

Uprooted: How Exile, Community, & Trauma Shape Cultural Identity



"Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home." --Edward S. Said¹

"I am not murdered, and I am not missing, but parts of me have been disappeared." --Leanne Simpson²

Colonialism is a worldwide scourge... It's time for all aboriginal people to stand up and to recognize that our liberation, our freedom and our justice are tied together with all the people in the world who are oppressed, whether they live in Mexico, or Latin America, the United States, or in Africa or in the Middle East or in the Far East." --former Ardoch Algonquin Chief Robert Lovelace³

Lesson created by Amy Perkins aperkins@lpslancer.net Teacher, Lakeshore High School in Stevensville, MI

Driving Question

- If culture is largely defined and shaped by the location in which people live, what happens to a community's cultural identity if/when its members are forced to flee their homeland?⁴

Supporting Questions

- How and to what extent does emotional trauma and the dispossession of ancestral lands alter the collective cultural identity of a people?
- To what extent do the customs and traditions of indigenous populations remain intact despite the loss of their homeland and the economic and political oppression that typically follows dispossession?
- In what ways are the experiences of Native Americans and Palestinians similar as evidenced in the literature and visual arts created by members of their respective communities?
- To what extent is the dynamic interplay of cultural identity, historical trauma, and geographic relocation evident in the literature and the visual arts produced by Native Americans and Palestinians?

Enduring Understanding

- Culture is a dynamic, ever-evolving byproduct of geography, historical developments, contextual circumstances, human agency, and collective identity. Although many aspects of a community's culture are deeply rooted in the physical space it occupies, the community's geographic relocation (forced or voluntary) rarely results in the erasure of its cultural identity. Rather, its departure from ancestral lands more often requires a renegotiation of cultural identity, a revised understanding of what unites them, what defines them, and what restores them.

¹ Said, Edward S. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000.

² Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

³ Zerbisias, Antonia. "Canadian aboriginal activist stands up to Israel." *Al Jazeera* <https://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2015/06/canadian-aboriginal-activist-stands-israel-gaza-150626073951799.html>

⁴ The American Sociological Association defines culture as "the languages, customs, beliefs, rules, arts, knowledge, and collective identities and memories developed by members of all social groups that make their social environments meaningful." <https://www.asanet.org/topics/culture> Several of these components of culture are closely connected with the physical landscape, history, and geographic location of a human population.

Overview

On the surface, Palestinians and the indigenous peoples of North America could not be more dissimilar. However, their historical experiences and current realities converge at the intersection of dispossession and colonization. Both people refer to themselves as the victims of settler-colonial nations, dispossessed and demonized in their native lands. Palestinians and Native Americans have attempted to preserve their cultural identity while adapting to their new circumstances. This endeavor has not been easy; their efforts have been complicated by persistent poverty and political oppression. Even still, authors and visual artists within both populations have appointed themselves custodians of culture. Through literature and the visual arts, they have attempted to craft a new identity for their people, an identity that reflects the scars of historical trauma, celebrates ancestral traditions, and encourages collective and individual restoration.⁵

This instructional unit invites students to conduct a comparative study of Palestinian and Native American experiences. Using literature and the visual arts, students will examine how Palestinians and the indigenous peoples of North America attempt to renegotiate their collective identity in the face of physical and political obstacles.

Curriculum Relevance and Suggested Grade Level: This lesson is most relevant to content covered in World History, United States History, Global Issues, Comparative Literature, World Literature, and Human Geography. The activities in this lesson are best suited for students with advanced analytical skills. For this reason, a Grade 11-12 or Advanced Placement (AP) audience would be most appropriate. Teachers with younger students or students with less-developed analytical skills will need to modify activities and provide more specific guidance throughout the lesson. The presentation of this lesson will be most effective if students already have some familiarity with Native American history and the origins of the ongoing Israeli-Palestinian crisis. Regarding the latter, teachers can use a related lesson [“Tying the Knot: The Israeli-Palestinian Crisis”](#) to introduce students to the history of and current situation in Israel and the Palestinian Territories.

Lesson Duration: 4 60 minute class periods (If time is limited, this lesson can be shortened to include the opening image analysis and the Packet A investigation.)



Learning Objectives

- Citing evidence from literature and the visual arts, students will outline at least three ways in which Native Americans' forced relocation is similar to Palestinians' dispossession of their homeland.
- Students will identify three or more symbols commonly used in Palestinian literature/visual art, clarify the significance of each symbol, and explain how artists and authors use each symbol in their respective works. Students will do the same with regard to Native American literature/visual art.
- Using four or more images/texts included in the lesson, students will evaluate the extent to which Palestinian and Native American identities today are the product of historical trauma and contemporary realities.
- Students will expand the lesson's Native American-Palestinian comparison by identifying two additional groups in world history that were shaped by the loss of ancestral lands. Students will justify their proposal for expanded research by providing at least three pieces of historical evidence that connect the two additional groups to Palestinian and Native American experiences.

⁵ White, Ben. "Dispossession, Soil, and Identity in Palestinian and Native American Literature." Palestine-Israel Journal, vol. 5, no. 2, 2005, <https://pij.org/articles/364>.

Content Expectations

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.4: Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects of history/social science.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.9-10.6: Compare the point of view of two or more authors for how they treat the same or similar topics, including which details they include and emphasize in their respective accounts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9: Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

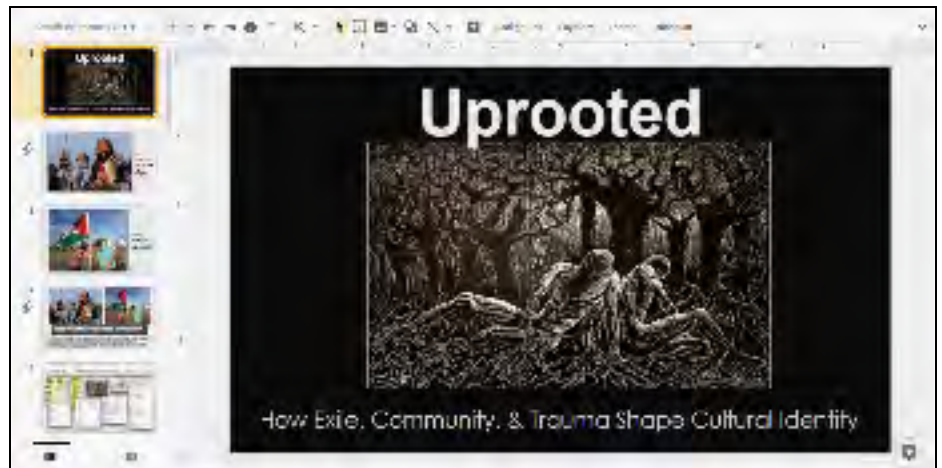
Key Concepts

- *Cultural Identity*
- *Nationalism*
- *Colonialism*
- *Zionism*
- *Indigenous*

Lesson Handouts/Materials

[Google Slide Presentation](#) for teacher use

[Student Resources](#): Resource packets for student analysis, question sheets, note sheets, and other handouts



Teacher Preparation and Instructional Resources

Background Information for Teachers: *Although this unit spotlights commonalities linking the experiences of Palestinians with that of Native Americans, there are several differences that warrant consideration.*

Chronology: The history of Native Americans' gradual dispossession of ancestral lands and violent conflicts with European settlers dates back to the [16th century](#). The fight to preserve their cultural identity and their geographic position in the face of European settlement and subsequent American expansionism often resulted in bloodshed, coerced land treaties, and forced assimilation. This pattern is evident in several historical



My Father's Torture, 2012. Mural painting by Shonto Begay⁶

[developments](#), including but not limited to the Pequot War, the Treaty of Fort Jackson (1814), and the Dawes Act (1887). Despite this systematic oppression, Native Americans today continue to celebrate their tribal cultures, assert themselves as political leaders, and utilize various modes of activism to preserve their traditions and the natural environment. In contrast, the history of Palestinians' dispossession of their homeland largely begins with the rise of Zionism in the early 20th century. The events of World War I further destabilized the region and allowed for direct European involvement in the creation of new boundaries throughout the Middle East. The Balfour Declaration (1917), the subsequent creation of the British Mandate (1919), and the resurgence of anti-Semitism throughout Europe in the 1920s-1940s inspired [waves of Jewish immigration](#) to Palestine. In the wake of World War II, the UN Resolution 181 (1947) and the subsequent "Year of Independence" or "The Catastrophe" (1948) accelerated the expansion of the new state of Israel and Palestinians' dispossession of their homeland. The decades that followed witnessed bloody clashes between Israelis and Palestinians and, more broadly, the state of Israel and surrounding Arab nations. This violence and the expansion of Israeli settlements persists to this day. For more information, see [this historical summary](#).

Geography: Within North America European settlement and American expansionism resulted in the westward migration/forced relocation of indigenous people and the subsequent creation of reservations. By the late 19th century American industrialists' lust for natural resources and Gilded Age politics enabled further encroachment on native lands. The 20th century witnessed a significant retreat of reservation boundaries, confining indigenous tribes to increasingly smaller, resource-poor plots of land. Today, the majority of Native Americans within the United States live in communities outside of reservation areas. Pulled by economic and educational opportunities in urban areas and pushed by the persistent poverty and inadequate resources of reservation lands, many Native people strive to preserve their culture while also establishing themselves as leaders in a "democracy erected over [a] burial ground."⁷ In contrast, historical developments in the Middle East, most especially the establishment of Israel in 1948, sparked a Palestinian diaspora that stretched across the globe. Although some Palestinians continued to reside within the newly defined (and expanded) borders of Israel, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians fled to neighboring countries and overseas. Refugee camps in Jordan, Lebanon, Gaza, Egypt, Syria, and the West Bank provided temporary shelter for Palestinians forced from their homes, and today these camps remain, housing the fourth generation of Palestinian refugees who continue to push for the return of their homeland. Their rallying cry is amplified by Palestinians scattered across the globe; still connected through cultural heritage, this international community of Palestinians continues to demand the return of their ancestral lands.

Connection to the Land: Although Native Americans and Palestinians demonstrate a close relationship with their ancestral homeland, the nature of their bond is not the same. Native Americans view the earth through a spiritual lens: the earth is home to venerated spirits, including those of their ancestors. Therefore, the destruction of land (through the extension of oil pipelines, deforestation, etc) represents an assault on their spiritual world. For Native Americans, the preservation of land and the environment is a spiritual endeavor closely connected with their tribal traditions. In contrast, Palestinians' connection to their homeland is largely

⁶ Fort Sumner Historic Site/Bosque Redondo Memorial. <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/navajo/long-walk/long-walk.cshtml>

⁷ <https://siwarmayu.com/conflict-resolution-from-holy-beings-8-poems-by-joy-harjo/>

defined by their economic dependence on the region's natural resources.⁸ More specifically, Palestinians' prosperity is often determined by their access to orange groves and olive trees, pastures for livestock, and groundwater. The creation and expansion of Israel, the construction of Israeli settlements, and the erection of the Israeli West Bank Barrier have significantly reduced Palestinians' land holdings and their access to natural resources. These hardships have delivered a devastating blow to the economic backbone of the Palestinian people who remain in the region. Today, Palestinians' fight for the return of their homelands is rooted in a desire for economic independence as well as political/cultural recognition.

Collective Identity: In an effort to advocate for political rights and the preservation of their respective cultures, both Native Americans and Palestinians have forged a collective identity within their respective communities. The foundation of their identities, however, is noticeably different. "The Palestinians' collective awareness has been irrevocably molded by the experience of dispossession and dispersal, while for the Native Americans similar practical circumstances have shaped a collective identity that maintains an organic, spiritual character as its crucial resource for resistance, a character that existed long before the arrival of the settlers."⁹

Symbolism: Native American and Palestinian artists and authors regularly use symbols to express ideas, celebrate their cultural history and identity, and provide context for their audience. A brief overview of these symbols is detailed below to serve as an instructional reference. Please note that the list is NOT all inclusive and specific meanings of these symbols vary across time, geographic space, and artistic styles.

Common Symbols in Palestinian Visual Art and Literature¹⁰

- **Trees** are presented as witnesses to history, most notably the destruction of Palestinian villages. In this sense, trees stand as a testament to the tragedies endured by the Palestinians. The specific use of olive trees as symbols in literature and visual art often represent Palestinians' rootedness, persistence, and defiance in the face of overwhelming opposition. Furthermore, olive trees can be a symbol of righteousness since the Quran identifies both the olive tree and fig tree as blessed and holy.
- **Oranges** often represent the homeland/Palestine itself. More specifically, references to oranges can symbolize the dispossession of orange groves owned and maintained by Palestinians in Jaffa.
- A **cactus** often represents the memory of Palestine. The symbol originates from the emergence of the prickly pear cactus amidst the ruins of Palestinian villages. The cactus is used as a symbol of defiance, taking root and surviving even in the most inhospitable environments. It's worth noting that "sabr", the Arabic word for cactus, has the same root as the Arabic word for patience ("alsabr"). For this reason, the cactus can also be used to represent steadfastness.
- A door **key** is used to represent the items/mementos carried by Palestinians who left their homes during Nakba in 1948. More literally, the key represents the actual house keys Palestinians took with them when they were exiled. Still today many Palestinians hold on to these keys, a tangible symbol of their persistent hope to return to their homes one day.
- **Slingshots** and **rocks** are symbols of Palestinian resistance against Israeli oppression. Historically, Palestinians fighting for the return of their land used slingshots as a weapon in their violent clashes with better-armed Israeli forces. The visual result presents a modern interpretation of the Biblical face off between David and Goliath.



⁸ Palestinians, however, have shown a spiritual reverence for the land, most especially with regard to olive trees. Palestinian farmers sometimes identify these trees as their "mothers," due to the sustenance and nourishment the plants provide. For more information, see <https://www.middleeasteye.net/discover/tree-trust-meet-man-guarding-palestines-oldest-olive-tree>

⁹ White, p. 2

¹⁰ Bardenstein, Carol. "Threads of Memory and Discourses of Rootedness: Of Trees, Oranges and the Prickly-Pear Cactus in Israel/Palestine." *Edebiyat*, vol. 8, 1998, pp. 1-36. Accessed online https://www.academia.edu/12385310/Threads_of_Memory_and_Discourses_of_Rootedness_Of_Trees_Oranges_and_the_Prickly-Pear_Cactus_in_Israel_Palestine

- **Red, White, Green, and Black:** The appearance of this combination of colors alludes to the Palestinian flag and, more broadly, Palestinian nationalism. At various points in the 20th century, Israel banned the appearance of the Palestinian flag and the juxtaposition of the flag's colors in artwork of "political significance." To subvert the ban on the national colors, some Palestinians carried sliced watermelons through the region in a sign of protest.¹¹
- **Handhala,** a cartoonish character originally designed by artist Naji Al-Ali, appears with his back to the viewer and his hands clasped behind him. He symbolizes Palestinian nationalism and resistance. He is, in essence, the personification of the Palestinian people. His ragged clothes, bare feet, and bald head represent the oppression of the Palestinian people.¹²
- The depiction of **people with heavy packs** on their backs is symbolic of the Palestinians who have fled their homes, most especially during Nakba. The weight of their few possessions and the emotional burden of the dispossession of their homeland weighs them down. This symbol is most visible in the iconic works of [Suleiman Mansour](#).
- The **keffiyeh**, a black and white fishnet pattern, is symbolic of Palestinian nationalism, solidarity, and resistance. The pattern is often evident in the form of a scarf, but it can appear in other ways within visual art.



Source: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CCqzoCvpHqj/>

¹¹ https://www.vice.com/en_us/article/z4g3ya/why-watermelons-are-a-symbol-of-political-protest-for-palestinians

¹² For more information about Handhala, see <https://newint.org/blog/2013/05/16/handala-palestine-naji-al-ali>

Common Symbols in Native American Visual Art and Literature (note that the use and interpretation of symbols vary widely across various tribal cultures and traditions.)

- **Eagle feathers/headdresses** represent the significant power and authority bestowed upon the most highly respected members of the tribal community. For this reason, an eagle or eagle feather is often used to symbolize victory.
- An **arrow** often symbolizes protection and defense. It can be used to indicate alertness, ward off evil, provide direction, and—if broken—indicate peace.
- The **sun** typically represents spirituality and the healing power of the sun's energy and warmth. Tribal traditions view the sun as the giver of life, energy and spirit. For this reason the sun is often used to symbolize regeneration.
- The **cactus** and cactus flower frequently appear in the visual art and literature of tribes residing in the North American Southwest. Whereas the cactus represents endurance, protection, and warmth, the cactus flower symbolizes the unconditional love that persists even in the harshest of environments.
- The **bear** is used to indicate courage and physical and/or spiritual power. Bear tracks can also appear in artwork to symbolize self-reflection.
- The **horse** was the primary means of transportation for most tribal communities. For this reason, the horse represents freedom and nobility.
- The four elements (**fire, wind, earth, and water**) are used in tandem to represent the cycles evident in nature and in life and death.



A Note on Tribal Diversity: Although this instructional unit appears to present Native Americans as a one dimensional cultural community, it's important to note that the tribes of North America were (and still are) incredibly diverse. They speak a variety of tribal languages and practice customs and traditions specific to their respective regions. Even still, their efforts to mobilize for political causes today often transcend tribal identities. This apparent solidarity is largely the result of a shared historical trauma and a deep spiritual connection to the earth.

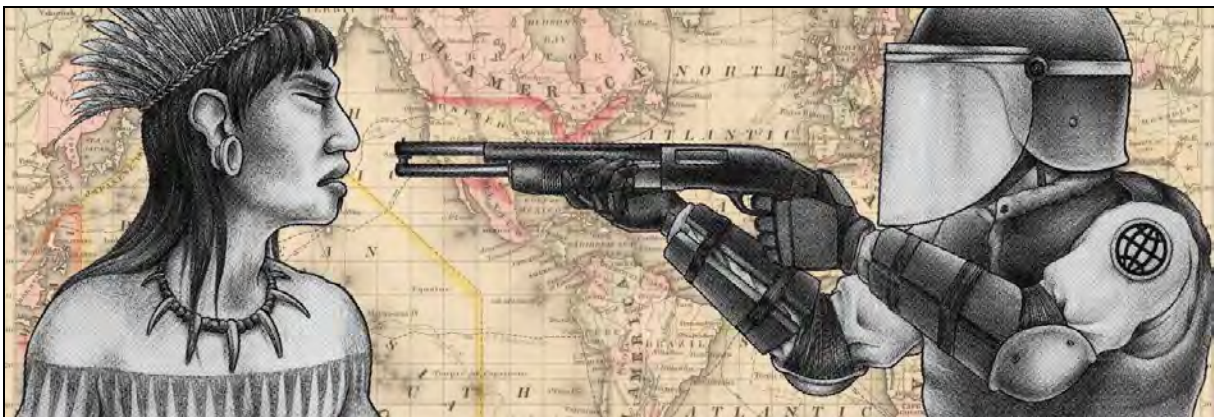


Image source: <https://www.kcet.org/shows/artbound/were-still-here-contemporary-native-american-artists-on-identity>

Lesson Sequence

OPENING: IMAGE ANALYSIS

1. Project Image A onto the front board (see [Google Slide Presentation](#)). Invite students to share details they notice in the image. Challenge students to form a hypothesis regarding who is in the image, where they are located, and what they are doing.



Image A (above)¹³

2. Project Image B onto the front board (see [Google Slide Presentation](#)) and reveal to students that this second image was taken at the same place and at roughly the same time as Image A. Once again, invite students to share details they notice in the photograph. Ask them to work together as a class to craft a hypothesis regarding the people, location, and historical circumstances featured in the two images ([See Slide 4](#))

3. Reveal to the students the historical context and circumstances that link both images:

Both images capture scenes from Standing Rock Camp, the site of a protest aimed at blocking the construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline. The protests extended from April 2016 to February 2017 and exposed the ongoing tensions between indigenous populations and corporate enterprise, between the preservation of the natural environment and the extraction/transportation of natural resources, between indigenous populations and a historically unsympathetic national government. For more information, see ["What to Know About the Dakota Access Pipeline Protests"](#).

4. Pose one final question: *"If the Standing Rock protests were in North Dakota and they mostly involved the Native American community, why do the images include the Palestinian flag and a keffiyeh, two symbols closely associated with Palestinian nationalism? How do we account for the proximate appearance of geographically disparate symbols?"*¹⁴ [See Slides #4 & 5](#). This question challenges students to leverage their knowledge of history to identify how/why Palestinians would mobilize in support of the Standing Rock protest. They might not be able to make this intellectual leap on their own, unaided. As you proceed through the lesson, though, this link between Palestinians and the indigenous populations of North America will become more clear.¹⁵



Image B (above)¹⁶

¹³ Image source https://www.huffpost.com/entry/standing-rock-and-palestine-the-struggle-for-justice_b_5838e22ee4b0c2ab94436936

¹⁴ When asking this reflective question, check to make sure students understand terms included in the question. If not, define the terms and clarify the question.

¹⁵ For more information regarding Standing Rock protests and Palestinian-Native American see ["Solidarity between Palestinians and Indigenous Activists has Deep Roots"](#) and ["The Liberation of Palestine Represents an Alternative Path for Native Nations"](#).

¹⁶ Image Source <https://www.palestinianspodcast.com/blog/2018/1/24/standing-up-for-standing-rock>

GUIDED INQUIRY

1. Divide the class into smaller groups of 4-6 students ranging in ability and learning styles. Each group should cluster their desks together to provide a unified research space. Provide each group with a copy of "[Packet A: The Geography of Dispossession](#)". Note that the images of the maps and the paintings should be printed in color if at all possible. If students have access to computers, the packet materials should be shared digitally to allow for easier access to supporting details available online.
2. Allow students 30-40 minutes to review the packet materials, discuss their findings within their small group, and record their insights on the packet's question sheet. Provide guidance to individual groups as they progress through Packet A. Inform students that they should be prepared to share their group's insights during class the next day. For added efficiency, teachers might want to assign roles to students within the group (e.g. taskmaster, recorder, discussion facilitator, researcher, etc.).



Packet A

The Geography of Dispossession: A Visual and Literary Account

Question Sheet for Student Group

Packet A

The Geography of Dispossession: A Visual and Literary Account

Names: _____

Mapping Land Loss

1. Briefly summarize what each map illustrates regarding the lands occupied by Native Americans and Palestinians. What similarities do you see in the two maps?

- Israel/Palestine Map:
- United States Map:
- Similarities:

2. What historical circumstances might help explain why the geographic developments in North America and the Middle East are visibly similar?

DISPLACEMENT

1992

1945

1957

7000

Division of Southern E. Asia University, 1912

Visualizing Palestinians, 2019

Visualizing the Geography, 1/6/19

Andrew T. Wright, *Exiles Return*, 1968

3. Literature

GUIDED INQUIRY (DAY 2)

- On the following day, facilitate a class discussion of students' findings. Use Slide #6 from the [Google Slide Presentation](#) to guide the conversation. Written responses to questions posed in the research packet can be collected for credit as well.

Now that students are more familiar with the *history and geography* associated with Native Americans and Palestinians, today's focus will shift to the groups' *collective identity and interpretations of self*. Students will examine a diverse collection of visual art, analyzing each set of examples to determine the extent to which Palestinians' and Native Americans' mutual loss of land and historical trauma have inspired a similar interpretation of "self" and a mobilization of the collective.

- Introduce students to the next element of their comparative analysis: cultural identity and political activism. Provide a brief overview of this extension of the lesson (see description above).

*For a brief introduction to today's activity, lead the students in an analysis of the images included on Slide #7 of the [Google Slide presentation](#). As the students view the two examples ("Return is Our Right and Our Will"; "Decolonize and Keep Calm"), challenge them to identify symbols and themes evident in the images. Ask them to share their theories regarding the artists' purpose, point of view, and intended audience.*¹⁷



- Distribute to students "Common Symbols" (see [Packet B](#) of student handout) and invite them to use this resource to revisit the sample set of artwork.
 - What new details do you notice in the images?**
 - Now that you recognize the common symbols, how does this insight change or enrich your understanding of the images?**
- Divide the students into seven groups. Assign each group of students one pair of images/texts included in [Packets B and C](#). Explain to students that they will work within their small groups, analyzing their assigned images/texts and preparing a short presentation of their findings for the class. Their analysis should focus on the following questions:

Analyze EACH item in the assigned set

- What symbols and historical references are included in the image or text? How does the author/artists use these details to communicate to the reader/observer?
- What is the author's/artist's intention in creating this piece of literature or visual art?
- Who is the intended audience?

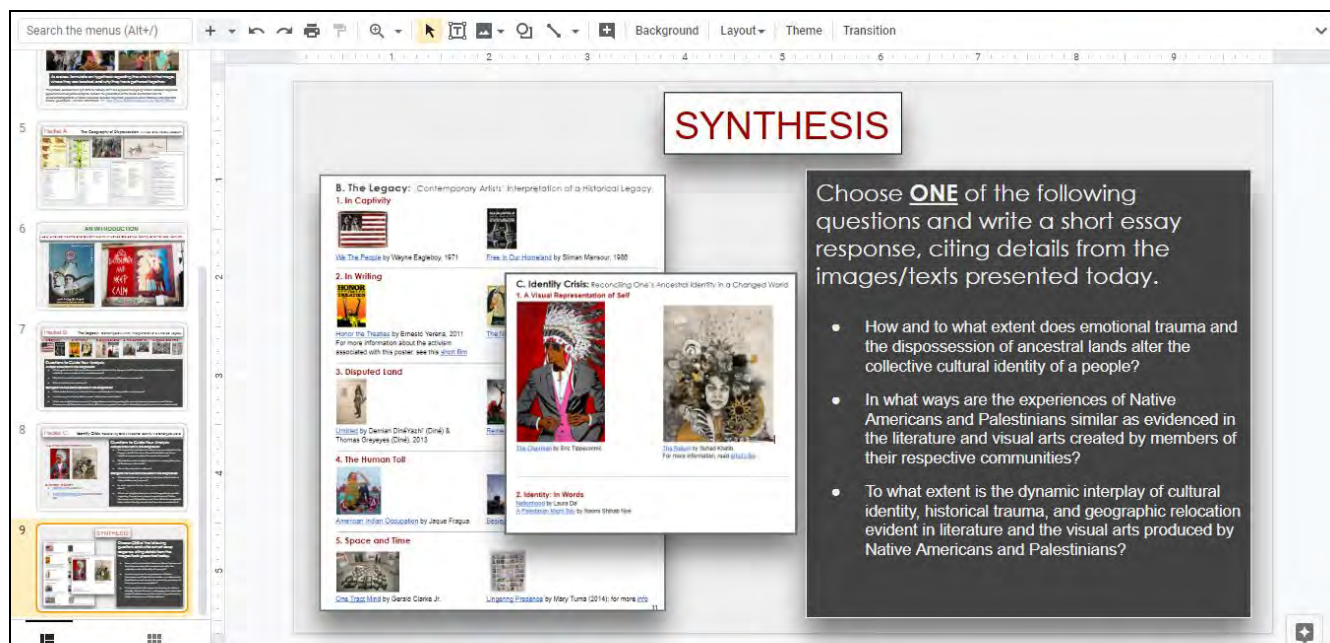
Compare the two items included in the assigned set

- What similarities do you notice in the two artists'/authors' interpretation and purpose?
- In what ways do the two items remain distinct from each other?
- What new insights does your set of images/texts provide regarding the past and present experiences of Native Americans and Palestinians and their efforts to renegotiate their cultural identity despite the loss of ancestral lands?



¹⁷ The original sources of the two sample images includes The [Palestinian Poster Project](#) and [Indian Alley](#). For additional information regarding Palestinian graffiti, consider reading "[Jerusalem's Separation Wall and Global Message Board: Graffiti, Murals and Art of Sumud](#)" by Craig Larkin (The Arab Studies Journal, 2014)

7. Distribute one set of images or texts (included in Packets B & C) to each student group. This can be done in a hard copy format or digitally. Note that most images are paired with hotlinks that connect students with **valuable** descriptions online. Whenever possible, share these online sources with students as well. Allow students 10-15 minutes to work within their group, complete their analysis, and prepare their presentations.
8. When all of the groups have completed their analysis, invite each group to present their findings to the class. Use the [Google Slide Presentation](#) to project the assigned set of images/texts as each student group shares their findings with the class.
9. Synthesis & Assessment: Challenge students to synthesize everything they have learned from the various sets of texts and images presented. For their formal assessment, instruct students to respond to **ONE** of the following questions in essay format. Their essay responses should include specific examples from the images/texts in [Packets A, B, & C](#). Student essays will be due the next school day. If desired, teachers can use a [rubric](#) to grade student essays.
 - *How and to what extent does emotional trauma and the dispossession of ancestral lands alter the collective cultural identity of a people?*
 - *In what ways are the experiences of Native Americans and Palestinians similar as evidenced in the literature and visual arts created by members of their respective communities?*
 - *To what extent is the dynamic interplay of cultural identity, historical trauma, and geographic relocation evident in literature and the visual arts produced by Native Americans and Palestinians?*



INDEPENDENT PRACTICE (DAY 3)

*Collect student essays (assigned previous day).

Now that students have explored the (a) *historical/geographical developments* that impacted Native Americans and Palestinians as well as (b) both groups' efforts to *renegotiate their cultural identity* following the dispossession of ancestral lands, this third component of the instructional unit invites students to focus exclusively on each group's relationship with their ancestral lands. Students should notice that although Palestinians and Native Americans have a very strong attachment to their land, each group interprets the value of their natural environment differently: Native Americans' bond is rooted in their spirituality, whereas the Palestinians' bond is primarily based on their economic well being. This divergence helps to explain why each group's social/political activism regarding their ancestral lands emphasizes different priorities and utilizes different methods of response.

10. Introduce students to the next element of their comparative analysis: reverence for ancestral lands. (See description above). Access the [Google Slide Presentation](#) (Slide #18) for a visual overview of this part of the lesson.

11. Distribute [Packet D](#) to students. Video clips are included in this packet of resources, so **it's critical that this set of resources is shared with students digitally and that students have access to a computer and the internet.** Explain to students that for today's lesson they will be working individually, investigating how Native Americans' and Palestinians' strong bond with their ancestral lands influences their cultural identity and social activism today. As evidenced by their ongoing protests and conflicts with government agencies, both groups remain deeply rooted in their natural environment. The dispossession of their homeland has not severed their emotional/cultural connection to the earth.



12. As students complete their investigation, they should record their findings on the [note sheet](#) provided. Ultimately they will use their notes/insights to create a visual representation (see [FACE template](#)). Completed illustrations will be due the next day.

Suggested Rubric for Grading Visual Representations (Face Template)

Points Earned	Points Possible	Criteria Assessed
	5	Includes at least 5 appropriate, recognizable, and relevant symbols for EACH group, illustrating each culture's connection to the land.
	3	Uses at least 3 key words/phrases that reflect the student's sophisticated understanding of the land-culture connection for EACH group.
	2	Uses vibrant colors to spotlight key details
	2	Visual details/text demonstrate an enhanced understanding of historical context; student shows how historical trauma and developments have shaped each group's relationship with the land.
	3	Overall composition reflects knowledge of the similarities and differences in the Palestinians' and Native Americans' connection with their ancestral lands.
	15	Total Points

SYNTHESIS & REFLECTION (DAY 4)

*Collect illustrations from students (see assignment from Day 3)

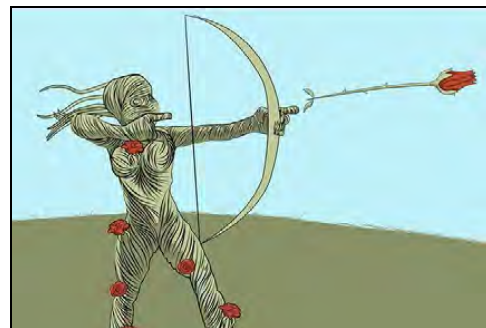
Now that students have explored (a) the *historical/geographical developments* that impacted Native Americans and Palestinians, (b) both groups' efforts to renegotiate their *cultural identity* following the dispossession of ancestral lands, and (c) each group's enduring *affection for their ancestral lands*, today's discussion will challenge students to synthesize everything they have learned and connect it to broader trends they see in world history, literature, and human geography.

1. Project Slide 4 (two images from Standing Rock) from the [Google Slide Presentation](#). Ask students to reflect on everything they have learned the past few days. Invite them to brainstorm the multiple historical and cultural reasons why Palestinians joined Native Americans in the protests at Standing Rock. Record students' insights on the board.
2. Ask students to consider how historical trauma (e.g. Nakba, the Trail of Tears, etc.), ongoing efforts to regain/preserve their ancestral lands, and attempts to adapt to a changing world might influence Palestinians' and Native Americans' collective identity and personal restoration.



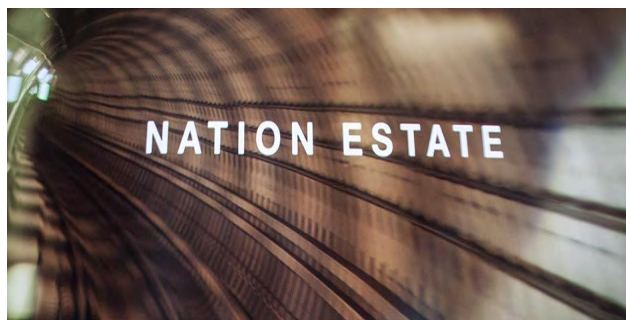
Compelling Question: To what extent do the customs and traditions of indigenous populations remain intact despite the loss of their homeland and the economic and political oppression that typically follows dispossession?

3. Together as a class, view the short film "[Sources of the Wound](#)" and discuss the questions below. Both the video and the questions are included in the [Google Slide Presentation](#). For more information about the video and its producer, see the [Interdisciplinary Research Institute for the Study of \(In\)Equality](#).
 - *What hardships are discussed in the film?*
 - *How did these hardships affect Native Americans' perceptions of self and their connection to the broader cultural community?*
 - *What does the film offer as a mechanism for personal/collective restoration in the face of emotional trauma?*
 - *The narrator explains, "We dance, we pray, we speak, and we tell our stories and we create things new. We define what being indigenous is NOW. Who we are is completely up to us." Reflect on what you've learned the past few days. How have Native Americans renegotiated their cultural identity to celebrate their ancestral traditions, preserve their ancestral lands, and heal from emotional trauma?*
 - *In what ways and to what extent does the film's message also apply to the Palestinian people?*



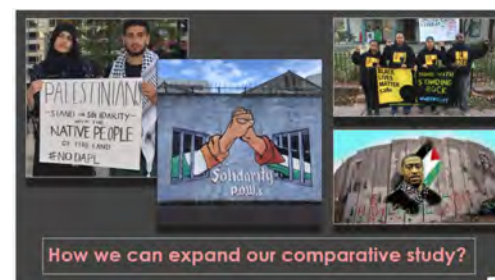
4. Together as a class, view the short film [“Nation State”](#) and discuss the questions below. See [Google Slide Presentation](#).

- What symbols/historical references did you recognize in the film?
- How does the film’s director represent the different aspects of the Palestinian experience in this dystopian production?
- What details from the film speak to Palestinians’ hardships as well as their resilience?



5. Invite students to synthesize the information they have learned about (a) historical/geographical developments that impacted Native Americans and Palestinians, (b) both groups’ efforts to renegotiate their cultural identity following the dispossession of ancestral lands, (c) each group’s enduring affection for their ancestral lands, and (d) their resilience and restoration in the face of persistent oppression. Now challenge students to broaden their focus. Present Slides #23-26 and conclude by posing some version of the following question:

Given what you know about World History and current events, can you identify other groups (past or present) who would be a valuable addition to our comparative study of Palestinians and Native Americans? Can you think of other groups who have endured the dispossession of their homeland and have endeavored to renegotiate their cultural identity in the wake of this trauma?



6. **FINAL ASSESSMENT:** Students will prepare a written proposal in which they (1) identify two additional groups they believe should be included in our expanded study of cultural identity, historical trauma, and geographic relocation and (2) provide historical or contemporary evidence that clarifies how the experiences of each suggested group connect with the experiences of Palestinians and/or Native Americans. See student handout included in [Student Resources](#).

To receive full credit, the proposal must include the following components:

- Clearly identify two groups (geographic region, specific population, historical timeframe) that should be included in our expanded study
- Identify and explain at least three reasons why EACH group should be included in our study. Be sure to cite evidence from history or ongoing news reports to justify your rationale. Note that you will be graded, in part, based on the persuasiveness of your argument.
- List at least two questions you would like us to explore as we examine EACH of the groups you’ve suggested for our expanded study.

EXTENSIONS

Add new dimensions to the existing comparative analysis of Native American and Palestinian experiences

- Compare Native Americans' current experiences living on reservations to Palestinians' experiences living in refugee camps. For more info, see
 - [Love Lessons in a Time of Settler Colonialism](#) by Tanaya Winder
 - [Those Who Pass Between Fleet Words](#) by Mahmoud Darwish
 - Documentaries and news reports, including....
 - [Language of the Unheard](#)- a documentary, 2011
 - [After 70 years, who are the Palestinian refugees?](#) BBC News, 2018
- Explore how gender within Palestinian and Native American cultures influences perceptions of personal and collective identity. How might gender also shape the ways in which artists or poets represent trauma and identity in their visual or literary works? Are the perspectives of men and women equally represented in depictions of historical trauma and contemporary experiences?
- Consider how experiences WITHIN each group differ. For example, how did the forced relocation of Native American tribes vary according to time and space?¹⁸ How did experiences of Palestinian business owners contrast with those of farmers during Nakba? To what extent are the experiences of Palestinians living in the West Bank different from those living in Gaza?
- Examine each group's complex relationship with government entities. To what extent has each group been integrated into or excluded from the political structures that govern over their region(s)? Explore each group's relationship with various law enforcement agencies (including military personnel). Also consider each group's complicated history with treaties and international agreements.
- Investigate the similarities between the construction of the [Israeli West Bank Barrier and its impact on Palestinians](#) with the construction of the proposed [US-Mexico border wall and its impact on Native American tribes](#) in the region.



Expand the Native American-Palestinian comparative study to include other relevant groups from world history and current events

- Explore the experiences of the indigenous tribes of Hawaii, Southern Africa, New Zealand, and Australia
- Consider the plight of refugees escaping war-torn nations or regions severely impacted by climate change/natural disasters.
- Examine evidence of transnational solidarity connecting Native Americans and Palestinians with other protest movements. Consider connections to the Black Lives Matter movement and the fight for independence in Northern Ireland, among others.¹⁹
- Investigate how a group's cultural identity might be impacted differently if it voluntarily left its homeland in search of better opportunities. Compare/contrast their experiences with populations that fled their homeland under duress.
- Evaluate the extent to which institutionalized racism and colonial orthodoxy continue to set parameters for "acceptable scholarship" on college campuses and further frustrate solidarity among indigenous peoples worldwide. (For more information, see Steven Salaita, "American Indian Studies and Palestine Solidarity: The Importance of Impetuous Definitions" in *Decolonization: Indigeneity, Education and Society*. Vol. 6, No. 1, 2017, ppp. 1-28.

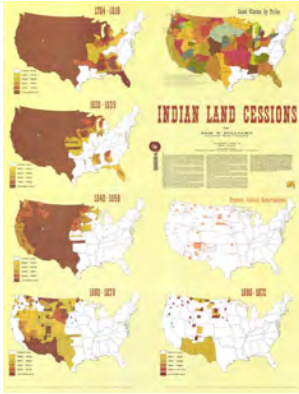
¹⁸ The National Museum of the American Indian has curated an impressive database of online resources and lessons for teachers interested in spotlighting the diversity of Native American cultures and experiences. For more information, see <https://americanindian.si.edu/nk360/resources.cshtml>

¹⁹ For more information, see Arar, Rawan. 2017. "International Solidarity and Ethnic Boundaries: Using the Israeli/Palestinian Conflict to Strengthen Ethno-National Claims in Northern Ireland." *Nations and Nationalism* 23(4): 856-877.

A Concise Overview of Packet Resources for Student Analysis

A. The Geography of Dispossession: A Visual and Literary Account

1. Mapping Land Loss



[“Indian Land Cessions”](#)

by Dan Irwin of Southern Illinois University, 1972

For more information see

[“Native American History Timeline”](#)



[“An Ongoing Displacement”](#)

by Visualizing Palestine, 2013

For more information see

[“Israeli-Palestinian Conflict: A Concise History”](#)

2. A Visual Conceptualization of the Land Loss



Ismail Shammout, [Beginning of the Tragedy](#), 1953



Jerome Tiger, [Family Removal](#), 1965

3. A Literary Conceptualization of the Land Loss

The Palestinian Experience

- [There Was No Farewell](#) by Taha Muhammad Ali (a description of the experiences of [his family](#) and fellow Palestinians during Nakba)
- [Exodus](#) by Taha Muhammad Ali (a description of the first Lebanon war and the Phalangist massacre of Palestinians at the Sabra and Chatila refugee camps)

The Native American Experience

- [Trail of Tears: Our Removal](#) by Linda Hogan (a description of the ordeal endured by indigenous tribes [forcefully relocated](#) to “Indian Territory” in the 19th century)
- [In Mystic](#) by Joy Harjo; (a description of the violent exchanges, especially the [Pequot War](#), between white settlers and native tribes in the 17th century)

B. The Legacy: Contemporary Artists' Interpretation of a Historical Legacy

1. In Captivity



[We The People](#) by Wayne Eagleboy, 1971



[Free In Our Homeland](#) by Sliman Mansour, 1986

2. In Writing



[Honor the Treaties](#) by Ernesto Yerena, 2011

For more information about the activism associated with this poster, see this [short film](#)



[The Nakba at 69](#) by Abdul Mahdi Bassam Hanani, 2017

3. Disputed Land



[Untitled](#) by Demian DinéYazhi' (Diné) & Thomas Greyeyes (Diné), 2013



[Remember Al Nakba](#) (Artist Unknown), 2017

4. The Human Toll



[American Indian Occupation](#) by Jaque Fragua



[Besieged Childhood](#) by Belal Khaled

5. Space and Time



[One Tract Mind](#) by Gerald Clarke Jr.



[Lingering Presence](#) by Mary Tuma (2014); for more [info](#)

C. Identity Crisis: Reconciling One's Ancestral Identity in a Changed World

1. A Visual Representation of Self



[The Chairman](#) by Eric Tippeconnic

For more information about the artist

See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fxmHZznVotI>



[The Return](#) by Suhad Khatib

For more information, read [artist's bio](#)

2. Identity: In Words

[Nationhood](#) by Laura Da'

[A Palestinian Might Say](#) by Naomi Shihab Nye

D. Deeply Rooted: Culture is Cultivated in the Land

1. Poetry

[Talking with the Sun](#) by Joy Harjo

[To Our Land](#) by Mahmoud Darwish

2. Protest Art: Static



["Sacred"](#) by Jaque Fragua

For more information, see [article](#)



[Lost An Olive Tree- Last Seen In the Village of Bi'lin](#)

By Yaronimus

For more information, see [BBC article](#)



["Stop Coal"](#) by Jaque Fraqua

For more information, see [The New York Times](#)



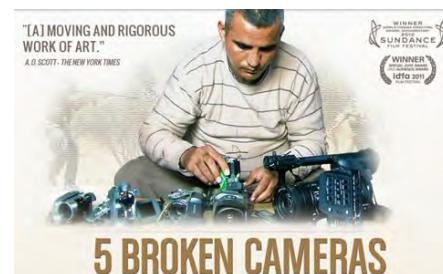
[1948-1989](#) by Marc Rudin

For more information, see [Jaffa Oranges](#)

3. Protest Art: Cinematic



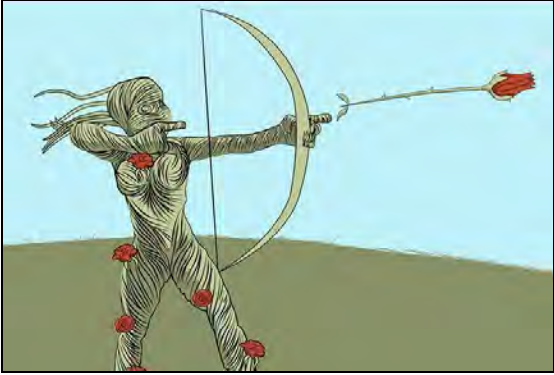
Trailer for ["Awake, A Dream From Standing Rock"](#)



Excerpts from [Five Broken Cameras](#)

For more information, see [New York Times](#)

E. An Evolving Identity: A Cinematic Presentation



[Source of the Wound](#) -- an animated short film, 2019

Produced by Associate Professor Ramona Beltrán

University of Denver Graduate

School of Social Work

For more information, see program [website](#)



[Nation Estate](#) -- a sci-fi short film, 2013

Produced by Larissa Sansour

For more information, see [Artsy](#)