

## *A Landscape of War: Ecologies of Resistance and Survival in South Lebanon*

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My book is about the life of war. It explores the life that goes on in the midst of enduring conflict by examining what I call resistant ecologies, vitalizing more-than-human relations that persist and make resistant life amidst relentless and enduring forces of destruction. Unfolding as a journey through landscape, I ask how life is lived in a place of enduring war. South Lebanon is an agricultural borderland that since 1948 is also a perennial battlefield. Life in these parts, for the most part, revolves around tobacco farming, olive cropping, goat herding and other forms of agriculture, generating subsistence and income and making viable an ongoing presence in place. The southern borderland is also deeply entangled in an ongoing condition of war that cyclically erupts, disrupts, destructs, (re)constructs, and has done for generations now. War in South Lebanon is by now a part of the living environment; it is generative of a kind of life that continues to be lived here.

In this seasoned battlefield, agricultural cycles and seasons of war are interwoven, enmesh and together shape the lived world: agriculturally-based livelihoods premised on known and predictable agricultural seasons *mawasim zira'iyi* are sustained across and through seasons of war *mawasim harb*. In South Lebanon, life and war are rooted in the land, and hence landscape, as the environment – the medium and substance – of both living and warring, is the portal of this inquiry into the life of war. Defined by Ingold as “the world as it is known to those who dwell therein, who inhabit its places and journey along the paths connecting them,” landscape attunes us to the ways in which war is lived and the living worlds that war creates. Far from a frozen rural scene and not “culture,” “the village” or “the local,” landscape as method defines the field of analysis without constraining it; it brings into view heterogeneous ecological assemblages and opens up life as lived to critical analysis and to a new understanding of (a planetary) politics beyond the hegemonic, the ideologically imposed. Relational, indeterminate, unfolding, landscape is a methodological hesitation against concluding too much.

The book condenses around what I call resistant ecologies, or various heterogeneous survival collectives that grow around resistant practices sustaining life in frontline villages through seasons of war. These resistant “ecologies of practice,” an orientation and phrase that I borrow from Isabelle Stengers, encompass human-plant, human-animal, human-spirit and human-human relations such as farming the “bitter crop” of tobacco, goat-herding amidst the mines, and tending to the protective spirits inhabiting nature. The various resistant ecologies that this book examines describe how various life-sustaining yet ordinary practices “become with,” as Donna Haraway puts it, the militarized environments of war.