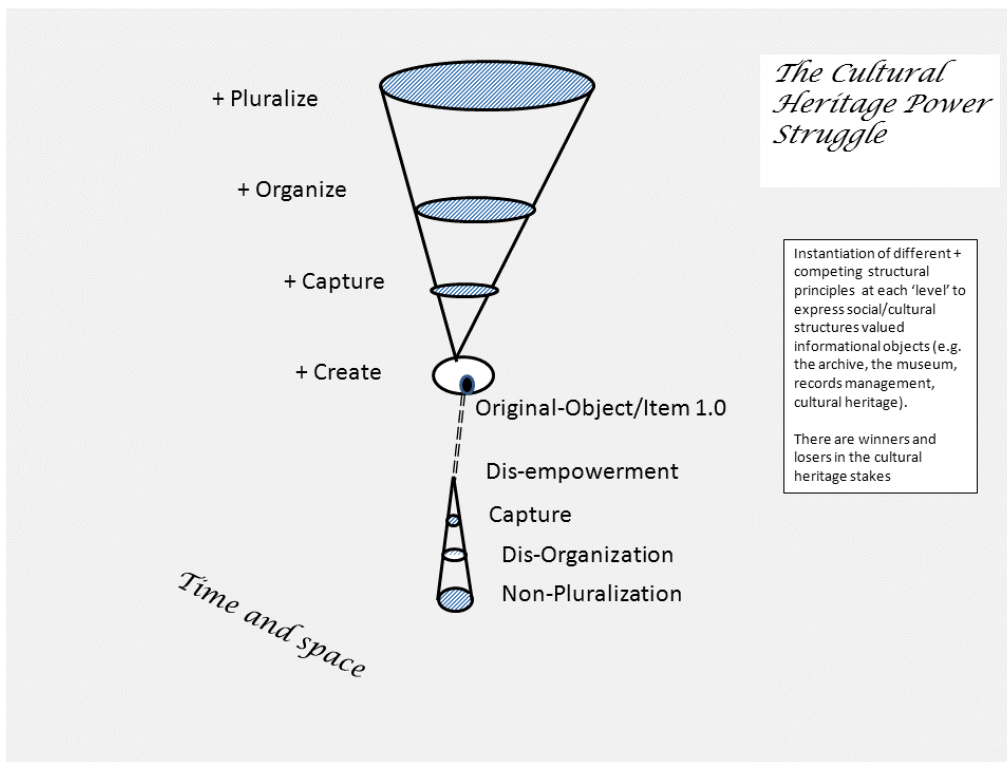


Figure 11. The Cultural Heritage Power Continuum. Another take.



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<sup>i</sup> For a recent dispassionate view of the Israel-Palestine conflict, see Bunton, M. (2013). The Palestinian-Israeli Conflict: A Very Short Introduction. Oxford, OUP.

<sup>ii</sup> See <http://unispal.un.org/UNISPAL.NSF/0/E0B719E95E3B494885256F9A005AB90A> (Accessed 1 July 2013).

<sup>iii</sup> <http://www.thenational.ae/news/world/middle-east/palestinian-activists-sue-israel-for-the-return-of-6-000-books#page1> "Palestinian activists sue Israel for the return of 6,000 books" Accessed July 20 2103.

<sup>iv</sup> <http://thedeskset.org/overdue-books-returning-palestines-abandoned-property-of-1948-part-3/>

<sup>v</sup> I am unclear if the researchers were at all granted access to closed stacks. I don't wish to make future research more problematic by asking questions.