

Liminal Spaces

Liminal Spaces 2006-2009

Reader : Editors: Eyal Danon, Galit Eilat
Assistant editor: Maya Pasternak
Graphic design: Guy Saggee, Neta Shoshani – Shual.com
Translation and editing: Daria Kassovsky
Printing and binding: A.R. Printing, Tel Aviv
Production: The Center for Digital Art, Holon

Project : Participants: Sameh Abboushi, Senan Abdelqader, Lida Abdul, Tal Adler, Azra Aksamija, Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri, Yossi Attia and Itamar Rose, Yochai Avrahami, Brother Banoit, Yael Bartana, Nabih Bashir, Hans Bernhard, Eva Birkenstock, Rana Bishara, Michael Blum, Khaldun Bshara, Boris Buden, Sami Bukhari, Hicham Chabaita, Hillel Cohen, Scandar Copti, Buthayna Dabit, Ronen Eidelman, Muhamad El Hatib, Jumana Emil Abboud, Charles Esche, Orhan Esen, Kodwo Eshun, Peter Friedl, David Garcia, Hagar Goren, Mauricio Guillen, Jeff Halper, Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti, Sabine Horlitz and Oliver Clemens, Khaled Hourani, Sanja Ivekovic, Yazan Khilili, Wolfgang Knapp, Erden Kosova, Ligna, Suleiman Mansour, Francis McKee, Anna Meyer, Salwa Mikdadi, Daniel Monterescu, Nina Möntmann, Nat Muller, Joanna Mytkowska, Simona Nastac, Olaf Nicolai, Khalil Nijem, Ilan Pappé, Parhesia Group, Lia Perjovschi, Khalil Rabah, Anjalika Sagar, Oren Sagiv, Sala-Manca, Miri Segal, Erinc Seymen, Solmaz Shahbazi, Nurit Sharett, Fadi Shbeita, Erzen Shkololi, Sean Snyder, Barbara Steiner, Hito Steyerl, Superflex, Aneta Szylak, Salim Tamari, Simon Wachsmuth, Adel Yahya, Inass Hamad Yassin, Yossi Yonah, Artur Zmijewski, Manar Zuabi
Curators: Eyal Danon, Galit Eilat, Reem Fadda, Philipp Misselwitz
Advisor: Khaled Hourani

Production team (The Center for Digital Art): Nir Sagiv, Or Kadar, Dor Guez, Maya Pasternak

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Introduction

The *Liminal Spaces* project began long before its official launching, in fact long before it had ever been conceived or named. Its beginnings may be traced to early 2004, to another project – *April 1st*. Created by the Artists Without Walls group, the latter included Palestinian and Israeli artists who sought ways in which to voice their criticism of the construction of the Separation Wall which splits and cuts the Palestinian villages located along the Green Line.

April 1st was selected as the project's title and date as a type of hoax intended to make the Separation Wall transparent. To this end, two video cameras were positioned on either side, each with its back to the Wall and its lens directed at the view facing it. Each camera was cable-connected to a video projector located on the other side of the wall, which projected the occurrences captured by the camera on the opposite side in real time, thus creating a virtual window in the wall via closed-circuit video. The

video window was set in the village of Abu Dis,¹ which is cut in two by the Wall. For several hours the village residents could observe the other side of their village and its inhabitants through the window. The event, declared an art event, was initiated to raise awareness of the damage brought about by the Separation Wall, by inviting an Israeli public which, albeit conscious of the Wall's construction, had never physically experienced the presence of this concrete monument, nor its detrimental implications.

The joint work on *April 1st*, as well as the resulting conversations and friendships, formed the basis for *Liminal Spaces*. One of the major questions which accompanied the initial phases of the project was whether artistic projects created by Israeli, Palestinian, and international artists are capable of challenging the separation systems physically and mentally constructed by the State of Israel over many years between Israelis

and Palestinians, both within Israel and between Israel and the Palestinian Authority. *Liminal Spaces* aspired primarily to establish the absent platform ever-so necessary for joint work and action and for dialogue between the Israeli and Palestinian art communities, a platform which would be able to exist despite the growing difficulties experienced by Palestinians under Israeli occupation, such as denial of freedom of movement and other basic human rights.

Three three-day seminars were held as part of *Liminal Spaces*. The first took place in March 2006, and was based on hikes and tours from morning till midday in the areas adjacent to the Qalandiya refugee camp, a visit to El-Bireh and Ramallah, guided by scholars, professionals, and activists from different disciplines such as architecture and urban planning. It began with a tour which departed from East Jerusalem, continued through the matrix of Jewish settlements around Jerusalem, arriving

// Galit Eilat

at the Atarot (Qalandiya) checkpoint. We rented a space located approximately 500 meters from the checkpoint (previously used as a furniture shop) for the duration of the conference, so that every noon following the morning tour we could return there for additional discussions, lectures, and presentations.

Following the first conference we offered the participants to return to the area which we had surveyed during the three seminar days (Route 60),² to conceive of artworks in collaboration with the professionals who had joined us. At that time, we assessed the project's duration as eight months, and the ultimate goal was to stage three exhibitions in three cities: Ramallah, Holon, and Leipzig.

We arrived in Leipzig in October 2006, when most of the works were in different stages of production – "half-baked" was the term we used. The meeting in Leipzig likewise included a seminar. Having departed from the geographical area

addressed by the project, we tried to bridge that distance and discuss a theme which we deemed relevant to the project's continuation as well as to the hosting institute, GfZK – Museum of Contemporary Arts Leipzig. The second conference thus dealt with the social and political responsibility of artistic institutions in the context of the Middle East – characterized by growing violence and the violation of human and civil rights, the continuation of Israeli occupation policies, the construction of an apartheid wall, and the total collapse of the peace process – as well as in the context of central Europe in the post-Fordist era, in which the erosion of social-democratic principles challenges artists and institutions to survive in a harsh social climate and fight for greater public involvement. During the work on the exhibition and the opening of the conference, we realized that the project required no concluding exhibition, and that in fact we were only at the beginning of the process.

We decided to go on with the project without committing to another exhibition or any final project. While conceiving of the exhibition and conference in Leipzig, a considerable gap was created between the way in which we wanted to communicate the project and the way in which the Leipzig museum wanted to exhibit it. Although they were partners to the project, as a German arts center they could not promote the marketing of a project which calls to stop the Occupation, or to be more accurate – could not afford using the word "occupation" in any marketing material. Thus we found ourselves, Israelis and Palestinians, opening a shared front to call a spade a spade, maintaining that this was the only way to face reality. Beautification, indirectness, and the use of political terminology such as "the Israeli-Palestinian conflict," only hinder discussion on the "situation," adding layers of ambiguity where clarity is needed.

The third meeting was held in October 2007, approximately

18 months after the first. Like the latter, it consisted of morning bus tours and hikes accompanied by professionals, and afternoon sessions. This time the conference focused on the cities Lydda, Ramla, Jaffa (mixed cities with high percentages of Muslims, Christians, and Jews), Bil'in (a village in the Palestinian Authority whose land was confiscated due to the route of the Wall), and Taibe (a Palestinian village in Israel's north). Thus the three-day seminar largely focused on Israeli territory and the repercussions of the occupation within Israel: the conflicts, tensions, and violence embedded in the daily relationship between the Jewish and Palestinian communities within Israel. Each session proposed a unique glance into the social reality and the intricate interrelations between colonists and colonized, occupiers and occupied.

In retrospect, one of the most important aspects of the project was that it took place, transformed, and adapted

itself to the dynamic reality in the region. At the very outset we postulated that a network of collaboration and sharing of knowledge are crucial to such a project, yet we could not foresee how such a platform would evolve since we had no role models in the form of previously held like projects. In collaboration with the artists, we (the project curators) sought methodologies that would challenge the limits and limitations, explore their penetrability, and their ability to serve as points of contact and communication. We tried to push and challenge the limitations on movement between Israel and Palestine anchored in laws and regulations, and often in prejudice and ignorance. Along with the project participants we sought and examined different ways to explore the physical and mental liminal spaces, ways which either confront or interact with them.

Alongside the scrutiny of the mental and physical liminal spaces and the development

1 Abu Dis is an Arab locale east of Jerusalem, on the outskirts of the Northern Judean Desert, whose population stands at approximately 10,000. In the wake of the Six-Day War, part of it (approximately 10%) was annexed to Jerusalem, and its inhabitants became Israeli ID holders. During that period the Abu Dis population grew as a result of the move of inhabitants from Hebron and the settling of Bedouins who camped in the area of the Abu Dis permanent settlement. This may have been due to the subsistence possibilities in Abu Dis on account of its proximity to Jerusalem. Furthermore, Arabs who lived in the Jewish Quarter in Jerusalem and were expelled after the Six Day War also moved to Abu Dis. On the eve of the al-Aqsa Intifada Israel was supposed to change the status of Abu Dis to Zone A, but the change was never implemented. As part of the construction of the Separation Wall, a tall concrete wall was erected, cutting Abu Dis from East Jerusalem. Since its erection, in order to move between Abu Dis and Jerusalem, inhabitants are forced to cross several checkpoints, a harsh separation for citizens who had become accustomed to regarding Abu Dis and its adjacent Jerusalem neighborhoods as a single urban fabric.

2 Route 60 is the historic traffic artery and connecting spine between Jerusalem, Ramallah and beyond. Its present condition

of new artworks, a curatorial model for the project began to take shape, based on continuity and the creation of an infrastructure for work concurrent with the construction of a body of knowledge through the shared effort of artists, curators, academic scholars, cultural producers, architects, and political activists. Most importantly perhaps, is that we succeeded in creating the basis for ongoing work between the different partners in the project which has since served as backing for other projects and professional interactions between Israel and Palestine, links which also extend into Europe and the Middle East. The basis for the project, an objection to the occupation and separation policy, has been preserved throughout its phases, its most radical manifestation being our objection to separation and hatred propaganda.

Still during the preparatory phases leading up to *Liminal Spaces*, we sought the advice of the Academic Boycott Committee in Birzeit

University on how a project involving Palestinian and Israeli participants might take place, and what the conditions are regarding such a collaborative project. The committee assisted us in the use of terminology, as well as in formulating the project's goals, thus helping legitimize it for some of the Palestinian participants.

Another act was implemented by Reem Fadda and Khaled Hourani before our arrival in Ramallah as a group for the first time. These were the days following the elections to the Palestinian Authority. The Hamas government had only just been elected, but had not yet constructed a government, and the state of mind on the Palestinian street, mainly in the West Bank, was hard to anticipate. Therefore, Fadda and Hourani turned to the Tanzim,³ requesting that they accompany us on our tour to the Qalandiya refugee camp which was under their supervision. The collaboration with the Tanzim led to a traditional Palestinian lunch held in one of their

meeting centers.

Other actions which accompanied the project were negotiated with the Israeli security forces.⁴ Palestinians living in the Palestinian Authority cannot enter Israel without entry permits. Each such request is filed with the liaison office, which transfers it to the General Security Services, where it is examined, and subsequently approved or disapproved. During the years of work on the project we issued numerous such requests for the project participants, for artists, curators, and in fact, for anyone who turned to the Center for help, regardless of the project. We tried to use our status as an Israeli center and a public body to pressure the security forces into granting entry to all those requesting it, though not always successfully. At times we were aided by Israeli members of the Knesset (MPs) in applying pressure on the security forces for this purpose. Over the years, the permit situation has worsened, bogged down by numerous bureaucratic obstacles. Apart from the desire to help in the

entry procedure into Israel, the other goal was to examine how the systems of separation, power, and control function, and find loopholes. Although this was not an original target, due to everyday constraints we had to confront yet another liminal space – that of Israeli military law.

The struggle for territorial and demographic control is deeply inscribed in the mundane texture of the intersecting spheres of Israel and Palestine. Urban liminal spaces, such as Jerusalem, have become laboratories for the urbanism of an especially radical ethnic segregation. Since the outbreak of the al-Aqsa Intifada in 2000, previously covert obstacles were replaced by concrete blocks, walls and fences often separating Palestinian villages from their agricultural land or cutting villages in two, rather than separating Israeli and Palestinian lands.

The Palestinians and the Israelis live in separate worlds in which the other's space is absent from the cognitive map

of the everyday. Sets of codes, largely incomprehensible to an outsider, demarcate "safe" territories and "dangerous" territories. The clear dominant polarization between Israeli Jerusalem and Palestinian Jerusalem, as a quintessential example, however, fails to convey the full complexity of the social transformations. It blurs and shifts attention from the internal conflicts faced by these two cultures, both tragically forced to define their identities in relation to a so-called enemy. This polarized perception overshadows and erodes the ability to acknowledge the internal conflicts which penetrate the depths of the social and psychological texture of both cultures. The walls, blockades, and barriers, however, are but a symptom attesting to a much deeper ailment between these two nations. Withdrawal and gathering against an enemy equally affect the social relations and other interactions in the internal, communal and domestic context – with family, neighbors, foreigners, and the community.

may be deemed prototypical of the alienation, segregation, and fragmentation characterizing the Israeli method of occupation.

3 The Tanzim was established in 1995 by Yasser Arafat as part of the Fatah. In effect, it functioned as the latter's military wing, and the two formed a single body.

4 During the al-Aqsa Intifada a military law was issued forbidding Israeli citizens other than IDF soldiers from entering the Palestinian Authority. Palestinians living in the Palestinian Authority are prevented entry to Israel without special permit from the Israeli security services.

Although everyday realities in Israel and Palestine are fundamentally asymmetrical, increased undermining is discernible in both cultures due to economic polarization, militarization of civilian life, as well as religious and social tensions. The internal borders are reinforced as a result of antithetical processes of traditionalism versus Westernization, preservation of age-old familial traditions versus a modern lifestyle, social and gender inequality, etc.

A large part of the artistic practice in Palestine and Israel is essentially dependent on this gradually radicalizing reality. Contacts with artistic communities from other countries are made quite easily, whereas artistic activity in the local sphere barely exists between these two groups. The predominant climate is one of disregard on the Israeli side and boycott on the Palestinian, a boycott of academic and artistic institutions in Israel declared by similar Palestinian institutions

and individuals, which has garnered support and has been de facto embraced by academic scholars, artists, architects and many other artistic figures worldwide. The difficulty in crossing borders due to the oppressive closure and movement restrictions renders casual random encounters virtually impossible. Despite these difficulties (and sometimes in response to them), a limited number of artistic endeavors survey social and political agendas in the belief that art is not only a mirror of society, but also a tool for political and social change. Such perception gives rise to works and projects transpiring on the line between representation and action, ones which blur the boundaries between disciplines, between artistic practice and political activism, and generate various models and platforms for artistic and social activity.

A reduction in shared artistic projects may be traced from the early 1990s. During the first Intifada in the 1980s, Israeli and Palestinian artists

collaborated on artistic actions and exhibitions which rejected the activities of the IDF and Israeli government in the Occupied Territories. The Intifada that broke out in the late 1980s was named the Stone Intifada or People's Intifada, forming a catalyst which stirred artists to respond and make their voices heard in public discourse on either side of the divide. The Intifada atmosphere and political stands were discernible in the works of many. Israeli artists co-exhibited with Palestinians in East Jerusalem and demonstrated in front of the political detention houses such as Ansar 3. It was the people's Intifada, and Palestinian and Israeli artists joined forces in acts of protest.

During the second Intifada a fundamental change occurred in the approach of Palestinian artists to collaborations with Israeli colleagues. The sense of personal and professional betrayal and the failure on the part of Israeli artists and curators to fight or at least voice public or artistic opinion

on the Palestinians' condition under Israeli occupation, put an end to the vast majority of artistic collaborations. Today such endeavors are virtually nonexistent, and the rare instances of collaboration are met with great skepticism not due to their quality, but with regard to the motivations to work together. In this context, one must differentiate between collaborative projects involving Palestinian artists living in Israel and those living in the Palestinian Authority. Exhibitions featuring Palestinian artists living within the Green Line are still held, but they are accompanied by great doubts and careful heed to their context: exhibitions criticizing the establishment or conveying explicit political messages can still find artistic collaborations, albeit rare. The main fear with regard to these exhibitions is that they might create the illusion of normalization between the two nations, and fail to reflect the reality of separation and occupation. Another fear is that such artistic projects may be used as a fig leaf for

local and foreign politicians to create an illusion or obfuscation of reality. Exhibitions putting forth an explicit public objection to the occupation may be considered.

Proposals for collaborative projects between Israeli and Palestinian artists today, for the most part, are brought to the region by good-intentioned, yet rather naïve European curators or artists, who try to bring the neighbors together. The motivation behind most of these projects is that if borders in Europe have been opened and walls have fallen, it can happen here too, and that in art, unlike in life, everything is possible; namely, art does not have to reflect reality; it should take positive action, possibly introduce another horizon, in order to enable change in the existing reality. But is it really possible to introduce another horizon to a reality where artists are also civilians, and where the majority of Israeli civilians, artists included, object to the occupation neither actively nor passively for the most part, and do not

fight for the Palestinians' rights.

The chance for local or international projects to garner support or participation of local artists is minimal mainly on the Palestinian side. Calls for a cultural boycott are heard from most art centers, universities, and other cultural institutions in Europe and the Middle East. The situation has deteriorated since 2006, when the project was launched, due to the Second Lebanon War and the attack on Gaza, which invoked little criticism or protest on the Israeli side whether during the fighting or thereafter. Another equally important aspect is the denunciation of Palestinian artists and curators who "collaborate" with Israeli colleagues. Palestinian society today denounces artists who co-exhibit with Israelis, and every shared work or presentation is considered an act of collaboration with Israel. When one collaborates with a stronger force he is held a traitor, since the prevalent definition of a "collaborator" is a person who helps a

foreign power governing his country, and collaborators are considered traitors of their people and nation.

Going back millennia to the biblical collaboration between the Canaanite harlot Rahab and the spies sent to Canaan to scout the land after forty years in the wilderness, Rahab is mentioned in the book of Joshua, in the story about the capture of Jericho, as the one who made the city's conquest possible. She hid the spies sent by Joshua and helped them escape, thereby making possible the capture of the first in a series of cities conquered by Joshua in Canaan. In return for her help, she asked that her family be spared, and indeed, all the citizens of Jericho were killed in the city's conquest, but Rahab and her family went unharmed (Joshua VI). Later, after converting to Judaism, she married Joshua, and, according to the biblical story, gave birth to ten prophets and priests. The lesson of the story is that those who collaborate acquire reward and recognition for their help. By the same token,

in most cases when territories or countries were occupied by another country or empire, the conquerors have been aided by local collaborators to rule over the occupied population. This was the case in Nazi-occupied Europe and elsewhere, and the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian people is no exception. Unlike the biblical story, however, in most cases the collaborators are not rewarded nor do they gain recognition for their support, mainly where Zionist operators and Palestinian collaborators are concerned.

The term collaborator is synonymous with traitor, one who betrays his nation, selling secrets or people for personal benefit. Today artistic, academic, or intellectual collaboration has also become considered collaboration with the enemy. While the international art and culture communities pursue projects of collaboration between conflicted parties such as the Palestinians and Israelis, and Israel tries to promote social projects including Palestinians and Israelis, Palestinian

society, as well as many of the Arab countries and cultural activists from these countries today, condemn such endeavors, refusing to take part in activities in which Israelis participate. How did cultural collaboration become equal with collaboration with the enemy? The underlying logic is that anything that does not explicitly help promote Palestinian society or the Palestinian struggle for independence should be banned. This boycott was preceded by ongoing collaboration between Palestinian and Israeli artists, as well as academic scholars and intellectuals. According to the Academic Boycott Committee in Birzeit University, such projects were used to legitimize the Occupation to the world and to whitewash Israel's crimes against the Palestinian people.

But what happens when someone collaborates with a weaker party? Is he a traitor or a hero? How is collaboration between Palestinian and Israeli artists perceived by Israeli society? The past

two years since the Second Lebanon War (as it is called in Israel) and the attacks on Gaza have hardened the attitude of the Israeli public toward the Palestinians, whether those living inside Israel or those in the West Bank and Gaza, with the encouragement of politicians. Thus even projects which previously enjoyed the support of the Israeli establishment, if only to create a semblance of normalization, have been eliminated, and any support or identification with the Palestinian people or position against the Occupation is now considered as an objection to the very existence of the State of Israel. A Citizenship-Loyalty Law⁵ and the Nakba Law⁶ are some of the newly-drafted bills on the political and public agenda in Israel.

In the Israeli art community it is deemed proper to express opinions against the Occupation in the private sphere, among colleagues, or to participate in demonstrations against the Occupation. But as individuals working in museums, galleries

or other art centers, the activity of these people rarely touches upon the evils of the Occupation nor does it take a social or political stand against it. The field is largely dedicated to art which avoids taking an unequivocal stand, preferring a personal view, engagement with the state of the artist or a formalist-aesthetic position which is subordinated to aesthetic or social personal interpretation. In the past two years, an overt position undermining the consensus of the Zionist left in Israel is not legitimized. Questions pertaining to engaged or political art are forthwith invoked by a work that negates the consensus, which is forthwith labeled superficial and slogan-like. Art, it is commonly held, ought to be detached from reality, for reality is so ugly, and art is about beauty.

It is hard to tell whether a project such as *Liminal Spaces* could have been initiated today, or could have received international support as it had in 2006. The project was never exhibited in Ramallah or

5 In order to receive Israeli citizenship, the applicant will have to pledge loyalty to the state and undertake to serve in the IDF or volunteer for national service. The oath of allegiance, according to the bill, will include the following sentence: "I pledge to be loyal to the State of Israel as a Jewish, Zionist and democratic state, to its symbols and values, and serve the state, as required, in military service, or alternative service, as stated by the law."

6 According to the proposed Nakba Law, anyone who commemorates the Nakba (Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948) may be subject to three years' imprisonment.

in Holon as initially planned. The frequent events, wars, and internal struggles within and between Israeli and Palestinian societies have led to the decision to continue investing in the development of works, rather than in staging exhibitions. Some of the knowledge gathered in the project is presented in this book, and many resulting art works have been featured in various contexts and venues the world over.

I would like to thank all those who have taken part, contributed, and participated in this extensive project, thus helping us explore and object to a reality based on the oppression of the other.



Participants of Liminal Spaces first conference, Qalandiya, 12.03.2006



Engaged Autonomy

& Other Paradoxes

// Charles Esche

* A presentation given during the first Liminal Spaces conference, Qalandiya, 12.03.2006

I have been asked to try to reflect on the last few days in this talk, but I have to say that I find this extremely difficult. I will try rather spontaneously to weave together some of my thoughts with some of the things that happened over the last three days, and also to speak in terms of four subjects, which I'll try to run through. The first is the question of art and the political. I call it political rather than politics because I think it is a process, a perceptual activity. The second and third terms I want to introduce are *modest proposals* and *engaged autonomy*, both of which relate to the potential that art has to permit and indeed generate ways of thinking things otherwise. That would lead to the idea of possibility, and whether art is a place for creating possibility. In seeing the conditions here in Palestine, it remains a question rather than a confident assertion. Nevertheless, I think it is an important way of understanding art as the creation of possibility. In the final section of the talk, I would like to speak briefly about art institutions and their possible roles as sites where thinking things otherwise can be privileged.

Now, let me introduce myself: I began working at the Van Abbemuseum in August 2004. The Vanabbe opened in 1936 and has maintained itself basically as a "white cube" type of space, largely reflective of art historical developments in the West and by the notion of the aesthetic as a separate category for judgement and justification. One of the questions I had when starting was how forums such as *Liminal Spaces* could use the institutional tool as a mechanism to project what is going on elsewhere. I think there is always a danger of essentializing the local, of making the local a unique point, non-translatable, and I'll try to explain why I think that's important. First, however, let me go back to art and the political.

One of the inspiring moments, or rather, a moment that helped me understand what this relationship that we are building between us might allow, happened on the first day, when we had two speeches, one from Ilan [Pappé] and one from Khaled [Hourani]. In their contrasting ways, these two exemplified, in a sense, the impossibility of politics and the possibility of art. What impressed but also bothered me about Ilan's talk was its smoothness, its easiness actually, which had the effect for me of glossing over complexities in its search to apportion out blame and guilt. In his talk, he drew a relationship or analogy between Palestine and South Africa. It troubled me at that moment, and still troubles me now. It troubled me for what could be called academic reasons, because I think there are very different economic structures underlying the two situations, and as an old Marxist I cannot help but see the South African struggle in terms of class exploitation that became manifest in race. In Israel, there are other traditions, of collectivism for instance, and also a complex racial and linguistic kinship between Israelis and Palestinians that makes the direct comparison unconvincing. The other thing that troubled me was that the only people I've heard use this analogy have been Israelis. It may be coincidental, but I haven't yet heard Palestinians refer to the justified struggle in South Africa with quite such readiness. Moreover, such a connection seems to me a huge challenge to the current, mainstream Palestinian strategies. Because the ANC and their strategy for "one man one vote," for instance, is very different from Palestinian strategies to do with the legalistic drawing of borders and a desire, in a way, to have their own "Bantustan" next to Israel rather than to change Israel as a whole. More importantly, these thoughts showed me that I was trying to work things out here on the basis of politics rather than the political, using as criteria the potential delivery of functional solutions that could be absolutely crucial to improvements in daily life amongst a severely oppressed and discriminated population but to which I am unlikely to be able to contribute much except my own body.

I also believe that art has nothing to do with such solutions even in its most instrumentalized versions. So my thoughts in trying to grasp what is it that I am doing here were much more jumbled and shaken out of their complacency by Khaled's very intimate description of going through an IDF checkpoint. The bareness of that description seems to me to be the language of art, and actually to be in many ways a more powerful language

than the academic. Art's power is something which resides in the individual and in the impact that it has – not only on the artist, but also the intimate effect on the listener or viewer. So the intimacy of that change, perhaps of that change in consciousness, is a power of art that politics has abandoned, at least for now. I'm sure politics needs to return, I'm sure politics is not over, and art can never replace politics in that sense. But it seems to me that there is a degree of impossibility in politics now, and that maybe impossibility is not only here with the extremes of the situation, but also in political discourse more generally. Politics itself – and not the subject of the political – has reduced itself to questions of managerial competence and salesmanship, devoid of any goal other than the exercise of power for private benefit. It is therefore at this historical moment that art seems to offer one of the few ways to apply an imaginative turn to the political that is not constrained by legalism nor rhetoric, and permits a specific kind of ambiguity.

By so doing, the practice of art may in fact create the conditions to make imaginative politics possible again; however, I think that the relationship between art and politics can never be direct because art addresses the individual, while politics must always address the masses. However confined it is by the politics of the white cube, art provides an intimate moment of reception that we need to cherish still. It is a moment of turning on the imagination and "thinking things otherwise," not as a destination but as an act in and for itself, with all the ambiguity of selfishness and triviality that it implies. I am sure that in politics this is extremely dangerous. but in art it is permissible, partly because art is not politics and art doesn't have the power of politics. Art is both extremely important, because in the end, art is what remains as the legacy of our society, and at the same time, it is completely irrelevant to daily existence. It is that irrelevance that gives it its freedom of action, an irrelevance that might also be seen as the irresponsibility of art. It is something that creates the conditions for free speculation and this "thinking things otherwise" without an end in sight.

I would like to read a couple of quotes now that might help to expand on these thoughts. The first is from Benedict de Spinoza, a Dutch Jewish philosopher who is the ultimate materialist in many senses, but also talks about the imagination in these terms: *"If the mind, while imagining non-existent things as present to it, is at the same time conscious that they do not really exist, this power of imagination must be set down*

1 Benedict de Spinoza, *Ethics*, Prop. 17, http://www.msu.org/e&r/content_e&r/texts/spinoza/ethics_part2.html#text18

to the efficacy of its nature, and not to a fault, especially if this faculty of imagination depends solely on its own nature – that is if this faculty of imagination be free.¹ As I understand it, Spinoza says here that the imagination is essentially deliberately self-deceptive. The imagination requires imagining a condition which you know does not or cannot exist. That moment of self-deception of imagining what cannot exist or what does not yet exist, is a cornerstone of the possibility of art and its relationship to the political, at least for me. Imagination is here the currency of art; it is the basis of the language, the mode of exchange and the faculty that art cherishes above all else. It is not managerial, it is not pragmatic. It is not engaged with the politics of everyday decisions.

This imagination is of course not only the imagination of the artist, but the imagination of the viewer and the imaginative exchange between them. Now while, on one level, this process might seem very, very far from the idea of politics discussed by Ilan, on another level and particularly under current conditions – it is absolutely vital to be understood as part of the political possibility today, and perhaps nowhere more so than in the situations we have seen over the last days.

This is a little introduction to my understanding of the relationship between art and the political, which I think has been at the heart of the *Liminal Spaces'* questions. I think it might help to use a couple of examples, to see how this imagination can play out. There are two artists here who I've worked with and who are very important to me, Superflex and Sean Snyder, who I think actually play with these things on a very pragmatic level. Erden Kosova already mentioned at one point in his talk the question of the cultural nation and the nation state. This has been a kind of challenge to the idea of sameness, which I'd like to defend a little bit here, in a situation where we have persistently talked about division of land, people and ideas of nationhood and entitlement. I would like to use the example of Sean Snyder to go further. His work on Iraq or North Korea for instance, seems to me to describe a relationship of sameness between extreme moments of resistance to or failure of our global economic exchange system and the places where his work is shown in the West. Following Foucault, it is indeed only at the ragged edges – and I don't mean the edges in a geographic sense, I'm not talking about periphery – of capitalism, that we can actually understand where we are and what we might need to do politically and

culturally. It is effectively impossible to see the urgency of the need for change in global relationships when looking to examples or arguments from Northwestern Europe – The EU, the Netherlands or Eindhoven, where I live. From here, political impossibility is only too real as our own cotton wool protected society disables us from “thinking things otherwise.” One might say of course that it is designed to disable, and I wouldn’t disagree, but nevertheless, designed or not, it has been one of the significant impacts of social democracy. We have probably two options to “undisable” us from this condition. One is to import the conditions of collapse that we see in Iraq or Afghanistan to our safe European home. I have to admit that it is not such an attractive option but it is a real one. The second maybe, culturally, to see the sameness that extends from Helmond (a town near Eindhoven) to Helmand (a province of Afghanistan). By thinking through such equivalences, an artist like Sean Snyder gives us just such an opportunity.

So this is where an institution like the one we have in Eindhoven, this museum with its white cubes, might begin to make sense in the world or in its own city. As the place where the presentation and perception of the fraying edges of capitalism and the consequences of those fraying edges, for the place where you stand as a visitor, the museum may grant itself a new purpose and mission. That purpose is one of exercising criticism rather than entertainment and aesthetic pleasure, though the latter do not have to be absent by definition; however, I cannot foresee any possibility for a society where there isn't a language of critique. We need propositional modes of resistance that not only say what's wrong, but suggest alternatives and provide tools of this imagination of non-existent things following Spinoza.

What I want to do now is to talk a little bit about two terms that I have been contemplating in relation to art, and how art becomes a site for this exposure of the imagination. The two terms that I've come up with are both paradoxical – one is *engaged autonomy* and the other *modest proposals*. I think that these two terms provide some way of understanding the relationship between art and the political in an agonistic way in which art is deliberately rejecting the political to retain its autonomy, or art is deliberately rejecting the political in the name of modesty, and I say modesty in terms of specificity. I'd like to read just a short bit out: "*Engaged autonomy is a paradoxical term that suggests a creative tension between two*

traditionally opposed forms of artistic thinking. It suggests that the post-1945 idea of artistic autonomy is no longer appropriate to the conditional relations between art and the political in the early 21st century. Engaged autonomy would not exclude any particular approaches to making art, but artworks so defined would be likely to share some aspects, such as close attention to the time and place of the presentation, attempts to lay out the conditions of production as determinants of what is produced and the abandonment of the idea of an ideal, universal viewer in favour of more specific invitations to whatever communities might be constructed. It might involve direct resistance to current economic doctrines, through channeling resources away from their stated purpose in order to fulfill singular objectives. Engaged autonomy should also be read as an antidote to the dangers of the incorporation of an instrumentalizing critical or curatorial discourse. Such frameworks can only be valid if artists themselves retain an agonistic relationship to other cultural actors especially curators and museum directors, who shape policy and artistic reception while often insisting on their unaccountability for the use of public funds on the basis of a simplified notion of artistic or even institutional autonomy." I think that the agonistic relationship extends to the institutions, and to me personally, on a certain level, as curator. Peter Friedel called himself a die-hard opponent of curatorial power in his introduction, I think, and that I should be an opponent; I shouldn't give way either, I should fight back, and that agonistic relationship is actually one that is very healthy in this sense, and it exacts this kind of engaged autonomy, which means the engagement with each other, and of course art's engagement with its environment, but nevertheless the retention of an autonomous critical position.

Such a position touches closely on what Irit Rogoff would call criticality, this living within the compromise but retaining a critical position towards it. I think that is our only option, given global capitalism and a unipolar world with one superpower imposing its universalist doctrine of freedom and democracy. Under these conditions, we inevitably affirm things like the free market, or the deep imbalances of the world directly caused by our actions. We live that affirmation every day, performing it when we go shopping, when we eat, when we buy a book. There's no outside in that pre '89 sense of two competing systems that each mirrored the problems of the other back to itself. In such straits, it is engaged autonomy, I would say, that offers the only possibility to retain an autonomous core

of being able to be critical despite the universalizing force of globalizing, of behaving agonistically towards consensus, of being able to respond with 'yes but' and not just 'yes'. The rebuttal is done, however, without a position of clarity. There is no new communist manifesto in our pocket. The adoption of criticality for its own sake in a sense, although necessarily, the adoption of criticality for its own sake is the thing that could allow a kind of engaged autonomy to be meaningful. So such frameworks may be valid only if artists themselves retain an agonistic relationship to them, struggling to assert their own contradictory position, while acknowledging and actively responding to the issues at hand. Those issues might be given by curators as much as by the economic or social context. The point is to take them on, and subvert or disassemble.

Now maybe this is a hard thing to say, but it would be interesting to hear from Palestinian artists, whether a specific form of engaged autonomy is necessary even from the extremes of a situation like occupation, in terms of art, not in terms of politics, again that agonistic relationship. Yet, what would that mean here? For sure, it doesn't mean a retreat to formalism, because that is a 1945-1989 idea of autonomy that is long past its sell by date... Therefore, it is not an argument in any sense for a return to an old North American modernist discourse. But it is nevertheless an argument for a situation of critical engagement, relying on artists' own ethical compass to guide them and defending, in democratic terms, their right to be awkward. Furthermore, engaged autonomy, as I see it, invests the quality of autonomy with action, understanding it at as a state of being or doing rather than something vested in the objects of production. For example, art can perhaps hide in the guise of other things or actions. This almost brings us back to the notion of the "unartist" developed by Allan Kaprow, the artist who actually disappears into life but retains an idea of the arts, the possibility of art through the actions that one carries out, whether he is a butcher, a baker, or a candlestick maker. But you carry out those actions in the name of being an artist. I think Kaprow – and also his withdrawal, in a sense, from the art world – becomes an important moment. I think a new look at Kaprow becomes a very interesting possibility and connects to intentionality and to my second term, *modest proposals*.

Modest proposals are essentially about a speculation that we imagine things other than they are now through speculative gestures that intend to be concrete and actual. They avoid the

fantastic as well as the hermetic purity of a private symbolism, in order to deal with real, existing conditions, and what might be necessary in order to change those conditions. In different senses according to various artistic approaches, the notion of modest proposals addresses the problem of necessity in relation to the free imagination, as a prerequisite for producing work. Returning to Spinoza, I think necessity is another term that comes into play... I've been living in the Netherlands for 18 months now, and the necessity of 93% of the art that I see there is basically absent. Art becomes a professional production whereby the necessary freedom to speculate and propose turns into self-indulgence in a society rich enough to be able to squander its excess in this harmless way. I hope this is where the modest proposal can have some purchase. In declaring a reduced or modest scale, albeit with a certain Swiftian irony, it impels a less grandiose use of resources and with proposal it demands that something is offered as a proposition for consideration by others, not something which is internally self-justifying. Modesty is about its specificness, as much as about the scale of the issue involved or the absence of grand ambition for change. In doing so, these modest proposals exploit a space which is accepted by society as free, as potentially provocative, in order to take full advantage of imagining things otherwise (that term again). This also directly concerns the question of how we reinvent the museum, which I regard as extremely urgent if it's going to have any reason to survive as a useful institution in the coming decades. Its reinvention is intimately concerned with this idea of exploiting its given possibilities, of creating the conditions in which it can be something else, in which the museum can think itself otherwise. I often think of the museum as a living being, rather than a building, because it has this ideology which is encoded into it as much as it is a set of rooms and white cubes – so exploiting that possibility of free transformative imagination related to modest proposals and engaged autonomy.

I had my artistic education in Glasgow, where a young group of artists created a sense of possibility in a city, which had almost no possibilities for artists previously. They did this through taking charge of an existing artists' organization called Transmission, which had a committee run by artists, and generated a community which then went on to be relatively successful, internationally speaking. It wasn't something which came from the top down or something which came through national cultural policy. It seems to me that those

were the most important places, those are the places where that relationship between art and politics can be played out, and where art and the intimacy of art, the intimate exchange which art allows, the "thinking things otherwise," without a destination – this is where that can happen. Of course it happens for a very small audience, I think that's tragic and it's a shame, but it is probably necessary that it's that small audience. There will never be a causal relationship between art and changing the world. In the end, in a kind of spirit of foolish optimism, I think in order to go on being an artist one must believe somewhere, deep down in his being, that the relationship survives, and that art's relations to changing the world, to political change exists. It is not something which could ever be traced causally, or drawn on a map, or reduced to political rhetoric. It's something which simply exists.

Dealing with the

Changing Nation //

The themes of nation, nationalism and national identity are inscribed in the project *Liminal Spaces* on a number of levels: in the configuration of its curators and their institutions in Israel, Palestine and Germany as well as in the international participants, the venues, and finally in the topic of the Israeli occupation of Palestine. At the same time, the project perceives this conflict as an international matter and calls upon the participating artists, curators, activists, academics, architects and their institutions to develop new forms of political debate within the art sector and using artistic means: "Curators, cultural figures and artists developed this project through a series of meetings and discussions that sought to generate active participation of the art sector in developing modes of expression against the political status quo of occupation, dehumanization and oppression. The curators have invited an array of local and international artists to participate in this project. Additionally, it is hoped that

through participation in the project, new possibilities of contact and exchange will emerge on an individual basis and beyond."¹

Within the destructive situation of resurgent nationalist sentiments in the Middle East conflict, the project is implicitly based on the premise that assuming an anti-nationalistic position is a necessary precondition for any fundamental agreement.

Nation and Nationalism

In discussions on the conflict in the Middle East, the crucial terms 'state' and 'nation' are often used without clear differentiation. Only in a historically ideal form of political community are the two concepts coterminous, whereby the nation is the narrative component: it provides the ideological and symbolic back-up for the political formation of the state and its territorial boundaries. A group of people who are

unlikely ever to meet use the term 'nation' to define themselves; their notion of belonging to this group is based on a common language, religion, ethnicity or 'culture'. A national community thus evolves not out of actual relations, but simply out of perceived common ground. Since the publication of Benedict Anderson's pioneering work *Imagined Communities*, the nation can no longer be thought of without taking into account this fictional and ideological aspect which underlies its identity formation.²

The nation state, which according to Anderson is the final version of a nation, is currently undergoing something of a contradictory development. While the decline of the nation state in many parts of the world is symptomatic of its reduced power, one nonetheless has to acknowledge its continued existence and identify its new, post-sovereign functions, which manifest themselves in various forms of participation in supranational contexts as

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well as in an emerging global society.

Upon closer consideration, the decline of the nation state can be described as a dissociation of the ideological construct of the nation from the political and territorial structure of the state. How does this 'drifting apart' of state and nation manifest itself, and how are they both changing as a result? Let us begin with national ideology. In attempting to answer this question I would like to refer to Boris Buden, who has drawn attention to the crucial fact that although nations still exist, they have lost their common narrative. The narrative, for example, of anti-colonial nationalism, which united the "Wretched of the Earth" and aimed at using a common interest in liberation to develop a model of common agency.³ In Europe, on the other hand, an all-inclusive, popular nationalism developed, unified by a common language, while a metro-political, formally conservative and reactionary nationalism of European origin later also extended to

the colonies.⁴ This form of nationalism, which defines itself through dissociation from other ethnic, religious or 'cultural' communities, today emanates less from states and more from regions, as the recent changes in Eastern Europe – and above all in the former Yugoslavia – show. Significantly, the ultimate goal of these regions is usually the formation of an independent state.

While the common agenda and hence the narrative of nations has been lost, new globalized states have become part of new communities in the form of powerful supranational decision-making structures that evidently constitute the new world order, such as the WTO or SAARC on an economic level, NATO on a military one, the EU or UN on a political one, etc. The state's new responsibilities in its role as a "free-market global managerial state" within transnational state collectives serve the "postnational character of global capital" in today's neo-capitalistic forms of society.⁵

1 http://liminalspaces.org/?page_id=50/

2 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities* (London: Verso, 2006 [1983]), p. 178.

3 Boris Buden, "Why Not: Art and Contemporary Nationalism?," in Minna Henriksson & Sezgin Boynik (eds.), *Contemporary Art and Nationalism* (Kosovo: Prishtina Institute for Contemporary Art, 2007), pp. 12-17.

4 See Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2005), p. 157.

5 Both quotations of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, in Judith Butler/Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Who Sings the Nation-State?* (London, New York, Calcutta: Seagull Books, 2007), p. 76.

How, then, should the relationship between state and nation be regarded in the specific cases of Israel and Palestine? Both Israel and Palestine can be described as a special form of a nation in a 'state of exception'. Israel's conception and foundation as a state was based upon a monoethnic and religious national ideology. Thus Israel's Declaration of Independence on May 14, 1948 does not, as Joseph A. Massad writes, declare a sovereign state, but one that is based on a unifying cultural identity: "the Declaration (of the Establishment of the State of Israel) did not proclaim Israel a sovereign independent state, rather it proclaimed it a 'Jewish State'."⁶ The historical aspect of the Jewish Diaspora with all its cultural, linguistic dimensions, etc. was thereby negated. Palestine, on the other hand, is a nation that fights for its state and cannot therefore be called sovereign either. The dissolution of the community as a result of the internal division of the political camps fighting for the 'Palestinian cause' into

Fatah and Hamas has further eroded the Palestinians' hope of establishing a governable state. The loss of the classical parameters of an anti-colonial struggle for liberation also means the loss of the basis for a national community – and at the same time reflects the international interests in the Israeli occupation of Palestine in a perfidious way.

As a matter of fact, the situation of Palestine under Israeli occupation is often described as colonial, and an independent nation state for the Palestinian people is the longed-for solution. However, the history of former colonies reveals that once they have gained independence, most have fallen into the hands of corrupt rulers from their own ranks. This means a reversal of parameters in terms of the fight for their national liberation, or, as Massad describes it: "how the progressive nature of national liberation becomes regressive after liberation takes place."⁷ The brief promise of the nation as the identity-forming community therefore proves

to be illusory. Besides the many reasons specific to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, the history of anti-colonial nationalism should therefore also cloud the hope of a nation state as a solution for the Palestinians. With this in mind, Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin describes the Palestinian state simply as a pragmatic intermediate step on the way to a binational, one-state solution, one that undermines the concept of monocultural and mono-religious nationalism sought by both Israel and Palestine and instead proposes an inclusive state.⁸ Even though this idea seems far removed from the present situation, its political concept provides a fundamental argument against the regional nationalism that is fuelling the ongoing conflict.



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Art Institutions and Nationalism

The cooperation between institutions in *Liminal Spaces* shows how the theme of nation and nationalism also and above all affects the specific tasks and the (limited) sphere of influence of cultural institutions. In general, all public institutions represent the respective prevailing system of social values. Although art institutions, unlike political parties, civil services or trade unions, do not have a direct and socially accepted mandate for political action, they are nevertheless expected to create an image of the prevailing social value system.⁹ They are supposed to transform social and subjective realities into a format in which this image can be handled and conserved, but they are not supposed to intervene or actively participate in the production of social and political realities.

The positive effect of this is a certain degree of freedom in the creation of an institution's profile, however this freedom is in fact minimal, particularly as far as larger institutions are concerned. The clearly negative effect is the sanctioning of art institutions whose work manifests more critical positions, which is articulated through limiting access to financial resources.

But let us first take a look at the historical role of the museum in society and its function as a public institution. Museums originated in the 18th century as a national project and were expected to play a part – together with the power of the state – in shaping the social order. The first example of its kind, the British Museum, was established in 1759. Its task was to create the narrative of a representative national history and heritage. To this end, its ideal audience consisted of those who were educated to be model citizens: patriotic, conscious and proud of a rich history superior to that of other nations.

6 Joseph A. Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (Abingdon/New York: Routledge, 2006), p. 19.

7 *Ibid.*, p. 21.

8 Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, *Exil et souveraineté: Judaïsme, sionisme et pensée binationale* (Paris: La Fabrique éditions, 2007).

9 "Whereas other institutions, like civil services, parties and unions, have a direct mandate for political action – which is also socially accepted as such – an art institution is expected to deliver and produce images or rather an 'image' of what is happening outside; to transform social and subjective realities into a format in which we can handle and conserve it, but not to interfere and take an active part in the production of social and political realities. The question is, how do art institutions deal with these expectations, how do they develop room for manoeuvre, and how do they relate their work to the political contexts they are confronted with and thus also to the activities of other institutions?" Nina Möntmann, "Art and its Institutions," in Möntmann (ed.), *Art and its Institutions* (London: Black Dog Publishing, 2006), p. 8.

Anderson also refers to a “museumizing imagination” that translates the fictive and symbolic concept of nationalism into an environment of objects and images.¹⁰ A public institution such as a museum is constitutionally open to everybody, but in fact it provides a limited and encoded accessibility that confirms the bourgeois and patriotic subject as the ideal citizen. Moreover, it imagines the world order from the perspective of the colonizer by showing a collection of ‘masterpieces’ of national artefacts along with acquired trophies from the cradles of culture and art such as Egypt or Greece, which are thus placed in a direct line with the contemporary national culture. In contrast to this we also find an ethnicizing presentation of artefacts from the colonies; in the context of the imperialistic narrative these appear as folk art, their practical value in both spiritual and everyday contexts even serving to highlight the achievements of civilization, which give way to the autonomous masterpiece.

The initial purpose of the museum was thus “the authoritarian legitimization of the nation state... through the construction of a history, a patrimony, ... and a canon.”¹¹

If, therefore, in neo-capitalism, there is a general social tendency to superimpose private interests on the public interest, then the profiles for action on the part of public positions or institutions must change accordingly; this also includes the duties of an institution’s employees. In today’s neo-capitalist societies, art institutions are becoming branded spaces, an increasing number of which, such as the Tate or the Guggenheim, are extending according to the franchise principle. Private financiers are generally less interested in attending the museum they support than in using it as a tool for image production and ultimately for the profit of their company. The ideal audience is represented accordingly by a mass of anonymous consumers. This corporate model of an art institution – which applies

to all the major museums such as the Guggenheim (the clearest example of an art institution conceived and operated by politicians and financiers), the Tate and even the MoMA, but also and increasingly to middle-sized Kunsthallen and even smaller institutions – consists of a peer group of speculators who possibly identify more with the Guggenheim brand than with its programme, and a non-specific audience that is measured in visitor numbers.

60 Years of Israel / 60 Years of Nakba

A large-scale exhibition project to mark the 60th anniversary of the foundation of Israel shows how a state that has long since become both economically and militarily involved in transnational contexts and has shown great interest in EU membership, nevertheless clings on to a national ideology that

is meant to represent its history and create a coherent national community. The exhibition series *Six Decades, Six Museums*, which was held in 2008 on the occasion of Israel's 60th anniversary, is a prime example of the delicate situation of art institutions within the missions of nations. The press release states that the project *Six Decades, Six Museums* is "the result of cooperation between the 60s headquarters, the Ministry of Science, Culture and Sport, the Culture Administration, the Department of Museums and Plastic Art, participating museums supported by private and governmental bodies." The state's mission is made very clear by this planning constellation. The structure of the project is simple: each participating museum adopts a decade between 1948 and 2008 and shows 'Israeli art' from that period.¹² The occasion – the anniversary of the state's foundation – allows for only limited criticism on the part of the participating institutions. The press announcement continues: "The project will lead to

first-time cooperation among Israel's six leading museums: each and every one of them shows an exhibition that is dedicated to another decade in Israel's history. The exhibition will present a comprehensive report and new insight about art in Israel during the last sixty years." The emphasis on first-time cooperation between the museums and the result of presenting a "comprehensive report" testify to the intended unity and cohesion of the Israeli community, which in this sense has long since ceased to exist. Subtle references to this fact can be found in some of the individually staged exhibitions, for example in the title of the exhibition curated by Doron Rabina at the Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art ("Eventually We'll Die"), which in its concept also mentions the "horrors of the occupation." The participation of Arab artists is, however, ambivalent. It is intended to open up the exclusionary concept of the series and of the art industry in Israel generally, but for many Palestinians, boycotting

10 Anderson, op. cit., p. 178.

11 Hito Steyerl, *The Institution of Critique*, <http://transform.eipcp.net/transversal/0106/steyerl/en>

12 The participating institutions and their exhibitions were: *The Fifties: The First Decade: Hegemony and Plurality* (curators: Gideon Ofrat & Galia Bar Or), Museum of Art, Ein Harod; *The Birth of the 'Present': the Sixties in Israeli Art* (curators: Yona Fischer & Tamar Manor-Friedman), Ashdod Art Museum, Monart Center; *My Body, My Self: The Seventies in Israeli Art* (curator: Mordechai Omer), Tel Aviv Museum of Art; *Check Post: The Eighties in Israeli art* (curator: Ilana Tenenbaum), Haifa Museum of Art; *The Nineties: Eventually We'll Die: Young Israeli Art in the Nineties* (curator: Doron Rabina), Herzliya Museum of Contemporary Art; *Real Time: Art in Israel 1998–2008* (curators: Amitai Mendelsohn & Efrat Natan), The Israel Museum, Jerusalem.

Israeli events is one of the few remaining possibilities of political activism they have. Ilana Tenenbaum, who curated the exhibition "Check Post" at Haifa Museum of Art, discerns post-Zionist and post-colonial tendencies already forming within Israel in the art of the 1980s.

The Collapse of the National Community

The collapse of Israel's national community, which the concept of *Six Decades, Six Museums* so vehemently attempts to counter, has however only become more apparent in recent years. This is also evident in the history of Israeli film. Whereas earlier works such as *Hem Hayu Assarah* (They Were Ten) by Baruch Diner were 'Zionist manifestos', which euphorically praised the idea of the state's foundation, today there are a growing number of critical films such as Dror

Shaul's *Sweet Mud*, which depicts the incapacitated existence of those who live in a kibbutz, Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir* and Avi Mograbi's *Z32*, two experimental documentaries in which soldiers recall their traumatic experiences of the war in Lebanon, or Yoav Shamir's *Flipping Out* about Israeli soldiers who are psychologically disturbed after three years of military service. Then there is Amos Kollek's *Restless*, featuring an Israeli who has fled to New York because he can no longer stand living in a state of oppressors, or the open criticism of Zionist policies in most of Eyal Sivan's documentaries.¹³ The notion of a national community is most visibly collapsing in intellectual circles. But without such a community Israel will disintegrate, which is why the nationalistic pressure from above is steadily increasing. More and more Israelis are criticizing their country's military activities and condemning the violations of human rights against Palestinians. The anniversary

of the Nakba ('catastrophe') was marked on May 15, 2008; art institutions in Palestine also responded to this anniversary: several exhibitions were held in addition to numerous panel discussions, film screenings and demonstrations in Palestine, Jordan, Egypt, Lebanon as well as supporting events in Europe, the USA, and Canada. For example, the Palestinian Art Court – Al Hoash Gallery in East Jerusalem showed a project by Scottish artist Jane Frere. Her symbolically charged work *Return of the Soul – The Nakba Project* consisted of more than 3,000 wax figurines fixed to the ceiling of the exhibition space. "This sculpture is representing people who had to flee their homes in a state of terror," Frere said in relation to the events of 1948.¹⁴ The institutionalized events in Palestine also represent a common cause, albeit under very different circumstances – the 'Palestinian cause', and in Palestine, too, the reality of society no longer conforms to its image. Since

Hamas seized power in the Gaza Strip and political and military leadership was split between Hamas and Fatah, and in the light of current (August 2008) escalations in the Gaza Strip on a par with civil war, the 'Palestinian cause', the common struggle for liberation, has been overshadowed by internal conflict and Palestine's main national narrative has consequently disintegrated. The interests of other nations such as the USA and Iran in the opposing parties constitute an additional dimension, that of war by proxy, which weakens and abuses the region even further.

The collapse of the nation can be observed, albeit under varying circumstances, in almost all parts of the world. In economically stronger areas, states are forming alliances, while national ideologies are increasingly emerging from specific regions. Although Israel attempts to affiliate itself with western state alliances, it remains caught up in the conflict with Palestine; as

a result, the Israeli state continues to limit and isolate itself politically and territorially, while the national community falls apart under the constant pressure of its own government's regional policies.

What roles do art institutions play in the light of this changed situation? What is their public mission? While a corporatization of institutions can be observed in fully capitalized countries as a parallel development to that of the neo-liberal global state, Israel's specific public mission can be described as the attempt to re-establish the image of a functioning Israeli community that supports the project of Israel with unchanged optimism. Although the situation in Palestine means that only emerging tendencies at most can be discerned, since the few institutions that exist are often supported by private initiatives or international money, it can also be described as an attempt to uphold an image that is no longer valid – that of a national community

13 I am referring here to Anke Leweke's article "Deserteure der Idee Israel," in *die tageszeitung*, 31 July 2008, p. 15.

14 Jane Frere, "The Journey of the Soul," *This Week in Palestine* 121, May 2008.

unified by oppression and the struggle for liberation.

The overall situation of collapsing national communities is, of course, only problematic for states which are not open to the adoption of an inclusive approach, one that goes beyond national parameters. Theoretically, this kind of situation offers the opportunity to replace the idea of the nation as the main defining element and to oppose all existing or emerging forms of nationalism.

Against this background, *Liminal Spaces* is an attempt to react to the new situation by refusing to simply accomplish implicit institutional missions and instead looking for new forms of institutional action. In the first instance this involves establishing a network of individual protagonists with a variety of international perspectives – not in order to organize some vague kind of ‘peace project’, but instead to use this transnational approach to promote

concrete political debate and develop possible courses of action in the field of art. In addition to the direct debate it encourages between the participating artists, curators, architects and activists, therefore, *Liminal Spaces* also intervenes on a subliminal level in the operating modes of institutions and their public mission.

Duchifat



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// Mauricio Guillén



Hud-hud, 2008, photograph of a vintage school poster from before the first war taken at the Scientific Library El Bireh, Ramallah

Stitching Pieces of

Our Story in Liminal

1

Begin with art, because art tries to take us outside ourselves. It is a matter of trying to create an atmosphere and context so conversation can flow back and forth and we can be influenced by each other.

-- W.E.B. DuBois (1868-1963), American sociologist and civil rights leader

This essay examines the potential transformative power of the liminal or in-between spaces created by artists and art professionals in the *Liminal Spaces* collaborative project. It explores how negotiating art within these on-site performative spaces in Palestine/Israel can lead to raising consciousness and to making meaning out of the chaotic lives of Palestinians under occupation. My remarks are based on my personal experience as a privileged participant in the project.

***Liminal Spaces* took place on March 10-12, 2006; it was composed of a series of panel discussions, guided tours of the Qalandiya refugee camp, Ramallah, and Jerusalem. The tours brought the urban transformation of Palestinian land into focus, outlining the impact of the Separation Wall, the over 75 permanent checkpoints and over 150 mobile ones set up every week, the many concrete road blocks, gates, fences, and the rerouting of traffic to favor settler-only highways, the isolation and collective punishment of Gazans, the ethnic cleansing via seizure of land and house demolitions in Palestinian Authority areas, and now more frequent land seizures from Israeli Palestinians.**

In 2007, *Liminal Spaces* organized trips to Palestinian towns in Israel and Israeli urban centers to meet with Palestinian communities. From Bethany

al Spaces // Salwa Mikdadi

Dabit in Ramla, we heard first-hand accounts of a ghettoized community's civil resistance and the threat to the last remains of Palestinian cultural heritage sites. In Jaffa, Fadi Shbeita explained the myriad laws that Palestinians face in the onslaught of gentrification and exclusion by Israeli city planners. In Bil'in, we heard the stories of the town's collective resistance and their triumph against the construction of the Separation Wall.

In Taibeh, Palestinian architect Senan Abdelqader discussed loss of communal domain in urban centers. According to Jamal Zahalqa, a Palestinian Member of Knesset, the Palestinian minority in Israel has undergone a process of modernity without urbanism; he attributes the absence of Palestinian cities in Israel not to "faulty planning," but rather to "a planned fault. It was manifested, *inter alia*, in the authorities' attitude toward the city of

Nazareth, which was besieged from all around by confiscation of land and Jewish settlements constructed in order to prevent territorial continuity with the Arab communities around it."¹ Without natural expansion and with increased demographics, Palestinian towns are looking more and more like crowded refugee camps.

Most illuminating was the meeting with Israeli artists and activists who believe in a future of coexistence and with new historians such as Ilan Pappé, who challenges the colonialist version of the Zionist narrative. These and others strive to unveil the truth regarding Israel's violence against the Palestinians and the methods of expulsion, usurpation of land, and destruction of villages. The accounts of these historians, however, are never covered by Israeli and Western media, or more importantly – included in

Israeli school books or university courses.

Eyal Danon is an Israeli artist and one of the curators of *Liminal Spaces*. His project [an initiative of the AYAM Association] *Jaffa – An Autobiography of a City* documents a new narrative of the Arab and Jewish history of Jaffa. According to Danon, the histories are not based on any hierarchical order, and a website database allows all residents of Jaffa to participate in "the redesigning of the City's Memory as part of the construction of a new Urban-Communal identity." Danon believes that "when the Palestinian resident population will be able to make public its own History, its communal sense of belonging and identity will be intensified and the bond with the Jewish resident population will be based on a more balanced structure."² Danon and other artists who seek change do so for both communities. They take

their art to the community and work outside the white cube gallery. They interact with their audiences, empowering them to question the dominant narrative.

2

Interrupted and Fragmented Narratives

The unshared memories such as those collected by Danon, or others I have heard throughout my life from my family, friends, and every Palestinian I meet on my travels, are all stories of fragmented lives – interrupted adolescent years, incomplete studies, uprooted lives. Life in Palestine is getting ever shorter as more emigrate or are being detained inside separation walls preventing them from seeking a full life or reaching family members, urban centers with schools, hospitals, theaters, museums, cultural institutions, etc.

Such discontinuity in life under an unpredictable and violent occupation that restricts the natural flow of people and goods leads to a fragmented physical and mental state of being. Palestinians with Israeli citizenship fear that Israel will one day expel them. East Jerusalem Palestinians with Israeli residence permits fear traveling outside Jerusalem as they may risk losing their right to return.

According to Edward Said, such fragmentation, disruption or interruption is also reflected in our literature where the "characteristic mode... is not a narrative, in which scenes take place seriatim, but rather broken narratives, fragmentary compositions, and self-consciously staged testimonials, in which the narrative voice keeps stumbling over itself, its obligations, and its limitations."³ Despite such chaotic existence,

Palestinians hold on to these fragments, and continue hoping for a magic *minjalieh*⁴ stitch to string our narrative and connect us together. *Liminal Spaces* artists examined this constant splitting, separation, and shifting of boundaries in the architectural and social landscape of Palestine.

3

*Collaborative Performance
in Liminal Spaces*

Unlike traditional art residencies, the exhibition was not the end of the project. *Liminal Spaces* went on with a major conference, including on site meetings with Palestinian communities and other professionals. It structured liminal spaces in many locations so that all the participants could share in the experience. In these spaces one may feel trapped, transformed, or emerge whole again. It all depends on the performer and other actors

within the space, in this case the artists, the art, the community, and the art professionals. *Liminal Spaces* acted as a medium for these spaces in Palestine/Israel, and the participants' performance took place in situ, outside the white cube galleries of Holon or Ramallah. In situ refers to the fact that the *Liminal Spaces* trips, conferences, residencies, and curatorial processes took place simultaneously as the Separation Wall continued to snake around Palestinian towns, isolating communities under an occupation that continues its restrictive and dehumanizing practices.

"Liminality" is a term generally associated with ritual. *Liminal Spaces* cannot be described as such or be associated with liminality's equalizing attribute between occupiers and occupied. Art historian Carol Duncan explored art museums as ritual sites with a performative element

within liminality which she describes as a "'liminal' zone of time and space in which visitors, removed from the concerns of their daily, practical lives, open themselves to a different quality of experience."⁵ Such an approach is dependent on the viewer and his/her solitary experience with the art object inside the museum. In *Liminal Spaces*, the interaction between the participants and the communities was a performative process. For the artists and the audience outside the museum, creating a larger art project as a result of the exhibition was one component.

Many *Liminal Spaces* participants shared temporary in-between spaces with the communities or their representatives. The process – with all its manifestations, tours, discussions, the art exhibition, and the participation of the community – was *one*. All participants were predisposed

mentally and politically to enter such a space. Therefore the experience had a transformative potential that raised consciousness and created the conditions necessary for change.

Several of the artists worked directly with the community. Their intervention, whether with Israelis or Palestinians, created a performative space mirroring the larger *Liminal Spaces* project prior to exhibiting the final art work in the gallery. Their art work coalesced stories, unpacked complex issues, and gave us a new perspective. *What Everybody Knows*, Ayreen Anastas and Rene Gabri's project, was informed by direct conversations with a diverse group of people over a twenty-day period in order to gain insight into their daily lives. Their art project underscores the regularity in which profound changes occur in the daily life of Palestinians under occupation so that it becomes humanly

impossible to learn first-hand how the occupation is affecting everyone's lives. These conditions also inform the work of Sandi Hilal and Alessandro Petti who looked at how Palestinians living in Jerusalem respond to current practices of exclusion and inclusion.

Israeli laws regarding residence as well as boundaries are in constant flux so that real-estate prices may change overnight depending on where the new Separation Wall will create an excluded or exclusive community. Artists Sabine Horlitz and Oliver Clemens explore this further in their art piece *How much did you pay for this plot of land? (Land Value in Ramallah and East Jerusalem)*. They gathered reams of information that examine how the politics of ethnic cleansing and the master plan for Jerusalem affect the social architecture of the excluded areas.

4

Spaces of Consciousness

The liminality of art museums, theaters, and other sites of aesthetic experience has long been recognized by curators, art historians, and others. Cultural anthropologist Victor Turner described liminality as a state of consciousness "betwixt-and-between the normal, day-to-day cultural and social states and processes of getting and spending."⁶ (The Arabic term for liminality translates as "being at the threshold of consciousness" – *ala atabat al shu'ur*).⁷ *Liminal Spaces* had several manifestations that together contributed to its transformative potential for the audience, the artists, and the community.

Art projects and artists-activists invited the audience to step over the 'threshold' and take time to reflect. Ronen Eidelman's art

project created such a space on a promenade and soccer park where the Arab Jaffa district of Manshiya once stood. In *The Ghost of Manshiya* (2007), Eidelman, an Israeli artist living in Tel Aviv, used white chalk to mark out the grid of streets and houses of the Manshiya quarter with the help of soccer field marking equipment and simple paint rollers. The artist engaged pedestrians in conversations on the vanishing Arab district, outlined in ghostly white with Arabic street names. The pedestrians' comments contrast sharply with the simplicity of the project's execution.

Liminal Spaces opened several liminal spaces in each of the walks, talks or encounters. The activists we met in Lydda and Ramla spoke of the challenges and threats of Israel's colonial expansionist policies and the erasure of their history and heritage. It seemed as though we





were on borrowed time, and this may be our last encounter before economic and political forces conspire to drive the residents out to make room for high-rise condominiums, settlements, or high-end boutiques. On the tour of Ramla and Lydda my 'memory performance' in these liminal spaces was personal. I admit that I missed most of the statistics on lost lands and homes. I did not use my camera that day. I wanted to absorb it all for my school friend in London whose ancestral home, the Khairy mansion, still stands in Ramla; for the owner of the San Jose falafel drive-in from Ramla whose falafel surpasses the one we had in his home town; in the memory of my father whose long walks in Palestine are legendary.

Every Palestinian town we visited sparked a memory 'chip' in my reservoir of stories. As I was born after the Nakba, the stories I know of historic Palestine are

bits and pieces shared with me over the years, or perhaps those I read about in the autobiographies edited by our fellow participant, Palestinian sociologist Prof. Salim Tamari who works tirelessly to gather Palestinian autobiographies and is a great storyteller.

5

On the Brink of the Liminal

Random House dictionary defines liminal as "pertaining to or situated at the line (threshold)," the latter is defined as a "doorsill, entry, verge, brink, edge." Life for most Palestinians is not just fragmented but also in-limbo, always on the brink in-between entry and exit. This very description of the state of being came to mind as I listened to Buthayna Dabit's father in Ramla. We met Mr. Dabit at dusk; we were all standing around him, surrounded by a mix of old

Palestinian homes and several post-1948 buildings crowding the small neighborhood (al-Hara). He pointed to a remnant of this or that house, the closed mosque, the car park; he knew every stone in al-Hara. He reminded me of the protagonist in Emile Habiby's novel *The Secret Life of Saeed: The Pessoptimist (al-Mutasha'il)*. Mr. Dabit's reality was neither part of nor separate from Israeli life. His status is precarious; for Palestinians nothing is certain in Ramla. He was neither happy nor sad; he was almost an optimist, but not quite. His demeanor said a great deal more than his words. He was proud of Ramla, of his daughter's activism. He had a great deal to tell but hardly enough time. In the end I was grateful for the new fragments of memories he graciously shared.

6

Conclusion

For me, *Liminal Spaces* was more than just another curatorial project, it offered me the opportunity to share discoveries with artists and to look forward to their art work from within these common experiences. In their statement, *Liminal Spaces* curators stress that the project was not a dialogue or another peace project, but rather a cooperative art project that looks for strategies for a socially and politically engaged art. They nurtured this project for over two years to allow the artists to work 'in situ' in order to create alternative strategies to expose the consequences of the colonial project on the daily life of Palestinians.

Liminal Spaces introduced new ways in which an art institution can commit to the understanding

of artistic practices. The artists worked directly with the public; they were both witnesses and participants in a transformative performance. The fact that the art exhibition was presented on another continent gave the project a new dimension. It allowed the artists and other participants to focus on the artistic strategies for change and on reaching out to the communities, rather than on the curatorial production.

Liminal Spaces opened new possibilities for art presentation that allows viewers and artists to see the work on equal terms outside the institutional setting, to show art for what it is and not what we imagine it to be, and to give new meaning to political art and inclusion.

- 1 Jamal Zahalqa, "In the Absence of a City," in Senan Abdelqader (ed.), *Senan Abdelqader: Architecture of Dependency*, The Israeli Presentation for the 7th São Paulo International Biennial of Architecture, Brazil (Tel Aviv, 2007), p. X.
- 2 http://www.digitalartlab.org.il/jaffa/jaffa_web_detailed.htm, accessed July 30, 2008.
- 3 Edward W. Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), p. 38.
- 4 *Minjalieh* is the decorative stitch used to join together separate sections of Palestinian traditional dress.
- 5 Carol Duncan, *Civilizing Rituals: Inside Public Art Museums* (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 20.
- 6 Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell UP, 1974), pp. 13-15.
- 7 Munir Baa'lbaki, *al-Mawrid: A Modern English-Arabic Dictionary* (Beirut: Dar al-'Ilm li-al-Malayin, 1981).

Note

The condition of Palestinian daily life is so critical and abysmal at this time that it almost seems unreal and not humanly possible to survive. Therefore I never cease to be amazed at the warm reception we received in all the towns and cities we visited. I also thank the organizers Eyal Danon, Galit Eilat, Reem Fadda, and Philipp Misselwitz for their hard work and commitment to change.

Ayreen An

astás & Rene Gabri

:1

The Left Needs Mediators

For Gilles Deleuze, a political distinction between right and left pertains to movements. The right is about blocking, the left is about embracing movements – two completely different methods of negotiation. Whereas the state works to capture or channel movement and to partition space, the left wishes to avoid capture, either inventing new channels or re-inventing the meaning of existing ones.

The left must re-create the meaning of mediators – those who help us express ourselves in relation to a problem, but would never express themselves without us; to make visible what otherwise may remain invisible. This begins with the awareness that one is always operating in a group, even if one works alone. One works in a group since one works in a series, a relay. The mediators that we form are always in a series. If we're not in a series, we're lost.

The right does not face this problem since it has its mediators working directly for it, in situ, on the field. The left needs freer mediators. A mediator for a philosopher can be an artist or a scientist; for an artist, it may be a geographer or an anthropologist. Mediators can even be objects. Without them nothing happens. They are fundamental.

For our collection of videos from Palestine we chose the title "What Everybody Knows" precisely in relation to that question. We experiment with the notion of mediators and how one can be effective in a specific, targeted way. In that sense, we may serve as mediators for our writer-friends, and our protagonists may form yet another set of mediators for us: the geographer, the activist, the father of the family, the Bedouin, the falafel store owner, and so on. One may purport to know all about Palestine, to take the right side, and so on, but is that enough? No. To explore all the possibilities of movement under a military rule which restricts and constrains. To talk to people, and not assume that we know. We need to create our truth on the ground, in lived experiences, not just our own, but also the experiences of those who struggle beside us, with

us. This implies that the production or fidelity to this truth involves working on this material. This type of work is a small fragment of what needs to be done and is being done by other colleagues.

If the right is about opposing movement, it also knows well how to keep us busy with the wrong arguments. This has been the history of recent Palestine, bargaining and hard negotiation for well-known facts. We have to go ahead and do the work that is truly needed, instead of lingering on the wrong arguments.

:2

On Cultural Production and its Role in Political Struggle

It might be helpful to begin by asserting that there is no exclusive response to this question. The solutions may remain forever contingent or provisional, given the variety of complex situations we are called upon to consider and address in the world today. Clearly, remaining on the sideline, detached and aloof, is not the position we are advocating. At the same time, the role of culture and cultural production clearly has the potential of being more than a mere instrument in the name of a broader political program, a mere means toward a hoped for or desired end.

The forms of life historically engendered by artists over centuries of struggle have certainly helped create many of the spaces of dissent which we occupy and make use of today. And if these spaces remain freer and less determinate than other spaces in our contemporary societies, it is in no small part due to an attitude that would not simply relegate our means to ends, but would see the means themselves as an essential element of the coming community we struggle for. In this sense, it should be clear that the languages we use or employ are not taken for granted, but rather interrogated. Even if we believe that a certain militancy and urgency are required on the part of cultural practitioners today, it is not at the expense of simplifications, platitudes, or avoiding complexity; not by abandoning poetry or forgetting that our battles need to be waged concurrently – both on the more explicit terrain of politics, and on the political terrain of language, images, and the other forms we use.

Having said this, we do perceive today the need to question practices which retain a fidelity to one pole of the political while losing their relation to the others. We were faced explicitly with this question in our most recent work together in relation to Palestine. For instance, over-focus on analyzing an image as a filmmaker might seem appropriate at times, as it relates to the politics of form and language, but at other times may distract from the larger context of the political.



25 OCT 2007 MODI'IN ILLIT/BIL'IN PHOTO: DOR GUEZ





25 OCT 2007 BIL'IN PHOTO: DOR GUEZ



25 OCT 2007 BIL'IN PHOTO: DOR GUEZ

How to untangle ourselves from a political narrative that is governed by disinformation and confusion? There is a fine line between an analysis that enters the nuances and complexities of a situation and one that gets lost in them, finds dead ends, road blocks; stuck looking for a way out, for an elegant solution, a nice transition, and losing sight of the untenable situation with which Palestinians are confronted under Israeli Occupation. For the majority of the Palestinians living on the wrong side of the Wall, the wall is a wall, devastatingly fixed, violent, restricting movement, cutting off relations with friends, with family members, and oppressive. No theoretical maneuvers or wizardry should mitigate such a reality or desensitize a public to it.

In such a context, one inevitably has to negotiate and make choices which profoundly affect the value a work can have to a political struggle. In the case of this most recent work in Palestine, we have attempted to err on the side of clarity on the more explicit political terrain even if this sometimes meant working against a style of experimental film practice which may have refused to provide "information" in the ordinary sense, or denied the viewer a sense of gaining a perspective on a situation. This tactic has a lot to do with where we believe the situation is today.

Although there is probably no "situation" or area in the world today which has been the "beneficiary" of such consistent media coverage in the last thirty years, anyone with even the remotest notion as to what is unfolding there can tell you that most people have little clue as to what is really going on; or if they have an idea, it is a confused one.

One should note here, that this confusion and disorientation (by way of misinformation, disinformation, partial information, and over-information) is a consistent tactic of not only the Israeli military, but also our contemporary media.

As a result, even someone committed to a politicized relation to images would have to re-orient to what in fact an experimental or politicized relation to images could be or become in such a context.

In this case, to work politically with images we would have to slow things down to a steady pace, a rhythm parallel to a machine that has been slowly devouring resistance for the last forty years, slowly, steadily – to dilate time, allow individuals to speak at their own speed, give the viewer time to see the physical manifestations of these techniques of dispossession practiced by the state.

Our goal was not to simplify the analysis of the situation. The mechanisms employed are diverse and yes – sometimes lawless, sometimes using the law; sometimes through planning, sometimes through the lack thereof. It was necessary to allow for a visual and analytical entry into the political and lived-in landscape in all its complexity. Something that can resemble a documentary or journalism, but in moving towards them, hacking away at them, altering them, demanding more from them.

It is within this process, which is not devoid of ambivalence and scrutiny, that we say that there is no single response and each solution is provisional.

:3

On the Necessity to Go to Palestine

*Continental drift carries you farther away each day.
- Guy Debord, Hurlements en faveur de Sade (1952)*

When Continental Drift was initiated, we felt that there was a necessity to appraise and analyze exactly where we were. "We" here means those of us who had followed with interest and/or been involved with various social/political movements throughout the 1990s and early 2000s. As a part of that reappraisal and in light of what has taken place in the first eight years of this century, we want to offer the following assessment.

It is evident that we have upon us a multiplication of various mechanisms of control and surveillance which are being aggressively redistributed in all areas of society. More importantly, a great deal is being invested in entrenching and expanding what appears to be an unending and self-perpetuating war against the specter of terrorism, waged, of course, in the name of an even more elusive "security."

Many questions remain about how these regimes of security-oriented control and surveillance integrate with the smooth space posited by neoliberal economic policies. Or how the emerging bodies of regional governance, alliances, and economic powers will attempt to instrumentalize the discourse on security in the foreseeable future of further attacks (staged or perpetrated).

A more important and immediate question remains for us in our discussions: How should this growing multitude of non-aligned and informal political actors around the globe respond to these developments?

If we lack perspective as to the long term ramifications and "success" of the military-security enterprise, one need not look too far into history. "Today Israel is conducting an experiment. It has invented a model of repression that, once adapted, will profit other countries." Although the statement is absolutely valid today, Gilles Deleuze wrote these lines

nearly thirty years ago in his piece entitled "Spoilers of Peace" published in Le Monde on April 7, 1978.

We can safely say that the Israeli experiment has multiplied, expanded, and has begun to reap the profits Deleuze predicted. Of course, the much sought after peace and security, in whose name the worst injustices are perpetrated, is nowhere in sight. But strategically and militarily, Israel controls every resource it needs to secure its long term survival in the region, and for this reason, it increasingly serves as a model for the current American-British-? experiment.

We believe that Israel, with its occupation of Palestine, serves as a kind of nodal point in what appears to be this century's Cold War. Not only are its mechanisms and discourses of security, surveillance, and warfare actively being exported globally, but its continued crimes against Palestinians on a daily basis also agitate and prevent any possibility for a plausible peace in the region.

Following this logic, we propose that without clear and explicit opposition to Israeli policies in Occupied Palestine, there is no short-term hope for ending the stranglehold on our collective futures by the most regressive and conservative elements in our contemporary societies.

Of course, Palestine is not the only issue in need of our attention, and clearly, even a just settlement in Palestine does not guarantee an end to the current wars. Moreover, a well articulated position against the Israeli occupation may not address or change the numerous structural dynamics that have allowed this emergence of the security state to take hold. By these "structural dynamics" we allude to Giorgio Agamben's implicit critique of liberal democracy and his introduction of the camp as the paradigm of modern governance. We also mention the various forms of racism that have plagued and continue to plague the internal politics of so many countries (and the Left in general) in the overdeveloped world (as evidenced by the revolts in the Parisian suburbs, the [ir]response to Katrina, and LA uprisings, ...) and beyond.

One can only hope that it may be through Palestine, that we can continue a process of education, which may overcome or at least contribute to addressing both these aforementioned structural dimensions and others.

Our colleagues in the European Left, particularly those who live in countries which have some history associated with the Holocaust or the collaboration with the Nazis, have been handed a gag order. To speak against what Israel is doing today, one could see, is intrinsically related to this history. But not in the way the Zionists would have us believe. Yet, equating a criticism of Zionism or Israel with anti-Semitism has unfortunately been a very successful campaign. And this campaign of silence has clearly worked in the countries which do not even share this history of guilt or "culpability."

But it is precisely by speaking out today, against Israeli policies of segregation, enclosure, siege, apartheid, and state terror that one can connect responsibly to this history – not by remaining silent. It asserts "never again, we will not be silent and stand by while such horrors take place in the name of the security of a people." Unfortunately, people's knowledge of the situation is so obscure or the pressure against speaking out so taboo, that the strategy of avoidance or silence has been too readily practiced – especially judging by how many respected intellectuals, journalists, and activists assume this position today.

We support our colleagues who protest against the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan as wars of greed and profit. We support our colleagues who protest against the G8 and attack the economic mechanisms which support the wholesale dispossession taking place around the world. We support the no-border coalitions and networks, which address the question of racism and the implicit hypocrisy of the neoliberal rhetoric of a borderless world.

In fact, we believe that it is not a great stretch to connect this structural racism to the very dynamics that allowed something like the Holocaust to take place. For example, the same logic (relegating some individuals a

right to bare life, while accepting that only others may enjoy the fruits of a political life) which was used by the Gestapo to strip the Jews of their citizenship (thus their political rights) before sending them to the camps, lets the American government allow the Red Cross to monitor the physical health of detainees in Guantánamo, while depriving them of the basic rights which would be bestowed upon any prisoner of war or imprisoned citizen of another country.

Today, in Palestine, a similar logic is unfolding. Israel continues to practice a policy of racial engineering among its own citizens, while at the same time the state actively attempts to foreclose any possibility of a normal existence or emergent society for Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories. And the “international community” seems to accept that an entire people might have the right to bare life, but not necessarily a political existence.

Furthermore, the International Court of Justice in the Hague (the same one that is given authority to try war criminals like Milošević) explicitly calls on the same “international community” and Israel to bring down the illegal wall separating Palestinians from Palestinians, and on the latter – to stop confiscating their lands. What exists of any recent vibrant contemporary social movement remains largely silent. Why is there no outrage and immediate outcry?

If this mandate does not come from the major powers, it may be understandable given their longstanding complicity. If this mandate does not come from those who receive their news from mainstream media machines, one can also understand. But how could those who purport to construct their own relationship to the world through an active engagement with it, through a pursuit of other sources of news, information, communication, ideas, how could this most promising of all “communities” remain silent?

As long as the silence remains, as long as we equivocate and lay blame on “both sides,” we remain susceptible to this logic. All the

governing elite need is additional "acts of terror" to embolden them to further attacks against more countries, and more limitations against personal freedoms and civil liberties. No security is won by targeted assassinations, or punishing civilians in symbolic retribution, as long as the conditions that produce the resentment or disagreement persist.

It should also be noted that Palestine has been used by many regimes in the Arab world to maintain the status quo in their countries, as in Syria ("we have a bigger enemy"). And Lebanon, the unfortunate neighbor of Israel, will remain an open football field for all the military forces in the area, as long as Israel does not change fundamentally.

What visible or viable movement in the world today offers an infrastructure of political, economic, and moral support for ending this injustice for Palestinians? Are we to expect the Bushes or Blairs of the world to engender real change there, when within their own countries (US and UK) these individuals lack such a mandate?

Of course, if the path of peace comes through a process that is not from international solidarity – not from a social movement that resembles the global solidarity that helped the ANC end Apartheid – we relegate ourselves to a "solution" or "road map" that will at best delay and defer a just resolution or produce catastrophic and unworkable solutions as were the result of the Oslo Accords.

For these reasons, we believe that any reconsideration of these social movements for the purposes of investing them with new force and a capacity to respond to contemporary challenges will need to take this position into account.

THE END, for now

Soldiers,

Soldiers, Soldiers...

// Roni Lahav & Artur Zmijewski in

Where do you come from? How long have you been working at B'Tselem?¹

Diala Shamas: I was born in Jerusalem and grew up in Beit Hanina, south of Ramallah and east of Jerusalem. My father is an American of Lebanese origin and my mother is a Palestinian from Beit Jala. I studied in the US, and have been working at B'Tselem for over a year now.

You have moved here from East Jerusalem. Can you tell us about the difference between the city's two parts – West Jerusalem and East Jerusalem?

Jerusalem is a divided city. The eastern part was annexed by Israel following the Six-Day War of 1967. Some 215,000 Palestinians still live here, with a so-called "Jerusalem resident" status. It is like living in a state of limbo, where we don't have full rights; we have the right to live here, but we are not Israeli citizens. We cannot vote. We can go to the West Bank, which Israelis cannot. My ID looks like the Israeli one, but it states my ethnicity as "Arab." They no longer issue these, because it is discrimination and racism. In the new ID the information is still contained, but in digital form. Who I am can be deduced anyway from my permanent residence address. Mine is Beit Hanina where my parents live, which is in East Jerusalem.

What does it matter who you are?

In Israel it is a reason for discrimination. The system categorizes me at every step. Soldiers, officials, etc. have to know who I am to interact properly. Israelis always try to learn my ethnicity. I usually try to avoid answering, speak Hebrew. When they ask me where I am from, I don't say Beit Hanina, I say Jerusalem. Arabs are the object of some very strong stereotypes, expectations, which are simply colonial in nature. I don't look like a typical Palestinian. In Ramallah or East Jerusalem I don't stand out, but in Hebron, for instance, everyone wonders who I am. I'm not conservative, I don't wear the hijab, I don't cover my hair. I speak openly with men. It is like trying to tell whether someone is Polish or German by the way he looks and behaves.

It is interesting, because whenever I am here I always have these conversations about looks; about whether someone looks like a Jew, an Arab, a Russian, a Pole, an Israeli... I know this from Poland, the so-called "good looks" and "bad looks," which once determined whether you could survive or not. Here everyone has a kind of inner detector, an ethnicity scanner, discerning between people of different origins.

In Jerusalem we get really good at this, because there are so many of them on both sides. You have to look closely and adapt yourself all the time. There are, for instance, illegal Palestinian workers from the West Bank. They very much want to look like Israelis, choosing the right haircuts, jeans, shoes...

Conversation with Diala Shamas

Tell us more about yourself. How old are you?

I am 23. When they built the Wall, those who were left behind it tried to remain connected to their community and started moving. These weren't wealthy people, so their houses looked like slums, overcrowded, without privacy; people become noisy and rude, very conservative. So I moved to West Jerusalem. I live in an old Arab house, right on the Green Line.² My grandparents lived somewhere in this neighborhood until the 1948 war.

Let's talk about B'Tselem. When did you start working for them?

I started as a volunteer a year and half ago. It was then that I met Israelis who weren't soldiers or settlers for the first time in my life. The Shooting Back project, which I now coordinate, was just being launched. We give video cameras to Palestinians living in dangerous places, near Israeli settlements or military bases. This is where acts of violence committed by soldiers or settlers are most often perpetrated. The guiding idea is to give them protection and enable them to gather evidence. A video recording can be used as evidence or a testimony.³ Three years ago we presented the first camera to the Abu Ayash family members from Hebron. They filmed the incident where an Israeli settler woman screams and shakes her fist at a Palestinian woman. She calls her sharmuta, a whore,⁴ and is extremely aggressive. Today we have eighty cameras out there.

How many Palestinians work at B'Tselem?

All field activists are Palestinian. But B'Tselem is an Israeli, Jewish organization. This is important, because B'Tselem intends its information for Jews. It is important that the Israelis criticize themselves. For this reason, other Israelis can hardly ignore it.

What exactly do you do at B'Tselem?

I coordinate Shooting Back. I know who has a camera. Every week I get in touch with these people to know what has happened in their area. I visit them. I know Arabic and I can cross the border between Jerusalem and the West Bank. If an incident had taken place, I have to know whether it was filmed. If, for instance, the settlers destroy olive trees, it is good if we have a tape to prove that. I make sure we are in constant touch with the media and the police. I work a bit like a psychologist and a bit like an ethnographer. I am the only Palestinian at the B'Tselem office.

Do any other women work for B'Tselem in the field?

One in Nablus and one in Bethlehem. It is difficult for women to work in the field.

Why?

Women are not treated seriously here. The people submitting the recordings to B'Tselem are usually men. This doesn't mean that women do not suffer from the occupation. It is simply that women are in the background here, hidden from view. When I walk into a home in South Hebron and say, "I'd like to hand this camera over to someone here," I know it will most likely be the man, the father. Of course, I try to change this, I do everything to get through to women too, but the status quo makes it difficult. Still, more and more women have been involved in Shooting Back.

Do these people accept you? In conservative religious communities women are almost hidden from view, while you don't cover your head and talk to men.

You've been to South Hebron, which is most conservative and religious. Girls approach me and say, "Are you sure you're an Arab? How is it possible that your parents let you come here with these boys?" There is a family in South Hebron. We met officially to hand them the camera. I was the only woman in the tent. The boys looked at me and laughed. They couldn't believe I was an Arab. They spoke in Arabic about me. I never felt so bad in my life. I never went back there; I broke contact with them. I have to be assertive. It was tough in the beginning, but now I know how to behave so that they listen to me and agree to participate in the project.

Why did they treat you like this?

You have to understand that in that place men simply don't talk to women with whom they are not related. Women there cover their faces and never wear trousers like I do. Suddenly I turn up and talk to them. They don't get such experiences there.

Exactly; your behavior, your work style, are in stark contrast to the culture of conservative Arab villages. ***That's right, but the response is usually positive. When I meet women there, it usually gives me a lot of pleasure. They are so curious about who I am and what I do. They tell me what they would like to study, what they would like to do in life. I am the one who can help them somehow, because my male colleagues have no access to these women, they can't even introduce themselves. To satisfy their curiosity, to talk to me, these women have to change the way they usually behave. None of us knows where to draw the new line in this situation.***

You are something of a stranger to them, a visitor from a distant, unreal world.

Sometimes I really feel like an alien. But their curiosity about me, my behavior... their encounter with me opens their eyes. I really feel people here are changing because of their contact with me and people like me.

Probably not only women. Those men who listen to what you have to say, they may not shake hands with you, but they will do the mental work necessary to process your suggestions or instructions. Do you call your work at B'Tselem political activism?

Of course it is political activism. I couldn't involve myself in something that I did not regard as important. This work has the potential to change things. I can also travel, meet people, visit places in Palestine that I'd never have visited otherwise. It is a paradox that due to my work for an Israeli organization I started travelling around my own country. My ambiguous ID, the fact that I am not an Israeli citizen despite being resident here, enables me to travel to the West Bank to Zone A, which is Palestinian-controlled. It is chiefly the cities – Hebron, Ramallah, Jenin. If an Israeli tries to get there, he has trouble with the Israeli police.

The city of Hebron is very much controlled by the Israeli army, protecting the 600 Jewish settlers living there. The life of 160,000 Palestinians is disrupted because of a couple of Jewish settlements in the city center. The downtown, where a large open-air market used to be, is deserted these days.⁵

It is funny; I'm a foreign citizen, but I also have problems with your border police. We used to joke that Ben Gurion Airport should be called Ben Gurion Checkpoint.

Yes, they are very suspicious there now of every foreigner because of the activity of organizations such as Anarchists Against the Wall,⁶ which is supported by overseas volunteers.

What is Israel for you? An enemy, an occupier? Because the Israelis at B'Tselem support the Palestinians...

Until only recently I thought of Israel as an enemy. It is easy to adopt the position of hatred. After all, I am a demographic threat, so my existence is constantly negated, my identity is negated. I am refused the right to my history. But I am able to see from a different perspective. This ability makes me a partner for the Israelis. B'Tselem is what I regard as the best in Israeli society. It is a manifestation of their self-criticism; they know the political situation can be different. B'Tselem's activities have caused many Israeli Jews to start criticizing their own state. Still, we differ, because I look at it from a Palestinian perspective.

You work with *Shooting Back*. Do you think the project can make a change? Do you believe in it?

We ask people to film settlers throwing stones at them so that they can make an official, evidence-supported complaint. A complaint made by a Palestinian means nothing. We know perfectly well that the testimonies of even ten thousand Palestinians mean nothing, but we still hope that this or that film will eventually change the situation. This project is a cynical acknowledgment of the Israeli legal system, despite its absurdity. One thing I like about this project is that it sustains a much needed spirit of resistance. The Palestinian communities experiencing occupation are filled with a sense of hopelessness and passivity. Giving them the video cameras, asking them to film things gives them a sense of being in control and a sense of self-confidence. It turns out the first thing they do when the settlers appear is turn on the cameras. This is an immense achievement. But how many more cameras can we give them? Several hundred? Will this turn into a social movement? I am aware that we can only go so far with this strategy. I want to study law to be able to act in a different way.

Do you want to become a politician?

No, politics here is a very dirty game – on both sides, the Israeli as well as the Palestinian. But I also know that everything is political here. I would like to write a new Israeli constitution. I am serious.

Can you do it? Israel has crossed every border and violated almost every democratic principle there is. The state builds walls on its borders, gives its citizens a "license to kill," places checkpoints and blockades on the roads, builds settlements on someone else's territory. People are talking about apartheid.

What do we do in such a situation? In a situation that is obviously horrible? Bring shame upon oneself by entering into a relationship with such a state?

Have you ever thought about living elsewhere?

I couldn't. I am connected to this place. I tried to fight it, went to Rwanda, thinking the country is in an even worse situation than mine. But I couldn't pull myself together there, find the passion in myself. It's nationalism. I feel that I belong to the place where I grew up, whose language I know, I understand these people, feel the same as they do. I couldn't be happy ignoring this.

What is Palestine's future? Did anyone envisage the Wall ten years ago?

No one expected something like that. I think the Israelis simply wanted to get rid of a problem, wanted to place us behind the wall and thus give us a state. If they only left us alone, let us live! But the Palestinians need something real, not just the chaos of small villages or towns intersected by the roads leading to Israeli settlements. This chaos is trying to call itself Palestine. What I would see as a long-term solution is a kind of multinational confederation. The nation state is passé today. The idea now is to create communities not based on ethnic origin. The Israelis must understand that they cannot go on forever using power to sustain their way of life.

We visited a settler family. They are religious people, observe shabbat. They live in the Shilo settlement, near Ariel. We talked to them and they told us that Palestine didn't exist, the Green Line was a joke, and the West Bank was part of Greater Israel.⁷ These people accept no political change. This is how they speak about Arabs: "People in Arab villages live like pigs; when they want water, they dig a hole in the ground. We build roads and power lines and sewage systems for them." How do you feel knowing that such a language exists?

It sounds like what the Europeans said about the Africans in the mid-19th century; pure colonial language. Well, I don't want to entreat these people to acknowledge that I am a human being. Many settlers employ Palestinian workers, trust them. They let them into their homes. Then they say "They live like pigs."

Do you think the Israeli majority accepts this situation, this kind of language, and the West Bank colonization policy?

I think it does. There is some sense of shame in that, but it is the biblical Israel after all. The settlers play on this sentiment all the time. They say Hebron is the city of their fathers and great-grandfathers, so how can they desert it?⁸ They use this trick to show that every Jew has the duty to protect, finance, and support them. If Israelis were really against the settlements, the civic movement against them would have been more significant. Yet the settlements are commonly accepted. People turn a blind eye to what the settlers do.

The settler population keeps growing. Apartments in the settlements are cheap, rent is low.

Yes. And children are born there are then raised in a situation where violence against the other side is accepted. It is precisely these kids from Hebron who throw stones at their Arab peers. They have a license for violence. They are actually encouraged by their parents to use violence. I don't know how to undo this. My parents' values are still deeply rooted in me. The same applies to those kids.

What should be done?

A mass evacuation of the settlements. The government mustn't keep repeating that the right time has not come yet. The illegal settlements are being built on land belonging to the Palestinians. The settlements are a means of controlling and stealing Palestinian territory. The government must take them away. It won't cause a civil war in Israel.

What do you feel when foreign people come here and try to understand the situation, when they present their views?

They usually tell us about nonviolent resistance. But this is what every Palestinian does every day. What else can you ask people to do?

What do you think about suicide attacks in Israel?

It occurred to me once or twice that I could do it. I also had moments when I thought, "I know why so many have decided to do it." Many people I know have joined groups organizing armed attacks. I understand them completely. I don't support their choice, but I understand it: men your age, humiliated, with a sense of hopelessness, who know nothing other than occupation. They cannot work, cannot earn money, and cannot leave the country. Whenever they go outside, they get shouted at by someone holding a gun. They saw their fathers and grandfathers being humiliated. This humiliation is something that most Palestinians identify with. It is a sense of total failure, humiliation on a daily basis. Passing the checkpoint every day, you beg the soldiers to let you cross. There is no point in arguing with them, presenting logical arguments or appealing to their sense of decency. They look at us as if we were animals. A couple of weeks ago in Ramallah I left a party at two in the morning, I was with a group of friends. We had been drinking and having a lot of fun. We were going to a friend to continue the drinking, but around the corner stood an army jeep with its lights turned off and someone was shouting at us through the loudspeaker, "Get out! Hands over your head! On the ground! Show your IDs!". You have fun, people feel great, and then a moment later some guy you don't even see gives you orders. It's inhuman. And they know that. Israeli society is militaristic, insensitive. It is a systematic policy of humiliating and dividing the Palestinians.

Let's return to *Shooting Back*. One of the project's aims is to do something about the constant threat under which Palestinians live.

Yes. Many activists confirm that the cameras protect them. The settlers withdraw when they see a camera. So it helps, if only on a small scale. And, perhaps involuntarily, we are causing the occupation to become a bit more humanitarian, tenable. The settlers still live there, only they are less brutal. The settlers know that their media image is bad. Especially after the Sharmuta clip with the famous abuse-hurling settler woman. But they don't have a sense that what they do is bad. Still, they have to be careful. So now the stones are being thrown by their children. Why? Because criminal law doesn't apply to children under 13.



11 MAR 2006 RAMALLAH PHOTO: EYAL DANON



12 MAR 2006 QALANDIYA PHOTO: UNKNOWN

فتح... حامية الشروع الوطني

الفائمة ١١




فتح

القادة الشهداء

أعضاء اللجنة المركزية لفتح

فتح... حامية الشروع الوطني




فتح

فتح... حامية الشروع الوطني

الفائمة ١١




فتح



11 MAR 2006 QALANDIYA PHOTO: EYAL DANON

Men pay dearly for the occupation, I mean the Palestinians, but it seems to me women pay doubly so. **Yes. It's a direct effect of the occupation, tough economic conditions, domestic violence; all that accumulates, women suffer. It is the effect of massive male acting out. Frustrated in public, men vent their frustrations on their wives and daughters. People have a sense that their culture and identity are under threat, so they want to protect them. That breeds conservatism. More women wear the hijab today than a couple of years ago. In some towns you won't see a woman unveiled. People no longer trust each other, the social fabric is disintegrating; the mosque is gaining power. All this is affecting women's lives and liberties. There has been a return to the traditional social hierarchy, which marginalizes women, because this is Islam. Women are not perceived as actors on the political scene. In Jerusalem, you cannot raise a flag on the street, make a speech, establish an organization or join an existing one – all that carries a prison sentence. It is a military regime. You can only gather in the mosque, and if you have no influence over the political sphere, you strive to have influence over people's private lives. Traditionally, the Palestinians have never been a conservative society. We were probably the best educated and most diverse society in the Arab world. Today we are heading towards religious orthodoxy.**

Are you a feminist?

Definitely so. Palestinian liberation means women's liberation. Women remain a vital part of the Palestinian liberation movement. Many men are in prison. This forces women to work and earn money to provide for their families. Many women's groups and committees are active. I believe that if the Palestinian state is created, women's rights will be guaranteed in its constitution. Equal treatment is the most important thing. That's what I expect from men. I expect to be looked on and spoken to like an ordinary human being. Being a feminist means treating other women with respect, not letting the stereotypes get in your way. Here it means choosing the shortest way to the generally-neglected woman in the room.

Tell me about the feminist movement in Palestine. **We have secular feminists and a women's religious movement. The latter accepts Islamic law, which is generally unfair towards women. All political parties have women's committees intended to make women more socially active. The feminist movement is not as strong today as during the First Intifada, but we have many women who write, many women activists, professors, local community facilitators. Among the religious parties, Hamas⁹ has a women's league. Women work for Hamas in the interest of women. Islamic feminists respect Koranic law. This is a noteworthy position, different from mine. I studied abroad and I am perceived as an imported, Western feminist. I have a lot of respect for women who decide to become feminists within their language, accepting the Koran. Unfortunately, organizations such as Hamas or Islamic Jihad,¹⁰ which have women's committees, in fact ignore women's rights. I fear the day Hamas takes over and we become an Islamic state. This would mean women becoming inferior to men. Hamas is very strong today, but in a situation as difficult as this people don't think about the consequences of their eventual rise to power.**

What are the stereotypes about Arab women and Arabs in general?

The stereotype of the Arab? We are brutal, poor, uneducated, extremely religious, primitive, and uncivilized. We are bad, emotional, chaotic, unruly. We are terrorists and we don't know about democracy. Arab women are submissive, meek, abused, and very conservative; they don't talk to men and don't date them.

And what is the stereotype of the Jew?

Jews are aggressive, impolite, noisy. Above all, they are all soldiers, soldiers, soldiers. This is what the Israeli is for the Palestinian.

What now?

Sometimes we win small victories. But even a victory can paradoxically have a harmful effect. If we win a case in court, the press writes about it and people in the US sigh with relief, "See, the Israeli Supreme Court revoked a racist government ordinance. So the Israeli democracy is alive!" By the way, George W. Bush arrives here in two days.

Yes, with his hand stretched towards the Palestinians.

As he said, "We will strive to achieve peace, but we cannot accept the existence of a terrorist state on Israel's borders." Did he mean Iran or Palestine?

The dynamics of power in the US is completely against the Palestinians.

When do you plan to change your operating method?

After completing my studies I may join Adalla. It is a civil rights organization in Israel created by Palestinians who are Israeli citizens. They recently issued a statement: "Israel cannot define itself as a Jewish state, because in such a context it is impossible to guarantee equal rights for all its citizens."

Jerusalem, January 2008

1 B'Tselem, the Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories, see <http://www.btselem.org/english>

2 The Green Line, Israel's border prior to the 1967 Six-Day War. During the war, Israel "seized territories inhabited by Palestinians. Jewish troops seized, *inter alia*, previously Jordan-controlled areas in the West Bank and East Jerusalem, and the previously Egypt-administered Gaza Strip"; *Izrael i Autonomia Palestynska: Wybrane aspekty polityczne i prawne* (Wrocław, 2007), p. 147.

3 The archive of video recordings made by Palestinians for B'Tselem now contains over 2,000 tapes. The footage is transferred to DVDs and made available free of charge to the media, members of the press, and filmmakers.

4 *Sharmuta* (whore in Arabic), the clip is available at: <http://youtube.com/watch?v=KUXSFsJV084&feature=related>

5 In Hebron, where the tombs of the Hebrew patriarchs, including Abraham, are located, the situation is very tense. In 1994, Jewish settler Baruch Goldstein opened fire at Palestinian worshippers praying in a Hebron mosque, killing many. Today the city is divided, and its center, in the vicinity of the Jewish settlement, is almost entirely closed to traffic. Palestinians are not allowed to ride their cars there; they must move alongside marked-off walking paths, with Israeli checkpoints positioned every 100 meters. There is a lot of anti-Palestinian violence in Hebron. When Israeli settler children throw stones at Palestinian kids leaving school, the soldiers avoid intervening because their job is to protect the Israelis, not the Palestinians. Trips to Hebron to experience the situation in person are organized by Children of Abraham, an organization of orthodox Jews opposed to the West Bank occupation, and Breaking the Silence, which encourages former Israeli soldiers to give testimonies about the atrocities of the occupation.

6 Anarchists against the Wall, an Israeli organization founded in 2003 in response to the plans for building a wall separating the West Bank and Gaza Strip from the territory of Israel. See http://awalls.org/about_aatw; http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Anarchists_Against_the_Wall. The wall was not really intended to protect Israel against Palestinian attacks, as much as it was another act of revenge against them – a punishment for the Second Intifada, in keeping with the logic of collective responsibility. AATW remains active, organizing protests on access roads to Israeli settlements in the West Bank, e.g. Road 443, called the "Apartheid Road," and in Palestinian territory, in places where the "protective barrier" is being built. Demonstrations are organized every Friday in Bil'in, Ni'ilin, Um Salmuna (exit from the Tel Aviv bus station, gathering point near the 4/5 taxi stand). Every month a cycling "critical mass against occupation" is also organized, in which AATW members participate.

7 Biblical Israel, the Land of Israel, Eretz-Yisrael, the land given to the Jews by God. The idea of Eretz-Yisrael has its roots in the Bible (see en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Land_of_Israel). According to its logic, the West Bank, Gaza Strip, the Golan Heights are not other countries' territories, but are Jewish property, and their annexation means continuing the Jews' covenant with God. Israeli state structures are deeply imbued with religious ideology, which affects its political and military decisions (Uri Huppert, for instance, discusses this in his book *Izrael w cieniu fundamentalizmów* [Poland: Stefan Bratowski, 2007]). The religion-rooted view about the need for a rebuilt Greater Israel has an ally in the Israeli military doctrine, whose objective is to maintain a buffer zone between Israel and its neighbors, especially Syria and Jordan. The West Bank is exactly this buffer zone. An exception to this logic, and at the same time its confirmation, is the Sinai Peninsula, returned by Israel to Egypt. The 500-km expanse of desert is a sufficient buffer zone, irrespective of its owner. This was confirmed by the 1973 (Yom Kippur) War, when the Israeli Air Force had enough time to destroy Egyptian tanks negotiating the desert.

8 The tombs of patriarchs important to Jews and Muslims, including Abraham, are located in Hebron. The Jews are the descendants of Abraham's son Isaac, and the Arabs are descendants of Abraham's son Ismail (Ishmael). This is why, according to rabbinic interpretation, Judaism is inherited from one's mother. Isaac's mother was Sarah, and Ismail's mother was her maid, Hagar. The Arabs' problems today have their roots in biblical times. It was precisely his son Ismail that Abraham supposedly sacrificed on Mount Moriah.

9 Hamas, Islamic resistance movement, an "organization combining Palestinian nationalism with an ideology of radical Islam, promotes the model of a religious Islamic state in the whole territory of historical Palestine. It does not recognize the State of Israel, opposes the peace process and the Oslo agreement" (*Izrael i autonomia...*, op. cit., p. 280). It is "recognized as a terrorist organization by the majority of Western countries, including the EU and the USA" (<http://pl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hamas>).

10 Palestinian Islamic Jihad, an organization "whose main goal is to free Palestine and subsequently promote Islamic values in Palestinian society. Firmly opposed to the peace process, bent on armed struggle for Palestine's liberation" (*Izrael i autonomia...*, op. cit., p. 280).

Shot By

Both Sides

// Francis McKee

* A presentation given during the first Liminal Spaces conference, Qalandiya, 11.03.2006

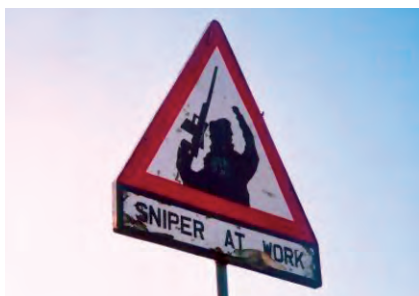
I'm really out of my depth coming here, totally, and even more so, what with the last few days... I come from Northern Ireland, so it'll be based on personal stuff more than anything else. Also, I come from a liminal zone, if there is such a thing. I come from an unapproved road which doesn't exist North or South; it is cut off from both sides, a kind of free space, and the army can't actually go into it. In my area the army can't actually travel on the ground. It's not possible because they'll get killed immediately, so they can only fly. But it's also the area where they dump all the dead bodies. It's very savage, so they began dumping corpses there, but things got more and more savage in the killings. They would mine the bodies afterwards, booby trap them, do everything possible to kill more people. It's a strange area. It's all common knowledge, that's what I thought before I came. I never thought about what I would show; I wasn't sure. Then fortunately this very old Scottish man died during the week, and I figured, well I can show you something from him, because he's quite nice, but totally irrelevant. So first I'm going to show you something totally irrelevant.

video segment: Ivor Cutler singing *Shoplifters*

That was an illegal download from the web. It seemed to be totally irrelevant, and therefore relevant, because having looked at it, I thought I might talk about Northern Ireland and what happened with visual arts in Northern Ireland during the troubles, but I couldn't find very much, and what I found was less material and more imaginative, more immaterial really. The most obvious thing I could find in terms of what happened in the visual arts was the murals and the mural history in Northern Ireland, and it began with a mural in Derry. London Derry is what the Protestants call it; the Catholics call it Derry. The point



1



2



3



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that might interest you in terms of the history of Northern Ireland, the troubles developed there because of the Protestants who live in Northern Ireland. The Protestants were settled by the English. I don't want to depress Palestinians, but the Protestants were brought 400 years ago, and they are still there. They were settled there because the Anglican English had come to settle, but then they would marry Irish people and within a generation they were gone, they just vanished. So the Protestants were brought in, only ultra-orthodox, fundamentalist Protestants. They didn't mix with anybody, they just kept to themselves. They held onto the territory and spoke to nobody else. For 400 years they have practiced this; their motto today is "No Surrender," and they mean it. They do it, and they haven't surrendered. People keep shooting at them and they keep on going. Totally true. Sad but true. There was a mural project and this is the mural... So this is the first mural, 1969, the army came in, the Catholics welcomed them, a few months later they'd shot enough Catholics for people to stop welcoming them. They realized things weren't going well, so they set up a free zone in Derry, then occupied by the IRA, and this mural went up, [fig 1](#) and the mural had a huge impact because of the sheer shock it elicited, saying you're entering free Derry. The fact that it could be free and that the army couldn't enter just created this area that lasted for about a year before the army bulldozed its way in and seized control. The sheer shock of its being free and unassailable, for Catholics was a major shock, and the impact never completely disappeared. I think it was the beginning of the realization that something could happen. This image – 'sniper cross' [fig 2](#) – is very famous, and it's been there years and no one can remove it because everyone's afraid to do so. It's true. It's not that there's a sniper near by, it's just that they say you'll die if you remove it, so it remains. As the troubles progressed they got more excited about this, and they had more to celebrate. I remember seeing the helicopter because it went right across the field. There was this huge gouge across the field, and then a burnt out helicopter and people were so excited, so this was a kind of celebration in a funny way. [fig 3](#) But it also was a kind of a newspaper for people, this one's from Mad Dog Adair and one of his friends, somebody White, and it was a good message to them. [fig 4](#) The follow through was very quick, and Mad Dog Adair is no longer dogging us, he is now dead. He was a very vicious Protestant paramilitary, and this was a quick sign and then he was assassinated. The Protestants immediately got in on this, they were quite jealous I think, and so they started their

own tradition, but their tradition was fascinating because it was a Protestant tradition, and they are anti-iconic, really. If there was a Taliban in Scotland and Northern Ireland it was the Protestants; they destroyed all statues, and they were named The Mainstream, no one ever got rid of them, you know, George Bush wasn't around. George Bush actually probably comes from them. That's what happened, they created this tradition, but it's far more emblematic. It doesn't have the narrative tradition that the Catholic mural has; it's based on this kind of abstract mural of the eagle, slightly American, kind of free missionary Rus-Prussian emblematic structures that were very Latin. This is funny when you consider the people: you can see the continuation of this template, of the emblem. The red hand of Ulster is very interesting, because the red hand comes from a Celtic myth about a hand covered in blood, which the Catholics had actually assumed for themselves, and the only bit the Protestants got was the hand. As the troubles went on, they began to assume the myth as well, so both sides began to claim the myth, and began to see themselves as various descendants of Celtic tribes, with this kind of unifying myth. *fig 5* This is another emblematic image – perhaps more like The Who's logo, kind of mod, it's protesting sectarian marches every 12th of July. Protestants march, and Catholics throw stones and shoot them, and this happens regularly. They march to annoy the Catholics, and the Catholics shoot them to annoy them back, and that's how it works, it gets more and more savage. This image is a typical Catholic one, I guess that's what I was talking about yesterday – in Northern Ireland there's a real identification with the Palestinian cause and they see a general link between the Catholic and the Palestinian causes. So these kinds of things appear. *fig 6* What also appears is that the Catholics make as many connections as they can internationally, and they connect. They invited the Zapatistas to come and make a mural which was disastrous, because they hoped the Zapatistas would make a hip hop mural being Mexicans. "You're a Mexican; you'll want to make a kind of little hip hop mural," they were deeply offended. So they keep making connections. Here's another example, and this one relates to Catalonia as well, anywhere there's a similar kind of cause they try to make a connection. The Protestants don't bother because they were trained not to talk to anybody. Seriously, they've made no connections, so they have become isolated, and this becomes more and more of a tragic situation as we go on. This is again more of what they do, King Rat, a classic Protestant from Portadown. Again a very savage man





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who, I think, was killed in 1997. His lieutenant is now in Scotland on the run. They began to celebrate more of these murals; there are hundreds of them, there's a great web site with a mural directory, with something like 82 files full of a hundred each of these things, and many of them still exist, again, because nobody can take them down. Here we have an image that celebrates women fighting for the Protestants, *fig 7* but there are also many celebrating women fighting for the Catholics, because during the troubles a desire emerged among women who said: "It's not just men that are being heroic, it's women as well," and this became quite a strong movement. Some were terrible, they should treat everybody connected with this mural. There's a real sentimentality and this is one of the worst I could find, but there's a sentimentality running its way through all of the murals. And here we have a more serious one but equally sentimental. *fig 8* It's about the hunger strikers in the 1980s where I think about ten or eleven Catholic hunger strikers died in prison after dirty protests, etc., and Thatcher let them die, because they wanted to be recognized as political prisoners, not as criminals. This image is very sentimental, it connects first with Christian mythology, and secondly it connects with Celtic mythology, an iconography of Celtic warriors. I actually got very depressed collecting these things. They are very impressive and very sentimental, and really when they surround you they become incredibly impressive. Things like this, the Catholic, or a Protestant one, again very sentimental, a huge Lambeg drum is in the back. The only thing the Protestants really have is this very large drum which they beat very loudly with whips. It's incredible, I have a video of it but it's boring. There are certain cartoon characters in there as well, and they are drawn from popular culture. These are all trained artists who have taken on the mantle of doing these things. Here, they draw comics, they draw in movies; and this is a Catholic one, but fascinating because it also refers back to the Kubrick movie (*A Clockwork Orange*). *fig 9* In the Kubrick movie in that scene, the tramp that gets kicked to pieces is an Irish tramp, and that's very resonant to the Irish because in England most of their people ended up as tramps and got a good kicking every three or four days by the English. It has greater resonance beyond Ireland as well, it brings it back to show that there is power beyond the Protestants controlling them, setting them off to do this. This is Eddie from Iron Maiden who's a strong loyalist, and again, loyalists are much cruder I think. Again something like this which is based on newspaper cartoons. And that is all of the



murals I'm going to show. They have a kind of humor and a real folk life to them. They can be incredible when you show them in a forum like this, they're really exciting. They remind me of Mexican murals for instance. Living among them is actually terrifying, because each one is a signal: if you come across the wrong one it means you're in the wrong area and you'll be lucky to get out alive. So they can also be oppressing. If you live in that area, they're a warning, the mural is a warning to the people in the same area, that you had better support the IRA.

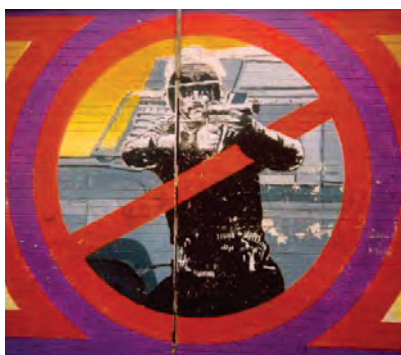
Any deviation from that and you will die. This feeds into how the area is controlled and what happens to artists in the area. I think there is very little real art apart from this kind of propagandistic work, because artists were considered too dangerous. To make art seemed wrong in the first place; you shouldn't waste your time doing that. You should go out and get a gun and join up. You shouldn't make art, but if you do, you better make art that really supports your side and tells the story from that side only. If you don't, they'll come around and kneecap you or they'll beat you into a pulp with baseball bats or they'll shoot you. That was a regular occurrence, I saw it many times, that's what happened to artists there. These are signs of a very conservative culture. If you take drugs the same thing will happen.



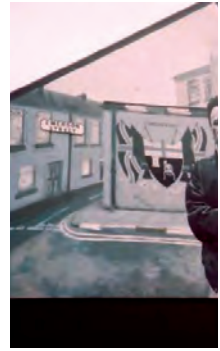
Both sides evolved paramilitary gangs or militaries, and they became real armies, but we always went way beyond any kind of notion of justice, defense, attack. They found that these are impoverished areas of poor people; if you wanted something done but you couldn't do it yourself, you had a whole unit behind you – if your wife was unfaithful, well you got your unit, you went and shot the guy. It began to become personal, it was something you used. If you didn't have enough money you went to a bank and you robbed the bank. If you didn't have enough beer, you stopped a lorry and you stole the beer. This is how it began to evolve, and increasingly, as peace has emerged, this is what's left. Because it is a poor area, it has become unfashionable. Because it's unfashionable, nobody cares.



Thus you're left in a poor area, the cameras have gone away; what can you do except go back to receiving unemployment? If you've got your unit, you've got a huge army behind you – you're not going to go on to unemployment. You start stealing, you set up fences for stolen goods, you deal drugs yourself. There's a whole system for doing that, smuggling goods. You get into crime, and that begins to take over the country. That's what they're doing, because people who had huge armaments in their lives are not suddenly going back to living on 20 pounds a week; they're just going to refuse



to do that. They haven't dispersed, they haven't changed, they just no longer have a political struggle in the same way, but they now have an illegal struggle. Within this I could find very little visual art, but I did find some very interesting aspects of other kinds of art. One was a group called Field Day Theatre Company which was a combination of artists, writers, poets, dramatists, and intellectuals who all got together and began to work out how they could actually create art in this kind of environment. What they came up with was the notion that they would create an extra state, that there already were four provinces in Ireland, so they posited the creation of a fifth province, and this was a province of the imagination, and in that province you can do anything you want and you can enact anything you want. You could try out different solutions and nobody would shoot you, which almost worked, except they could. That's what they tried to do. They began to write plays, poetry, they began to re-imagine what could happen in the environment in the fifth province, and it became a very powerful imaginative force for people in a powerful mental space. Actually most of the liminal spaces I've come across have all been psychological here; they haven't really been physical in any way. That became a place where you could actually try out different things. There's a beautiful Protestant poet who went back and started looking at the sources of Protestantism and realized that it was Protestants who invented Republicanism, not Catholics, so all the Catholic Republicans were equally horrified to find that Protestants had invented Republicanism, but it gave Protestants a completely different origin and a completely different political structure to consider as their root, rather than just being settlers there for the English and their colonial lackeys. They were able to begin to see themselves within a very different libertarian tradition and that became quite exciting for them. This had a real impact in terms of Protestant prisoners of war, for want of a better word, who began to learn Irish and then began to write really interesting tracts, discussing the possibility of speaking to Catholics and to the IRA and coming up with a different political structure. The best of these people were then quickly shot by the Protestant community, but for a moment there was a really exciting point where they were beginning to create a completely different sense of what Protestantism could be and to break away from what it had been. Catholics also began to consider different kinds of notions of what they could be, and how they could change their history and get away from their history, because the greatest burden there is is history. Beyond that, many of



these people then found themselves intimidated on the Catholic side as well. Protestants were shot by Protestants for daring to assume there could be an alternative Protestantism. Catholics were shot by Catholics for assuming they could be something other than what they were meant to be. A few escaped, such as Seamus Heaney. He escaped by actually positing the fact that we are all the evil enemy and there must be a kind of blood lust in all of us, and something that I think is true, that we are actually in love with the violence in Northern Ireland. We love the attention and we love, to be honest (I think someone mentioned it last night), the sheer bloodiness of it all. There is a sense that everyone is somehow complacent. Heaney had to leave the country and only goes there partially but can't properly go back. Seamus Deane, who was one of the prime intellectuals and friend of Edward Said, was finally confronted at gun point for what he was doing, and escaped, but now lives in America. Horn lives in England and is now a media celebrity. The whole thing was dispersed through pressure, as it was considered too dangerous.

Male Speaker:

What was the name of the group?

Francis McKee:

Field Day. They published a lot. There's a nice piece called "Civilians and Barbarians" about how the English adopted the notion of civilians and put the notion of barbarians on the Irish, which is a great essay. What Khaled [Hourani] said yesterday, just the way he spoke was very important, I think Reem [Fadda] pointed it out afterwards. I think that was very important, that it was a completely different way to approach speaking from the first two speakers, and I think the way he approached it was radically interesting, as opposed to the first two speakers [Khalil Nijem, Ilan Pappé], both of whom I enjoyed. What he offered was more of a narrative approach, and in that kind of narrative I hope for some storytelling and a way to actually present a different vision of things. If you get caught up in the language of what we saw yesterday, the planning, the legal, the pirating, you're immediately complacent in that language



and all you can do is struggle in that language with people who are deeply legalistic. You might score a point here and there, but you are caught up in the argument itself. I guess what Khaled offers is a different way of saying that there's a completely different vision to be obtained, and it changes the discourse entirely. Once you change the discourse, you can offer something more radical as a different vision of what you can be. I think that's important. It offers a different notion of identity. A lot of the work came out of Northern Ireland, but the best work was really about asserting a different kind of identity, asserting your own identity and creating a voice for yourself that you could recognize and think "Well, this is what it means to be a Catholic in Northern Ireland and this is what it means to be a Protestant in Northern Ireland," and to provide something to hold onto culturally. I think that was the deep importance or one of the things that survived. One of the most important areas that this worked in is music; it might be invisible to people outside, but someone like Van Morrison, who is well-known everywhere, and appears to be completely apolitical, just interested in singing the blues – is a well-known Protestant, but he joined The Chieftains who are well-known Catholics, and they produced an album together of Irish music, traditional Irish music, which to the Protestants really was seen as a radical betrayal, his doing this. Through this act he was offering some kind of notion of an alternative again for Protestantism. Those kinds of notions where you had to extend the identity, the possibility of what you can be culturally, are very important, even if you are not looking at something very politically or if you are not representing the political world or representing what is out there in terms of tanks and guns and buildings etc. You can do it without ever referring to any of that. So that's why the first irrelevant thing I think is relevant. One need not refer to what is out there in the street; there can be other approaches. The last thing I'll talk about, the thing that inspired it all; when Galit [Eilat] asked me to talk about it, I thought well this is historical. When I went back to the hotel room that night, the BBC announced that Protestant playwright Gary Mitchell has



just gone into hiding because they firebombed his car, then they petrol bombed the house of his wife and child, so they're all in hiding now. It's basically a product of peace, since with the peace, as I said, the Protestants don't communicate with anybody. The British have abandoned them. They are seen now as an embarrassment, these settlers, we don't want them, embarrassed they settled, wish they would go somewhere else, they're stuck there because there is nowhere else to go. They've been abandoned by everybody. So they still say no surrender, but there's no one to defend and there's nothing to defend, and they've been abandoned by everything that they've ever believed in. Their community is collapsing, it's imploding. As it implodes, Gary Mitchell, the playwright, is actually describing that implosion and how it's happening, and the betrayals that happen in a community when peace comes. Because when peace comes, you've finally got a paramilitary community, you've got politicians. The politicians move on to try for greater glory. Other people set up businesses, and the people who actually worked the guns become a deep embarrassment and they all begin to betray each other, and eventually the community really turns on itself. That's happening in the Catholic community as well. Gary Mitchell is in hiding at the moment because he actually portrayed it exactly as it is and that was unpopular. His problem is that they are Protestant, nobody wants to know him. If he were Salman Rushdie everybody would be writing about him in *The Guardian*, but because he's a Protestant from Northern Ireland he's got no publicity, nobody cares. So he's in hiding, his family is in hiding; he can't come out, but nobody cares. It is a really peculiar situation, but it's one of those situations which happen when you're no longer fashionable in a sense, and when peace arrives, peace is a very peculiar notion in Northern Ireland.

Moderator:
(Salwa Mikdadi)

I just want to mention the title of the session again: "Occupation, Segregation, Ethnicity, Places, Cultural Territories in Relation to Other Geographies." ... Francis, you mentioned being fashionable. I was wondering if you could elaborate



a little about that, seeing that Palestinian art is now quite fashionable.

Francis McKee:

I have been thinking about it a lot because we discussed it this morning. I've been asked to do an exhibition with Palestinian and Israeli art, as part of a season in Glasgow of projects about sectarianism, and it's stepping on a land mine. There are lots of problems with it, and I know that it would be the same if it were Irish, Catholic; would be the same if it were Catholic and Protestant. It's the sort of work that deals with the conflict or the war or the troubles. It is so specific that for people who actually live there it's a misreading of the situation. I know, Northern Ireland is a very boring place, incredibly boring place, and the troubles will happen, occasionally a bomb will go off, someone will die, and you'll turn on the TV and watch it; you don't go out and get involved all the time. Most of the troubles you don't necessarily see, and actually 99% of your life is incredibly boring and domestic, just ordinary life. Once you reduce it to "here is the checkpoint, here is the problem, here is the petrol bomb" you stereotype both countries or both peoples such that it becomes meaningless. Actually, if the work is that direct, it's also meaningless. I'm approaching it to try to find work that isn't direct and actually might be irrelevant in a sense that broadens the context. Maybe the direct work has brought a new context to it. People are beginning to see that there's something else there, this fits into a broader light that disrupts or changes. I worry about it being so direct, I have concerns. Two questions that might come up as a result, there are so many material things that you may see that can be dealt with, but how do you deal with the psychological things; they are so complex, such as we saw yesterday. You couldn't see what the problem was, you couldn't see anything. It's a completely invisible problem.

Photos:

A Directory of Murals in Northern Ireland by Dr Jonathan McCormick
<http://cain.ulst.ac.uk/mccormick/index.htm>

Studies on New Israeli L a



Photo: Hagar Goren *Sala-Manca are Lea Mauas & Diego Rotman

Landscapes // Sala-Manca



From the beginning of the 20th century, Zionism visually represented an ideologically-charged Eretz-Israel (Palestine), showing the local landscape as an idealized continuation of the biblical landscape. Until around 1970, Jewish Israeli art constructed an ideological representation of "the own territory," "the own landscape" where the Palestinian population was not represented at all, or became literally a part of the landscape. Since 2002, with the beginning of the construction of the Separation Wall by the Israeli government, a new border is being defined and a new landscape is being created.

The construction of a new form of landscape, which has the aim of hiding the view of the Separation Wall, is being tested in the so-called Olive Terminal, situated near Al-'Azaria, east of Mount Scopus, Jerusalem. A pastoral and "natural" name is intended to conceal the fact that an unusual terminal serves as a checkpoint.

In this part of the Wall the construction of a façade, of a Potemkin Village, is being tested along the "border" in order to prevent Israeli citizens from seeing the Wall. But the use of landscape construction, through painting and reliefs, is not only intended to create the idea of a peaceful wall in this case, but to make it disappear. You see mountains, flowers, pastoral images, and also the façades of Jerusalem-stone houses with windows which do not overlook anything.

In this project, Sala-Manca deals with the use of politically created landscapes, with these new forms of art-ificial or art-official and naïve landscapes, created in a very non-naïve platform. The platform is the message, and the naïve landscapes – the decadence of an official aesthetics of colonialism. These are the first steps of a new, fake way of life as proposed by the Israeli state to its citizens.

Prof. G. Vakulinchuk

Constru c



ction Status Unknown



// Simon Wachsmuth





Simon Wachsmuth opts for a location-specific and at the same time structure-creating moment of publicity for the conditions of participation in public communication. Struck by the ubiquitous plastering of the Ramallah townscape with long-faded but also newly stuck-over election posters, all competing over the project for a future 'Palestinian state', communication by means of posters emerged as a specific phenomena, to which Wachsmuth reacted by preparing 2000 posters, which could be distributed on the streets by local youth, and which were distinguished from the existing posters by their motif and by their bold, contrasty black-and-whites. Just as the practice of institutional criticism of the early 1970s is powerfully present in the displacement of views of concrete places to new surroundings, so can the coupling of these two pictorial worlds only be understood against the background of a functional concept of place. With the coupling of two picture-realities, discursive relations are introduced into the viewers' field of vision, which determine the paradox of their own public nature – one whose right to exist is disputed.

Franziska Uhlig

Israel

as a Gated Society,

Past & Present // Ilan Pappé

* A presentation given during the first Liminal Spaces conference, Qalandiya, 10.03.2006

There used to be a house in Tel Aviv called the Red House. Today it is a parking lot, as are quite a few of the historical houses in Tel Aviv. The Red House used to be the pride of the Tel Aviv workers. They built it in the 1920s, reconstructed it in the early 1930s, and turned it into the headquarters of the Jewish labor movement inside Palestine. It was not actually red; it was a white house, very typical of houses built by Jews on the Mediterranean coast in those years, a fusion of early Bauhaus motifs with local Palestinian architecture. From photographs it looks like a very beautiful house; it had three floors, and until the end of World War II it served mainly as headquarters for the local Zionist labor movement. In 1945 it was turned into the headquarters of the main Jewish underground – the Hagana. In 1947 it actually became the seat of most of the secret meetings of the Jewish leadership, that dealt directly with the question of what the fate of the Palestinian population should be in any future Jewish state. After the British decided in the very beginning of February 1947 to leave Palestine, the group of people who met there started to meet more intensively and to work more attentively on a plan to cleanse Palestine of its original population. It took them a year and a month, from February 1947 until the beginning of March 1948, to come to the conclusion, to two conclusions actually: one was that they would like to have a Jewish state over much of what used to be mandatory Palestine, which is present-day Israel with the occupied territories. They hoped to have at least 90% of the land, but dreamt of having the whole country. The second decision was to oust the Palestinian population from those areas. On March 10, 1948, on the third floor of the Red House, they adopted a famous or infamous plan called Plan D. They already had Plans A, B, and C; there were also Plan D1 and Plan D2, but I won't go into them. In any case, on March 10, eleven men decided that more than a million

Palestinians had to go. Most of these men are quite familiar, definitely to the Israeli public, and I think some of them are quite familiar names outside Israel as well. First and foremost was David Ben Gurion, the founding father of the State and Israel's first prime minister. Legendary figures usually found in the Israeli pantheon of heroism, such as Yigal Alon, Moshe Dayan, and others, were also part of the group, as well as some less known figures, whom today I think we would call Orientalists. They were the top advisors to Ben Gurion on Arab affairs, and played a very important role in finalizing the plan for absolutely cleansing Palestine. What these people did, in the 1990s had already been considered quite clearly a crime against humanity. Anyone who goes into the United Nations or the State Department website, and anyone who reads scholarly work on definitions of ethnic cleansing would agree that people who decide to cleanse systematically and comprehensively one group of people for the sake of another, are very clearly a group of ethnic cleansers. Ethnic cleansing is a crime. It is an incomprehensible story, which is beyond the scope of this talk, how an ethnic cleansing of half of the country's population, or destruction of half of the country's villages, urban neighborhoods for the most part – went unnoticed. Nothing in the second half of the 20th century comes close to that kind of elimination of a crime, such a huge crime, from public attention and public consciousness. It is also beyond comprehension because there were many journalists on the ground, there were many United Nations emissaries roaming the country, and there were Red Cross representatives who were there also from the very beginning. In fact, all these people wrote reports, very detailed reports on the ethnic cleansing. Obviously, they didn't use the term ethnic cleansing; the only people who used the term 'cleansing' all the time were the Israeli commanders themselves. All the direct operations that came from the headquarters in the Red House to the units on the ground were to cleanse, they used several Hebrew words: *le'va'er* (to uproot), *le'taher* (to purify, cleanse), and quite often, *le'hashmid* (to destroy), the following villages, and then came the names. But the foreign witnesses, so to speak, were just describing each locality in detail, and of course it's neither the function nor the obligation of the representatives of big bodies, whether foreign press or the United Nations or the Red Cross, it's not the function of the representatives on the ground to sum up what they see, they just have to report what they see in each locality, it's up to the newspaper editors and headquarters of the Red Cross in Geneva and the UN

Secretariat to write reports, and it's very clear today that in all these cases – whether it's the important newspapers of Britain and United States or the headquarters of the Red Cross, or the UN General Secretariat – there was a clear decision not to publish a full report of what was going on, each with its own arguments. The most sinister probably of all was the Red Cross' behavior, because the organization decided not to publish a general report due to the way in which it behaved during World War II, with its unwillingness to commit itself to exposing the concentration camps in Nazi Germany of which it was fully aware. So three years later the Red Cross had no wish to blame the Jewish national movement for ethnically cleansing Palestine, although its representatives on the ground knew exactly what was going on.

In terms of how orders were sent to units – Palestine was divided into twelve regions, each was given to an Israeli brigade; in haste the Israelis created new brigades to adapt themselves to the plan that they made, and each brigade had a very clear list of villages that it had to destroy and cleanse, and there was a very clear methodology; if you compare the methodology of expulsion in '48 to the methodology of expulsion defined in general literature on ethnic cleansing, there is a perfect match: both in the abstract description and in the Israeli implementation of the idea on the ground, the following measures were taken: a village was encircled and the army went in to locate men of military age – for the Israeli army, anybody above the age of ten was of military age. These people were then interrogated, some were executed on the spot, thousands were sent into prisoner-of-war camps. Only recently the Israeli army released documents that tell us in full the story of these camps, most of them were enforced labor camps and there were five of them in Israel. The rest were expelled, their houses were demolished, and mines were planted in the debris so that people could not come back. This was a master order, this was not a specific order for each village, this was a master order to all the twelve brigade commanders in the '48 operation to exercise on the ground. Seven months after this master order was given, 531 villages had been destroyed, 11 urban neighborhoods had been demolished, and 750 thousand people had become refugees. Three quarters of a million people. I mention these details of the past because I think without understanding what Israel did in 1948, without understanding the ideology and master plans of the Israelis in '48 – one cannot understand what Israel is doing today. What we are seeing is only the tip of the iceberg of what Israel is doing, but I

think it would be wrong to think that this is a policy that emanated from the '67 war or as a result of the last five years, as a kind of Israeli retaliation to the outbreak of the second Intifada, or that any policies which seem to be very extreme – such as expulsion, ethnic cleansing, and executions – are only in the margins of Israeli policy and thought. In fact they are very much rooted at the heart of Zionist thought and ideology. It is no coincidence that the 1948 ethnic cleansing operation was masterminded by the Zionist labor movement, and not by the right wing organizations. And it is not surprising that today the people who embody the center of Israeli politics – the leaders of the Kadima party – regard Ben Gurion as their father, their role model, as the kind of leader they want to be. What it really shows is that the idea that you should try to have as much of the place as you can, with as few Palestinians in it, is an agreed upon objective to mainstream Zionist thinkers from as early as the late 19th century. It's still very much at the heart of Israeli policy, strategy, and planning. What changes with time are the tactics, and what fluctuates, comes in cycles, is the very interesting interaction between language and realities on the ground. There are times when Israelis feel that they can openly use, as Jeff Halper told us today, words such as separation, segregation, and there are times when they feel that such words undermine their external image or their domestic image, or internal image. Basically this interplay is being judged at every juncture for domestic consumption, and whenever there is a sense among the policy makers that the image outside is a crucial factor in the overall policy. Outside usually means American public opinion, and American public opinion usually means the two houses of the Congress, and anybody who knows the basic feelings and emotions and perceptions in the two houses of the American Congress knows that the Israelis don't have to work very hard on language and on policies in order to receive the support of this component of the American policy making. Ever since 1948 the ethnic cleansing continues, but in different phases, at different paces, and in different forms. Between 1948 and 1956 there was a feeling among the Israeli authorities that a great opportunity was missed in the 1948 war, and the reason was that there were two areas which had not been cleansed. If you look at the map of Palestine, there were two areas which were not totally cleansed, and these areas are the two concentrations today of the Palestinian citizens of Israel: One area is called Wadi 'Ara, which is a valley that connects Hadera on the coast today to the city of Afula and to a plain called in Arabic Marj Ibn 'Amer and in Hebrew Emeq

Izrael (Valley of Jezreel). Along this road there were more than a dozen Palestinian villages, which were targeted by the Israelis in the '48 war and were supposed to be expelled and cleansed as well. Interestingly enough, during the 1948 War the Israelis tried six or seven times to occupy these villages and expel them but failed due to local military resistance. This is a chapter that even Palestinian historians do not recount for some obscure reason, a chapter of heroism of Palestinian volunteers who, together with Iraqi volunteers, protected these villages from one attack after the other. For some reason the Israelis did not succeed in occupying these villages from the very start of the war, whereas they found it quite easy to take over hundreds of Palestinian villages before and after May 1948. So the only reason that area became part of Israel is because under an armistice agreement with Jordan it was annexed to Israel with its population. A second area where the Israeli ethnic cleansing operation did not go too well was the upper Galilee and other parts of the Galilee, and the reason is that the Israelis left that area for the end of their military operation and I think much of their energy ran out, and since these were the last Palestinian villages to be cleansed, the Palestinian villages there already knew what to expect and put up a much stronger resistance against the expeller than the early Palestinian villages that had been expelled along the coast or in the inner plains. Some of the villages succeeded in remaining because of such steadfastness, and that's how we ended with what is called in Israel today the "Israeli Arabs," namely the Palestinian population of Israel. Most of the Israeli leaders who had already decided on the ethnic cleansing in '48 regretted that they allowed the Palestinians to stay in the Galilee, particularly in the Galilee. Somehow they thought that the people in Wadi 'Ara would eventually be given back to the Jordanians in some sort of an exchange. Several villages were expelled after '48 and until '56 as part of an attempt to reduce the number of Palestinians in the Galilee. The Israeli ethnic cleansing tendencies subsided somewhat between 1956 and 1967, probably the only decade in Israel's history that one cannot report any significant policies of expulsion, although there were of course expulsions of individuals who were suspected of political activity and so on. Then came the '67 war, and the annexation of additional parts of mandatory Palestine brought with them, quite naturally from a Zionist point of view, a wish to reduce the number of Palestinians in the area occupied after '67. Between 250 and 300 thousand Palestinians were expelled from their houses and locations in the West Bank and the Gaza

Strip after the 1967 war, and very few were allowed to come back. Ever since 1967, as many of you are aware, there is a kind of a creeping ethnic cleansing of people, Jeff Halper gave us a bit of information about how it is done in the Greater Jerusalem area, but these tactics are not just confined to the Greater Jerusalem area, they are exercised elsewhere in the occupied territories. Now I think that the fact that these tendencies are still there, very much rooted at the heart of the political center in Israel, and a part of policies of various Israeli governments, and are still, to my mind, part of future strategies and policies of the Israelis – go back to a concept that I suggested in the title, and that is making Israel a gated society. There is a striking parallel between the way that the early Zionists built their colonies in the late 19th century and early 20th century, especially in the 1920s and the 1930s, when they had a clear concept of what they wanted to see in a Jewish settlement at the heart of the Palestinian territory or homeland, and the overall picture or perception of the state in the eyes of both its leaders and many of its citizens. The early Israeli settlements were built more like fortresses than rural habitations. The wish was indeed not to allow too many Jews to settle in the towns, the wish was to push them into rural areas in order to create the new Jew, who was supposed to be an agricultural person, a peasant, something the Jews didn't do in Europe, and there was a feeling that Palestine served not only as a coveted homeland for return from the so called Jewish exile, but also an empty fertile rural area in which the Jews could be reinvented as peasants and people who work the land, compared to the jobs and functions which they had been holding in what the Zionists used to call the Exile Period, which in many ways was explained by most Zionist thinkers as one of the main reasons for the animosity towards the Jews – the kind of jobs that they had, and so on. There was a lot of talk about the healthy Jew, not just the new Jew, but the healthier Jew. Their settlements were built as fortresses to begin with. They were built as military installations, and they had all the makings of military bases, and there couldn't be a greater contrast between the Palestinian villages with their open access to the hinterland, hardly any fences, and the very secluded look of the Jewish Zionist settlements during the early years of the 20th century and throughout the British mandatory period. The thing that really made Ben Gurion such a great leader was his ability to take these separate locations in the rural areas, especially after he found out that most of the immigrants did not like life in rural Palestine, most of them prepared to live in the cities. In

1937 he prepared a plan with many of the people who would eventually sit in that room in the Red House on March 10, the same people, and they looked at the map and saw all these isolated Jewish settlements in the Palestinian rural areas, which was most of Palestine, and they said: if we connect all these areas, and we regard all the area between the isolated Jewish settlements as a Jewish space – we have a state, even if most of the land between the isolated spaces is not inhabited by Jews. It's amazing because this is the same strategy that Jeff Halper described to us today in the way that, not just what he called the Greater Jerusalem, but if you remember he had three Greater Jerusalems: the biggest Greater Jerusalem that he described for us is not yet Judaized. It's still Palestinian area, but he claims, and I think he's right, that if you connect lines between the various isolated settlements that we have now in the Greater Jerusalem area, you can see a future map in the eyes and maybe even in the drawing tables already of Israeli architects, which is totally Jewish despite the fact that there are large areas of Palestinian communities inside. The idea that you have a small gated community which is protected by a space that should be de-Arabized is, I think, something that is still in the planning in Israel. The gated communities in the Galilee are still isolated, from a Zionist point of view. I don't think they're isolated; they live very nicely with their Arab neighbors in a beautiful part of Palestine. From a Zionist point of view, however, they are isolated. They are becoming more and more gated physically, by the way. The fences are higher, they have private militias now, private policemen who protect them, especially after the spilling over of the October Intifada in 2000. They will never feel secure as long as there are Palestinian areas between the small gated communities. In other words, for the small gated communities to feel secure, a big gated community is needed; a big fortress that will be safe. It is safer to have the spaces de-Arabized, than just enclosing the Jewish areas. Much of this gated mentality is reflected not only in the architecture, and not only in the spatial planning for the year 2020, which is a famous Israeli plan. It's part of the *raison d'etre* behind the official educational system; it has to be a segregated educational system. It's part of the *raison d'etre* behind the welfare policy; that has to be segregated too. You have to have segregation as a point of departure for any state policy, because there is a dynamic of building a state that has not ended yet. The building of the state as a gated community is finding a way, eventually maybe even to open the small gated communities, by allowing them to live in a very wide and open

"safe space." This was discussed very openly in 1948: the need to have space which is safe, namely clean of Arabs, between the isolated Jewish settlements. This is not mentioned openly today, history changes, historical sensitivity changes, this is not a way to talk about it, but I don't think that, apart from change in language, anything changed in the strategy or the intention. It also has implications for Israeli immigration policy. As you know Israel has exhausted its Jewish resources around the world. There are hardly any more targeted Jewish communities in the world where the Israelis really hope the Jews will come over. When I say "Israelis" of course I'm talking of the Israeli government policy makers. They are very worried about the demographic balance. Rightly or wrongly it doesn't matter; I think that their statistics are all wrong but that doesn't matter. What interests me here is the phobia, which is what they call natural Palestinian growth and natural Jewish growth. Taken into account, I return to Jeff Halper's remarks on Greater Jerusalem as a microcosm for Israel as a whole, we're here about a situation where the Israelis want to annex large parts of Palestine for a final agreement, which will in a way increase the number of Palestinians in the state, so it is not just a matter of a balance of power that changes due to lack of Jewish immigration and differences in the rate of natural growth, but also because of the appetite for more territory, and each territory coveted nowadays by Israel, or the consensual Israel as we may call it, in the big settlement blocks – in each such area there is a Palestinian population. You can't get a square mile without a certain number of Palestinians in it. When you take into account all these problems of exhausting Jewish immigration, you can see how the immigration policy of Israel has changed. Instead of bringing over Jewish populations, the major target is to bring anyone who is not an Arab. This is why so much has been done in the case of the former Soviet Bloc to bring over Christians and Jews alike, as long as they are not Arabs. And I think much of it is now a part of the immigration policy of Israel for the next few years. To sum up, I would say the following: the plan of March 10, 1948, which was adopted at the Red House near the Tel Aviv coast – the plan has not been totally implemented. It originally meant a total de-Arabization of Palestine. I don't think that the major forces in the Israeli political system have ever given up on their idea to complete the plan. Nothing in their ideological outlook, their phobias, their fears, their perception of reality has changed, and therefore nothing has changed in their master plan of how to solve the question. It is true that they are pragmatic people,

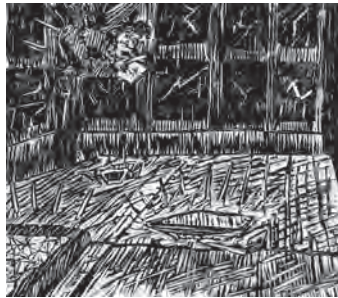
they know how to take ad hoc decisions, they know how to take tactical decisions and wait for opportune moments for taking more major decisions, but I think one of the things we cannot allow ourselves, and with this I will end, is to look at anything that we see around us – the wall, the settlements, the bypasses – as something which we can confine to the area of Jerusalem, that we can confine to a problem between Israel and the Palestinian authorities, that we can talk about problems that really are only on the seam between Israel and the occupied territories. The focus on a certain geographical area is accidental, it is not by choice or decision. The Palestinians in the Galilee, like the Palestinian in Ramallah, are still part of the gated communities problem, not part of the gated communities solution. This makes for a lot of work inside Israel in changing people's perceptions, ideology, indoctrination in a similar way. It was a formidable task, but people eventually succeeded in changing public opinion in places such as South Africa. Here the task is far more formidable, the balance between majority and minority is different as we know, the historical cases are different, but the fixation of the ethnic cleansing of '48 is as strong as the fixation of those people who built the apartheid system in South Africa.

Exquisite Corpse

// Yochai Avrahami

I woke up in the dark on brown Formica tables, in a room the size of which I was unable to determine at that moment. It was difficult to identify the blinking images on the computer screens cast about, pointed upwards. Flickering lights were reflected on the ceiling amidst unlit fluorescent bulbs. Scores of photographs were scattered in between the screens. I got used to the dark, and tried to assess the room which was lined with glass cases filled with books all around, from the floor to the high ceiling. I didn't know where I was. The windows looked Templar in style, but also Mediterranean. It could be eclectic architecture. I must improve my position to know more, I thought to myself, and fell asleep again. The fluorescent starters' attack woke me up once more. A series of noisy red sparks within small plastic units dragged in its wake a set of flashes. It culminated with a fluorescent rectangular row flooding the room with cold, bright light. Daylight in the windows exposed green branches and creeping ivies

1



which could be seen through the granular-textured glass interwoven with a mesh of ultra-thin wires. More details were gradually revealed: a magnifying glass and a video camera were placed on the table next to me. I lifted up my body to see better what was happening on the tables. Countless images switched in varying speeds on the screens: elderly people, sculptures, gardens, paths, landscapes, weapons, and works of art. The photographs scattered in piles amidst the screens are aerial photos. fig 1

The Collection Houses, Jaffa

The Collection Houses (IDF History) Museum exhibits weaponry and spoils from Israel's various military operations. Matti Hemed is the curator of the Small Arms Wing – a giant hangar presenting the evolution of hundreds of weapons inside glass display cases, reminiscent of the Marine Animal wing in a natural history museum.

We enter a small lecture hall. Matti gives in to the camera and begins to talk.

- My connection with the Uzi is this: In 1950 I moved to the Quartermaster-General Corps GHQ. During that time, Uzi was referred to us at the Arms Equipment Wing, and we referred him to Israel Military Industries (IMI), where his submachine gun could be developed according to specifications determined by

the Chief of Staff. Uzi himself participated in the Infantry Platoon Command course in 1949 with Lieutenant Colonel Meir Zorea; he reported with a submachine gun which he had made in Yagur, which resembled an MG34.

- The Czech...

- It's not Czech, it's

German! Because an MG34 is a *Maschinengewehr vierunddreißig*. The Germans name a weapon by its year of production – 1934. Later on they issued the MG42 in 1942, which everyone calls the Spandau, I don't know why. It looks very similar to the MG34, but its rate of fire is much greater. While the rate of the MG34 is 600-800 rounds per minute (RPM), and when you fire a burst, you hear taktaktaktaktaktak, the 42 can fire 1200, and you hear a simultaneous rrrrrrrrrrrrr sound. But let me get back to Uzi. Lieutenant Colonel Zorea liked the submachine gun Uzi built on the kibbutz. When he came to us, he realized that his submachine gun, which was similar to the MG34, must be reworked to meet IDF needs; and then he was given

a place to work in, a corner of his own, in IMI.

- A workshop.

- A workshop. He was assigned a tool operator who helped him physically, also in terms of contact with other departments, when he had to bend or twist steel, etc., and there he also built the prototypes. Two units: one with a hoe's stock, and the other with an ordinary triangular wooden stock of a standard gun. Later there was a competition, and the IDF decreed that Uzi's submachine gun was preferable. That Uzi is still in use.

We enter the Small Arms Hall. The large hall is empty of people, save a maintenance man who opens the showcases one by one, oils the guns, and returns them to the display. We naturally approach the showcases containing the first Uzis, and those of his competitor – Kara.

- Can you zoom in without getting the lamps? [He points out the reflections of the lighting in the glass vitrine].

- I get a bit of lamps, but it doesn't bother me.

- This is the K12 which competed with the Uzi. They chose the Uzi. Period. You see. After the prototypes, five models were manufactured initially.

2



- In the prototype, the sights hadn't been rounded yet.

- Here it's still straight, and here, and here. Only later they began to round them, to make it stronger. This is my bullet collection. You have every bullet, from this caliber to the small Russian caliber, 5.45 of Kalashnikov. The previous one is 7.62, very similar to our 5.56.

- It's like a stamp collection.

- True. Here you have all sorts of things, dozens, countless, all sorts of calibers, the Kalashnikovs of North Korea, of Romania, everything is loot taken from the Syrians, partly from the Egyptians. You see, Iran; an Uzi with Arabic inscription... It's hard to see without opening. It's from the Shah's regime.

- I can see.

- Did you manage? Look, a rifle was already manufactured back in 1943. A popular one. It was called *Volksgewehr*. Look at the bolt, look at the simple barrel. This one was made by Speer!! That one... Look at him, look at the way he puts the oil!... How much oil?!... That's terrible!!! Why does he put so much oil?!?!?

- Like models!

- Terrible. fig 2

The pair of heavy wooden doors painted in glossy white oil paint knocked noisily. I turned my eyes, but could see nothing, apart from the motion of an opening door. I raised my eyes and saw a strange fairy: a short, plump, smiling lady with wide-open, curious, great big eyes, equipped with dragonfly wings. A video camera was attached to her head, like a miners' lantern. She circled above me, gliding horizontally over the tables like a hawk, and then vertically, up the display cases, like a honey sucker.

- What are you looking for?
Can I be of any help?

- Yes please! But could you remind me what I am doing here?

- We must go on a mission!
She continued flying, the flap of her wings casting transparent shadows on the tables. Her words reinforced my feeling – I was in a military facility. There was a smell of machinery and gun-oil and plastic and metal there. Cleanliness for the purpose of lubrication.

- What's this smell of oil?

- Things must be ready for receipt of command.

- And what then?

The questions led to riddles rather than answers. I let it go. I stretched my awakening slowly, and enjoyed my semi-dreamy state. Reality was not necessarily the one thing I needed at that moment.

3



In the summer of 2007, while staying in Weimar, I learned that Uziel Gal, the inventor of the famous submachine gun Uzi, was born in that town. During that week I participated in a course on the origins of the Bauhaus. I first became acquainted with the evolution of the school's building, which began operations in an art deco structure in Weimar and evolved into the famous Bauhaus edifice with the clean lines in Dessau. During the war, the Nazis wanted to demolish the building in Dessau, but ultimately changed their decision, and instead opened a school for the SS command in situ. During the war Dessau was bombed due to its famous airplane factory, but also because of the sugar processing plant, one of whose products was Zyklon-B. The ruins of that factory are located some 700 meters from the renowned school, whose white walls were painted in camouflage colors in fear of bombings. fig 3,4

4



I contacted Iddo Gal, the son of Uzi (born Gotthard Glas) to locate the house in which the famous weapon inventor grew up. Iddo gave me the address; 45-47 Am Horn street. He told me that Uzi's father, Erich, was an aerial photographer in the German air force during World War I, and that after he was injured, he studied in the Bauhaus during the school's first years in Weimar. I didn't succeed in finding the house that summer. Since my return to Israel, I have been meeting with Iddo and others. We have been sifting through vast amounts of archival material, gliding at random over piles of aerial photographs, motivated by the intuition that this piece of weaponry inherited the Bauhaus genes. The gun's design, the materials, as well as the scarcity and simplicity of the constituent elements and operation, are a fractal in the aforementioned chain, in the symbiosis between self-defense and creativity.

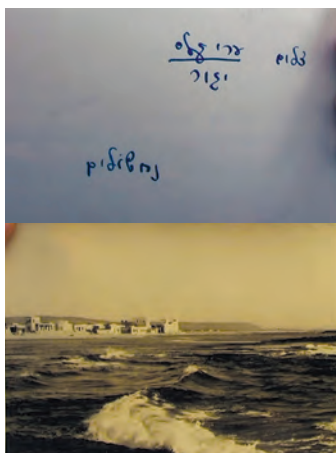
5



The Gal Family Home in Haifa

We open a wooden box containing etchings created by Erich as a student in the Bauhaus. Then I start wandering with my camera over contact-sheet albums from the years in which Glas lived in Acre after 1956. Iddo shows me sights from which Eri drew inspiration for his later Orientalist paintings. We move back to photographs taken during the journey to Palestine. One album after another, scores of contact sheets. The Munich beer cellars; a photograph of fishermen in Trieste, from where they left by sea to Palestine; aerial photographs from the Jordan Valley fig 5; a photograph of beehives;

6



Kibbutz Yagur appearing like a cemetery or a deserted village against the backdrop of Mount Carmel; a photograph of a seaside village, taken from the sea. The word "Nachsholim" (Heb. large waves) is inscribed on its rear, and it is hard to tell whether it refers to the waves at the foreground or predicts the building of Kibbutz Nachsholim on the ruins of the Palestinian village Tantura. fig 6

7



Erich Glas was born in Germany in 1897. He never met his father. When his mother, an actress, was hospitalized, he moved in with his uncle and aunt, who were also in the theater. During World War I he participated in one of the first flights to engage in aerial intelligence gathering photography. After sustaining an injury, he began painting the atrocities of war, was discharged, and began studies at the Bauhaus in Weimar. fig 7 As a young artist he aspired to reach the high technical proficiency of the German Old Masters, and therefore focused on etching, lithography, woodcuts and linocuts – areas which required an exceptional level of precision. He married Maria, a Christian hailing from a family with a Jewish background, and their son, Gotthard, was born. The family lived on Am Horn Street. Several years later they divorced, and Erich moved to Berlin. Gotthard stayed

Kiryat Ono

Berlin-born Ruth Rapaport lived in Yagur during the 1930s, and knew Glas. Today she is 97, living in a modest house in Kiryat Ono. She looks very old, is hard of hearing and has difficulty walking.

- He was given a fine welcome. They gave him a studio in the center of the kibbutz, where he worked. What did he do? He taught art and painted... One of the things I think he did in terms of work was take pictures. Very few people owned a camera in those days, and the members were given credits for having their pictures taken by Erich. In 1933-34 we came from Germany, we were a group of people, and he invited the 'yekkes'¹ for tea. He was a very nice man. He could tell stories and engage in conversations....

As far as I remember, his color paintings weren't his strong point... His graphic works were very good, weren't they? - With regard to the color, I agree with you, I didn't think this was his forte.

- Let me tell you one more thing. Since he came from Germany, and he was there, in the army, during World War I, the old guard in Yagur accepted him to the Hagana²; he must have known more than they did about war. There was some quantity of bullets that got wet, and it was a

shame to let them go to waste; there was a bakery in Yagur, and he thought he would dry them... He put the bullets there after they finished baking, and they started firing from the heat... (She laughs).

- Where did you work in the first years?

- At first I washed dishes in the kitchen. One of the worst jobs was to go to the henhouse, take a live chicken and look for someone to slaughter it. The best one was a Druze from Usfiya. There is a wadi there that goes all the way down to Yagur. He had a good knife, and I told him, 'Kill it'. Then they discovered I was good at weaving, and this was where I stayed, in the factory.

- Do you remember anything about him? How he behaved, how he fit in?

- He assimilated very well, because everyone wanted their pictures taken. Also, the guys from the Hagana were with him, he was considered someone who knows things...

- Eri studied at the Bauhaus. Did you know anything about the Bauhaus?

- Oh, the Bauhaus. It's the first time I hear that Erich studied at the Bauhaus. We had two women-immigrants who studied there. One was

in Weimar with Maria and her partner, Etta, who had a collection of old weapons from the days of the Prussian army. When the Nazis rose to power, Gotthard was transferred to boarding school in England. In the meantime, Erich studied under Hermann Struck and Max Liebermann in Berlin; he was influenced by his Surrealist-Expressionist friend, Alfred Kubin, and taught at the academy. In 1933 he fled with his new family to Palestine and settled in Kibbutz Yagur, where he changed his name to Eri. The young Gotthard continued his studies in boarding school, until one weekend in 1936, during a home visit in Weimar. Etta's brother, who was an SS officer, recommended that Maria send him out of Germany as soon as possible, and he was sent to Palestine, to his father in Yagur.

8



called Bella, and the other – Ruth. They helped us create beautiful weaving patterns that they learned there. Bauhaus is a concept, not just a word. It was a style... you know, when you entered a flat in Berlin, you had some piece sticking up, you know... all kinds of... and the Bauhaus put an end to that, and made everything straight and logical. Look. I'm 97 now, and I have the loom by my bed, and I'm really sorry that I don't have the strength to use it anymore. Recently I worked alone making so-called art... scarves and other articles of clothing... tablecloths... In the good times I had three workers. It gradually diminished... Now I'm like that, all alone. Everyone has already passed away. fig 8

9



During World War II he knew what was going on in Europe. His correspondence with Maria bypassed the censor. In 1942 he published a book of linocuts entitled *Nights*: 28 prints depicting a young artist waking into a nightmare with surrealistic scenes of the angel of death, bats and ravens. The sights are replaced by real images of rioting, destruction, and fire, culminating in acts of violence, punishment, barbed-wire fences and watchtowers in concentration camps. The book was published during the war (although it is customarily believed that the Jews in Palestine were unaware of what was going



on). It ends with a prophecy: the prisoners collect the arms, rebel, and leave the camp with the sun beaming behind them. fig 9,10,11,12 The knowledge he gained in aerial photography was later utilized, when he was drafted to take aerial photographs for Hagana intelligence as part of the so-called "Village Files."³ The aerial photographs which remained in the possession of the family portray mainly Jewish settlements and "Tower and Stockade" groundbreaking acts.⁴ Early military aerial photography by Jews in Palestine was a by-product of Glas's art classes at the kibbutz. Moshe Goren, who



was his pupil, remembers that Glas talked about his past as an aerial photographer during World War I in class. Goren later joined the Hagana, and became Chief Scouting Officer. He realized the strategic need in aerial photography, and harnessed Glas. His subordinate, Itzhak Eran, wrote about it in his book *HaSayarim* (The Scouting Patrol). Eran describes the first test flight, the type of camera which Glas chose, and the people on the plane: his wife as a "decoy" in an ostensible pleasure flight, which covered up the military aim, and Yigael Yadin. 5



The fairy continued flying in the room, fetching literature about weaponry, military tactics and strategies, and mainly information about analysis of aerial photographs. I realized we must prepare for an operation involving flight overseas. She seemed to have substantial information, yet surrendered very little detail, and things unfolded as in a psychoanalytic process: she was high above, and I was below, barely able to see her. I mainly hear her voice and the flapping of her wings behind me. At some point she ordered me to get up. I slid off the messy table, and could finally see her clearly. She was dressed



in khaki uniform.

- Time to leave.

- Where to?

- Follow me.

She opened the door, and the smell of lubricant grew stronger.



Ramat Gan

I received the transcript of Moshe Goren's testimony, where he maintained that Glas already flew over the Middle East during World War I. Goren's house is located in the

12



Paratroopers Neighborhood. An Asian man opens the door, leading me to a living room with a wooden ceiling, leather sofas, and a state-of-the-art sound system playing Mahler. An old man is seated on the sofa. Piles of remote controls and medication lie on the table.



- How did you begin thinking about the aerial photographs?
- Let me take you to the beginning. I was Chief Scouting Officer in the Hagana, and during that time we set up an entire system of aerial photography which was nonexistent theretofore; I introduced the change. We

had this basic problem, and decided to introduce aerial photography in order to obtain better information on the targets themselves, and not just how to access them. The Palmach⁶ was only interested in access routes; they patrolled nearby, but what was in the aerial photograph solved the problem for us. And then I remembered Eri. How he told us that in Germany he was...

- How old were you?

- I was 13. It's been 70 years since then... Yes. And he... Every Friday we had an hour with Eri. We learned to read paintings: to view a painting and analyze it, and he also told us that story... For some reason, I don't know why, it remained stuck in my head on the way back from school. I finished the regional school in Yagur, and worked my way up the Hagana ranks to Chief Scouting Officer.

- Before we return to the aerial photographs, can you remember what he was like as a teacher?

- Every week we had painting and music lessons. The school wanted to broaden our horizons... to bring us closer to culture. He used to tell a lot of stories. He said he knew the terrain, etc., etc., and that he toured the area where Jordan is now located back then. I

don't remember much apart from that story.

- He said that during World War I he toured present-day Jordan?

- Who?

- Eri.

- The territory was Jordan; the British were there, but the territory he talked about was there.

- During World War I?

- World War I, that's what we are talking about!

- Because I asked the family about this, and they know nothing about him flying over the Middle East.

- That's what he told me!

I didn't make it up. Also... we were very interested in painting. He was just a very gentle man and a good teacher.

- In the family archive I found many photographs he took, in your time obviously, but it's the first I hear about him coming to the Middle East during World War I.

- It's a fact! Now, regarding the aerial photographs—here we had a problem; because of the British we couldn't get vertical shots. Every shot was diagonal, and each part of the

photograph had a different scale. We managed to find a solution; it wasn't ideal, but it worked.

- Stories have it that Eri Glas taught about camouflage techniques, things he had learned in Germany, and that he painted guarding posts in the kibbutz.

- I don't know about that.

At any event, he emphasized visual art because he was an artist.

- How many flights did you have with Glas?

- I don't think I ever flew with him, not with him... I flew with Yigal Alon.⁷

- I know there was one flight with Glas.

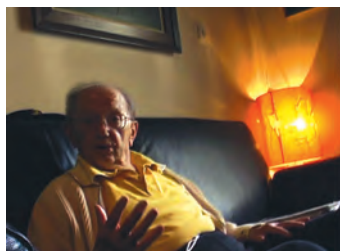
- I don't know. It wasn't with me.

- You never flew with Glas?

You mean, you only made the contact with him and other people flew with him?

- 'With him' is two different things, I am trying to differentiate...

13



- So please explain again...
- I wanted to tell you what I know about Glas; so, among other things, he told us that he photographed from the air in the territory that was then Jordan, the British. I don't know more than that.
- But didn't you later invite him to take photographs for the Hagana?
- No!
- But in the book it says that the first photography flight was with Glas.
- I don't remember, perhaps it wasn't in my time... it wasn't in my time, surely...
- Eran writes: "The initiator was Moshe Goren, who was Chief Scouting Officer since 1945. Goren sought an aerial photographer, and he found Eri Glas from Kibbutz Yagur"...
- It's all imaginary. fig 13

She opened the large door, and we went to the entrance of an endless hall with a row of houses at its center. They differed slightly from one another, but all had clean lines, mainly horizontal, and protruding balconies, rounded in part. Some were reminiscent of submarines, due to the round windows in their stairwells. The design was simple, aside from the green camouflage colors that covered them. As we progressed, the smell of lubricant grew stronger. At the end of the avenue stood an impressive building, similar to the other houses, yet much bigger. The rounded balconies were located on the

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roof, on either side, casting a silhouette of two arches. A small barrel-like structure that looked like a water tank was also located on the roof, closer to the left-hand balcony. The building with the metallic façade seemed to hover on two columns: one, plastic-coated, was where the entrance was; the other was metallic-constructivist, and supported the building on the right. A long, large pipe emerged from the left side of the building, like a launching apparatus leading outdoors from the vast hall. There were fences all around and heavy security. fig 14



Kibbutz Kfar Giladi

In the foyer of the Museum of Hashomer (The Jewish defense organization 'The Guard')⁸ we meet Batia Guy, the Museum's director, who had studied with Glas as a young girl. We walk amidst Batia Lishansky's⁹ sculptures, and climb the stairs to the roof. On the way we see broken glass – a reminder of the recent war fought in the summer. Batia tells us about the location of the museum which functioned as a watchtower. We enter a large room, which served as the office of the Shochats who were among the leaders of Hashomer. The walls are lined with pictures from the Shomer days, paintings by Israeli artists, and Joseph Trumfeldor's¹⁰ rifle proudly installed in an elegant wooden frame adorned with green velvet. fig 15

- In the kibbutz, everyone always knew he was a pilot and that he had studied in an art academy in Germany. No one knew about that specific school or about the Bauhaus style at the time. He was very impressive with his high stature, his dignified gait. He was considered an authority, a very pedagogical figure. There was also something mysterious about that studio above the children's house. After you called me, I began to think about the affinity between a military museum and art. It is a field that I have been studying ever since I started engaging in art. Throughout my career I have linked history and art. I tried to think of what I learned from my art teacher. Creativity and curiosity. Even if you create a weapon, it's an artistic act. The function it serves,

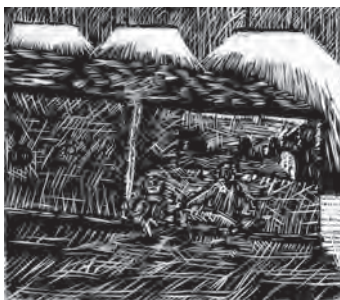
that's another matter. It's very present in art. As I said, you have a blank page, and something emerges from it. I can say about the problems of artists on the kibbutz, that they were considered idlers.

- Parasites.

- Yes, parasites, I didn't want to use such a word, but it's... until the Kibbutz Movement set up a committee whose function was to evaluate the quality of their work, and allot certain "art days" to the kibbutz. An artist could get an art day on his work schedule, because he was given a permit to make art. In support of Yagur I can say that they always treated art as a cultural asset, and therefore I began by saying that he was a teacher like any other.

Once we passed by the guard, we entered a tall and narrow metal shaft. Entry was through a strange elevator, where instead of standing up, you had to lie down across the compartment and ascend horizontally, one atop the other in zigzag. I lay down as well, while the fairy-soldier hovered on the outside, accompanying my ascent which was made in jolts, like bullets climbing up a magazine. I was led to an elongated, rectangular conference room with massive walls. To the right of the façade was a wide window with rounded corners, and the ceiling descended from its highest part to the rear wall on a slant. On the right was a round door, and inside – the elongated table. Left of the façade was a small round shut window with a round latch and a slit which looked like an emergency exit. On either elongated side, at the bottom,

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was a rim on which soldiers sat, speaking enthusiastically about rabbits that must be rescued. Several letters were engraved on the wall on which they leaned. We entered the room and heard a lecture delivered by a short, chubby man with a beard, a moustache, and a peaked cap, who spoke about the importance of national art and design for defense purposes. fig 16

17



East of Goethe Park, at the end of Am Horn Street, is the first Bauhaus house worldwide, built as part of the school's exhibition in 1923. North of it, between the third and fourth houses, a small path climbs uphill, winding left and then right, embracing a cultivated plot on the slope with vegetable crops such as lattice, carrots, and kohlrabi. Further along there are several huts, a wooden greenhouse with a smoking chimney, and the family home at the far end. I visited the place in summer 2008 and met the owner, Mr. Tipelt, a nice dwarf with a small moustache. He recalled Maria, from whom his father had purchased the house in 1973, with enthusiasm. Mr. Tipelt was proud of his father, who until a year before continued to raise vegetables and sell them in the City Square, as Maria had since the 1920s. fig 17

18



Sadness spread over his face, but it was soon replaced by proud gaiety. He said that he himself grows rabbits for food, and boasted his major client, Prof. Dr. Volkhard Knigge, Director of the Buchenwald Memorial, who is renowned for his gourmet cooking. I recalled that the previous year, before leaving Weimar in the summer, we were invited by Dr. Knigge for a farewell dinner. I was promised rabbit, and anticipated the dinner with mixed feelings of excitement and fear, but it was cancelled. fig 18

In one of our conversations Dr. Knigge recommended that I visit the Jewish Cemetery in Erfurt, and on the morning after my meeting with Mr. Tipelt, I went there. At first it gave the impression of a typical Jewish cemetery, with gravestones bearing Stars-of-David and inscriptions in Hebrew. I was afraid to be disappointed and feared the imminent rain. I climbed uphill to the funeral home, which had a portico in front, with two locked heavy doors at the center. The doors were flanked by two large marble plates bearing the names of local Jewish soldiers who died in World War I, decorated with helmet reliefs and gallantry medals. I hastened my steps downward, and then, as in a German Expressionist science fiction movie, oblique gravestones, with odd angles, prisms and cuttings emerged, calling to mind diamonds or pine cones. The more I studied this section, the more daring the style turned. These were gravestones from the 1930s of a specific bourgeois class within the Erfurt Jewish community, whose rest was penetrated by design extracted from cinema and art. Some looked like spaceships, others like the logos of industrial

21



20



19



plants fig 19 or parts of machines and décor. I was especially impressed by one large angry-looking gravestone made green by moss, with a spiky central part protruding upwards, and another part sticking out like a nose. I felt as if I were in a fictive air force base dominated by the souls of this middle class, which has covered itself with spikes, prepared fortifications for wartime, as if fear had given rise to a belief that art can offer protection. fig 20, 21

Okay. Now. Do you have information about that German rifle?

- What German rifle?

- The German rifle from 1934...

- From 1934?

- Yes, what you told me, the one like the first submachine gun Uzi made at Yagur...

- Oh, the machine gun!

- The machine gun, yes, my mistake. MG34 was a machine gun first produced in 1934. It was air-cooled, like other machine guns, but it was lightweight. Its initial design was conceived by Heinrich Vollmer, during the time he worked at the Maschinenfabrik Geipel plant in Erfurt, which no longer exists.

- And that weapon which inspired Uzi, does it exist?

- It doesn't exist at all, and I have never seen it, but from the data I gathered in my research I reached its size, magazine capacity, feed system; and when I saw the picture, I knew this was it, because it fit the data.

- You say there was an IDF specification according to which Uzi developed the weapon... What did that specification contain? What were the criteria?

- The size, that it wouldn't exceed 3.5 kilos in weight, I think, that its rate of fire wouldn't exceed 400 RPM, its general length...

- Is the rate of fire an economic consideration?

- Some developers want to have as small as possible a rate of fire to obtain better accuracy so that the weapon won't run wild... but the Germans even produced one with 1200 RPM.

- You say that he created the prototype in the kibbutz metal shop. Did he have knowledge in welding?

- He graduated from a vocational school, and he always fixed spare parts for the Hagana. He had a knack for such things. From childhood, I guess.

- Did he tell you about his childhood, or...

- Look, Uzi was a very reserved man. He never initiated talks about his developments. Since he was both a technical man and a soldier, he always knew what to do in terms of human engineering, what kind of a trigger mechanism, which blowback apparatus, how to fix jams... Now I am ready to show it to you. You need a permit from the Manager in order to take pictures. They are all in a showcase, and there is glass. This one you may shoot, but if you are using

a flash...

- No. no. I need the flash.

Can't you take the Uzi out and disassemble it, say....

- Here on the table?

- Yes.

- I can. Let me bring it here.

- So perhaps we should start with that.

- I'll bring it... You can sit and wait.

Matti left the room and went to get the Uzi. I waited, excited, and after several minutes he returned, holding a plain wooden box. He placed it on the table and opened it. Inside was an Uzi submachine gun which looked brand new.

- Do you want it on a bright or a dark background?

- It doesn't matter.

- What do you want to do?

- I want you to explain about the various parts.

- I will explain, look. The weapon is based on the blowback principle. It has a heavy bolt, and when you pull the trigger, the bolt runs forward, issues a bullet

by turn, feeding it into the barrel. Here is the return or recoil spring, which means that when I want to cock the weapon, the bolt is pushed here. Here is the safety-selector, it's hard to see: automatic, semi, and locked. In locked position I can do nothing. In semi I take it forward, and it is now cocked. Imagine there are bullets inside; I pull the trigger, and it fires. The finger is still pressed, and the bolt moves backward by itself. It pushes the bullet forward, and the bolt backward. Is that clear?

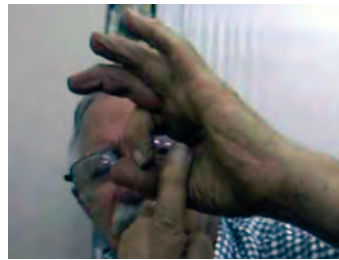
- Clear.

- Now, in automatic, which is like that – I'll demonstrate as if there are bullets, OK? I cock the weapon and it's ready to fire. When I pull the trigger, the bolt runs, the trigger is pressed, but it doesn't stop, it runs forward, fires the second bullet, and the third, and it does the movement. The bolt itself moves, but the cockling handle remains in place.

It doesn't move. That's the underlying principle. Now it's me, firing from the hip, but if I want to aim, I can aim. This is the front sight and this is the aperture-type rear sight. Come see.

- And what is the front sight, this is just the pointer?

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- A pointer! I can see it inside. I bring the end to the center, and if I lift higher, I lift the entire machine gun to fire there (Matti demonstrates: he makes a circle with the fingers of one hand and a pointer with the other, and threads one into the other). fig 22 Can you see what they have done here?

They put this weapon out of service. If I had real bullets... It is neutered! That means I cannot take the barrel off. Can you see that the firing pin is fixed, but what did they do? They ground it down so as to disable this weapon. Now let's put it together....

- Wait a minute. I would like to dwell a little longer on this story. What is this?

- It's an arrangement that when it gets here, this hits that and not the metal.

- And what is this material?

- It's a type of plastic, something very durable. It is intended to cushion the impact, it takes all the recoil.

- It feels like cardboard.

23



- Yes, and this one feels like Bakelite or cardboard. Not fragile. It is a fact that it endures. Look at the mechanism, you can't see anything here... You see... It was in semi-automatic mode, clear?

Matti fires multiple shots, and I photograph the movements in the chamber.

- So this is the weapon. Only five parts: the body, the return spring, the barrel, the bolt, and the cover. Look how easily it closes: boom, and it's already down.

- And the box...

- They did it for the present. He received it from IMI. It's not from us. fig 23

The Hagana Museum Archives, Rothschild Blvd., Tel Aviv

A bronze relief by Batia Lishansky is installed in the entrance, depicting a group of young men and women in work clothes, possibly armed, on the move, looking straight ahead. The archive contains six brown Formica tables with computer terminals. The archivist sits at the entrance. A smiling woman with the energetic gestures of a librarian, she happily answers any question and climbs the ladders to fetch books from the higher shelves lining the room. She has been working in the archives for over twenty years now, since she was a young soldier. The noise of a gardener's saw is heard from outside. I am handed a pile of original aerial photographs from 1921-1948. I have filed a request to video the photographs from either side, because they bear handwritten inscriptions on the back, which may help me prove that these are photographs

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taken by Glas. Following my meeting with Moshe Goren, who refuted the argument that Glas took photographs for the Hagana, I did not invest much effort to prove otherwise. I mainly enjoyed toying with the photographs before the lens: small and glossy manually printed black-and-white images, threaded on light blue Bristol paper squares pierced at their corners, much like an old photo album.

A photograph of largely unpopulated terrain, partly cultivated, with rural houses on the right. The cardboard bearing the photograph reads "a photograph of enemy territory, July 1948." I turn the photograph around, and on the verso it says in English "original" with a double underline. Terraced olive groves. I zoom in further, trying to capture the houses. The reflections of fluorescent lights in the room interfere. The next photograph is very beautiful, fig 24 almost abstract: an

agricultural territory divided into squares, occasionally crossed by dirt roads which interrupt the geometry. Each plot has a different texture, attesting to different crops in different phases of cultivation. I detach the photograph from the cardboard and zoom in. At the center of the field there is a house with an inner yard which could have been a strategic target. This photograph was taken from the airplane's belly, a vertical rather than a diagonal photograph. It could have been taken during 1948, without British supervision.

The archive manager, whom I asked for permission to take pictures, enters the room. She sends threatening looks, talks about me with the archivist, making sure I am aware of the rules. She briefly looks at the lens. At the bottom part of the frame there is a glossy aerial photo, and it appears immersed in a grayish puddle. I sense danger, lift the camera, and go on with my work.



The lens cap swings, revealing the inscription "Tel Aviv – Reading." From amidst the sands, the airport's landing strip bursts forth, the Dov Hoz Airport built by the Aviron Company, where Glas flew. Next to it is the famous Israel Electric Company building, which has recently hosted contemporary art events, running for the title of the Israeli "Tate Modern." The camera lands on the table. The Formica ridges lead from it in perspective onto the horizon. *fig 25*

A vertical photograph of a village in very high resolution. A magnifying glass makes the details clearer; and then comes a three-dimensional surprise. Some of the houses are inclined in relation to the lens. On the one hand, it is a two-dimensional image featuring a sequence of roofs, roads, and courtyard sections; on the other hand, it is three-dimensional, featuring façades with arched doors



and windows. The organic subconscious erupts through the slits of the geometrical at the village center. In the rural areas, the opposite happens: crowding of organic, round and oval forms – grain barns. *fig 26* The geometric bursts forth from amidst the barns in the form of small booths, tin huts. The camera hovers hypnotized, and then tires and once again lands between the brown Formica clods.

I arrange the photographs in a pile with a strange feeling of research disappointment. I leave the building on Rothschild Boulevard, and head north, towards the ruins of Tel Aviv's "culture plaza."

Notes

1 A term denoting Jews hailing from Germany.

2 An armed Jewish militia active in Palestine during the British mandate period until the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. One of its strongholds was in Kibbutz Yagur.

3 A vast intelligence project of the Hagana, as part of which extensive material was gathered about the largely rural Palestinian population.

4 A unique settling method of pre-1948 Jews in Palestine. A set of poles and a folding watchtower made of wood were driven to a given location by night, and within several hours a small settlement was erected, delimited by wooden fences, with a watchtower at its heart, thus introducing a new reality in situ, despite the objection of the British mandate and the Arab neighbors.

5 Head of Operations during Israel's War of Independence; second Chief of Staff of the IDF; an archeologist and a politician.

- 6 A scouting unit which evolved from the Hagana in the early 1940s.
- 7 Commander of the Palmach, minister in the Israeli government, and acting Prime Minister of Israel.
- 8 The first armed Jewish militia in Palestine.
- 9 Recipient of the Israeli Prize for Sculpture. Created busts of leaders and memorials embracing a wide spectrum of feelings ranging from oppression to revolt, defense, and creation, in social realist style.
- 10 A renowned Jewish fighter killed in the battle of Tel Hai. Attributed the maxim: "It is good to die for our country."
- 11 Yochai Avrahami, *Only in the Archive*, 2008, linocut
- 12 Erich Glas, *Get Up and Fight!; To the Weapon!*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book
- 13 Yochai Avrahami, *Moshe Goren in his living room*, 2008, video still
- 14 Yochai Avrahami, *BauGun*, 2009, linocut
- 15 Yochai Avrahami, *Trumpeldor's rifle in Hashomer Museum*, 2007, digital photograph
- 16 Yochai Avrahami, *Outside the Conference Room*, 2009, linocut
- 17 Unknown photographer, *Maria Zacarias in the Weimar Market*, 1925, black & white photograph
- 18 Yochai Avrahami, *Vegetated Bunnies*, 2008, linocut
- 19,20,21 Yochai Avrahami, *Gravestone in the Jewish Cemetery of Erfurt*, 2007, digital photograph
- 22 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed demonstrates the Uzi sights*, 2008, video still
- 23 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed demonstrates the Uzi disassembly*, 2008, video still
- 24 Yochai Avrahami, *Neon Reflection over Village*, 2008, video still
- 25 Yochai Avrahami, *Furrows of Formica*, 2008, video still
- 26 Yochai Avrahami, *Threshing-floors*, 2008, video still
- figures:
- 1 Yochai Avrahami, *Only in the Archive*, 2008, linocut
- 2 Yochai Avrahami, *Mati Hemed holding a copy of Uziel Gal's first submachine gun*, 2008, video still
- 3,4 Unknown photographer, *Bauhaus campus in Dessau: painted camouflage in the 1940s*, the Bauhaus Foundation, Dessau
- 5 Erich Glas, *Aerial photographs from Israel's north region*, 1940s, black & white photographs
- 6 Erich Glas, *Tantura village* (today Kibbutz Nachsholim), 1940s, black & white photograph
- 7 Unknown photographer, *Erich Glas wounded and adorned by the Iron Cross during WWI, sitting and drawing*, 1920s
- 8 Yochai Avrahami, *Ruth with Her Cat and Loom*, 2008, linocut
- 9 Erich Glas, *Retreat; The Death Say*, 1942, from *Nights*, linocut print book
- 10 Erich Glas, *Flames; Pogroms*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book
- 11 Erich Glas, *Concentration Camp; The Race of Lords*, from *Nights*, 1942, linocut print book

Betwixt

and Between:

Urban Liminality & the Future of Binationalism in Jewish-Arab 'Mixed' Towns

This essay analyzes how urban space, Jewish-Arab sociality, and local/national identities have been both represented and produced in ethnically mixed towns in Israel/Palestine. A binational borderland in which Arabs and Jews live together, cities such as Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Ramla, and Lydda bring to the fore, on the one hand, the paradox of Palestinian citizens in a fundamentally Jewish state, while suggesting, by the very spatial and social realization of urban liminality or "mixed-ness," the potential imaginarity of its solution. Through ethnographic and historical research centered in Jaffa, this article posits mixed towns as a political and theoretical challenge to the hegemonic ethnonationalist guiding principles of the Israeli state, which fails to maintain homogeneous, segregated, and ethnically-stable spaces. This failure, I argue, results in the parallel existence of heteronomous spaces in these towns, which operate through multiple and often contradictory logics of space, class, and nation.

Analyzed relationally, these spaces produce peculiar forms of quotidian social relations between Palestinians and Israelis, enacting counter-hegemonic local identities that challenge both Palestinian and Jewish nationalisms.

*'Me or him' –
Thus begins the war.
But it
Ends with an
awkward encounter:
'Me and him'*

Mahmoud Darwish, *State of Siege*¹

Awkward Encounters? Forced Coexistence in an Enabling Environment

Now more than ever, Palestinian-Israeli relations seem like a zero sum game. Indeed, for more than a century Jewish and Palestinian national movements have

been struggling to establish their collective identities as separate autochthonous "nations" with respective distinct cultural histories and so were they analyzed by sociologists, anthropologists, and historians. Thus, these projects of nation-building were conceptualized as antagonistic processes defined *only* by the negation and exclusion of the other. Implicated in this struggle for recognition and exceptionalism, however, under Ottoman, British, and later Israeli rule, Zionist settlers and Arab inhabitants interacted in a complex, multi-varied web of relations. This included, on the one hand, land purchase, dispossession and territorial feuds, and on the other, commercial partnerships, class-based coalitions, residential mix and municipal cooperation. Rather than a unidimensional conflict between primordial, self-contained, and largely monolithic entities, the two groups and their identities *ipso facto* constituted each other in a relational dialectic of negation and recognition,

Towns' // Daniel Monterescu

authenticity and mimicry, segregation and mix. Historically and analytically, therefore, the Palestinian-Arab and the Jewish-Zionist political collectivities and cultural projects not only *opposed* each other, but at the same time *created* each other, albeit in obvious asymmetrical positions of power. The relations of mutual determination and the history of contact between these communities have often been rendered invisible in Palestinian-Israeli studies.² The mutually constitutive relations and cultural encounter between the rival ethnonational groups and individual actors have been most acutely marked in ethnically mixed urban centers, such as Haifa, Jaffa, Lydda, Ramla, and Acre, where both Jews and Palestinian-Arabs have been sharing one living space and competing over limited resources.³ In these cities, from a condition of forced coexistence, a border-zone thus emerged which brought to the fore the paradox of Palestinian citizens in a fundamentally Jewish

state, while simultaneously suggesting, by the very spatial and social realization of urban liminality or "mixed-ness," the potential imaginary of its solution. This twilight area and intercultural "contact zone" is the theoretical and analytical territory explored in this article.

The highly politicized encounter between Jewish and Palestinian individuals and social worlds – which Darwish qualifies as "awkward" – can be literally read from various public representations that cover Jaffa's city walls. The three graffiti I photographed in 2003 and 2007, three to seven years after the eruption of the al-Aqsa Intifada, point to the persistence of a deeply rooted structure of ambivalence. *fig. 1* On the one hand, a series of five misguided swastikas on a side street in one of Jaffa's mixed neighborhoods expresses clear frustration and anger, but in a pattern of graphic mimesis which lacks the cultural and ideological knowledge required to draw the historical sign accurately and thus to convey the message effectively. The

1 Mahmoud Darwish, "State of Siege," in *Halat Hissar* (Beirut: Riyad al-Rayyis lil-Kutub wa-al-Nashr, 2002), p. 62.

2 The terms 'Israeli' and 'Palestinian' refer here, respectively, to Jews who are citizens of Israel and to Arab-Palestinians, who are also Israeli citizens, and who are usually referred to, in Israeli research and media, as "Israeli Arabs" (Rabinowitz and Abu Baker 2005). Arabs who remained in Israel following the establishment of the state constituted 13% of the total Israeli population, and now make up about 17% of the entire Israeli population. Today, 10% of the entire Palestinian population in Israel (approx. 100,000) reside in mixed towns. In Jaffa, for instance, the Palestinian population constitutes 24% of the city's total population. Despite of their population size, however, mixed towns occupy a disproportionately important place in Israeli and Palestinian public discourse and national imagination.

3 The term 'mixed towns' refers to the pre-1948 Palestinian leading and "modern" urban centers that were officially transformed from Arab into Jewish cities during the first years of Israeli statehood. The majority of the Palestinian population (95%) in Jaffa, Haifa, Acre and Ramla, including most of the local elite strata, were forced to leave during the hostilities of 1948. At the same time, Jewish mass immigration from Europe and the



Fig. 1 Public signs of impossible love and hate: failed attempts to draw a swastika (above) and a declaration of love – "Fuad Love OSNAT" (below)

result is an indeterminate signifier which exposes the drawer's confusion as much as it attempts to relay an ideologically

coherent statement. Rather than an icon of nationalist enmity, which invokes an internationally identified symbolic code, the swastikas

indexically point to the problematic political context of urban mix and social disadvantage from which they sprang. On the other hand, a graffiti which reads in English "Fuad Love OSNAT" (*sic*) celebrates a romantic relationship between a Palestinian man and a Jewish woman on the walls of a mosque, newly renovated by the Islamic Movement. Here too, however, the explicit choice to express their love in English, namely in a foreign and "neutral" language, while insisting on exposing it to the public in what might be perceived as a controversial and even subversive location, reveals a similar position of incongruity. These public expressions of love and hate are culturally inarticulate and attest to the political, social, and cultural difficulty of enacting coherent subject positions in Jaffa. The third graffiti, fig. 2 located in the same mixed neighborhood as the first one, seems to correspond with the figure of the swastika. Stating, in English, that "Jaffo [*sic*, misspelled Hebrew for Jaffa]

is the Jewish City Too," the graffiti invokes the Star of David to make an ethnonational claim on the city. This claim over space and entitlement, however, is qualified ("Jewish City Too"), and refrains from making an exclusionary territorial statement. Again, here, more than it calls for a Jewish takeover of Jaffa, the writing on the wall reflects a culturally and politically indeterminate position vis-à-vis the city's identity.

While these graffiti representations express opposing emotions and diverging political ideologies, they all share a semiotic failure in conveying a clear message and thus problematize exclusivist narratives of identity and place in the context of the mixed city. This inconsistency within the two ethnonational factions that define difference and identity in the Palestinian-Israeli city disrupts a unified vision of the city as either exclusively Jewish or Palestinian. Such examples, I argue, are representative of more general practices and interpretations,

which exemplify the problematic and paradoxical nature of the cultural regime that I term spatial heteronomy in Jaffa.⁴

How should these paradoxical representations and the social world that enabled them be understood? Addressing a similar problem in a different context, Ann Stoler analyzes conflicting reports by colonial officials in Sumatra and calls to "recoup the inconsistencies of these narratives." For Stoler, such an endeavor must address the following questions: "how do we ethnographically read these stories and write a history that retains the allusive, incomplete nature of colonial knowledge? How do we represent the incoherence rather than write over it with a neater story we wish to tell?"⁵ The methodological task that Jewish-Arab sociality and urban mix challenge us to undertake calls for making sense of such political inconsistencies and cultural reciprocities, without losing sight of the constant unequal power relations between these collectivities.

In line with Stoler's call

Middle East poured into Israel and settled in the emptied cities (see Morris 1987; Falah 1996).

4 I define heteronomy as a paradoxical spatial terrain whereby constituent parts follow divergent, sometimes mutually contradictory logics of class, ethnicity and social or physical proximity. Etymologically, heteronomy goes back to the Greek words for "other" and "law." Focusing on the problem of social and spatial order, I maintain that heteronomy should be distinguished theoretically from Foucault's concept of heterotopia, "of effectively realized utopia ... a sort of place that lies outside all places and yet is actually localizable" (1986), such as cemeteries, fairgrounds, gardens, and ships.

5 Ann Stoler, "In Cold Blood: Hierarchies of Credibilities and the Politics of Colonial Narratives," *Representations* 37:151-185, 1992, p. 154.

to retain incoherence and represent ambivalence, I argue that we should recognize (politically and analytically) that Jewish-Arab mixed towns have long been sites of opposing as well as complementary cultural and social processes. To decipher these processes one needs to focus on interactions and

Within this theoretical context I would like to suggest a third alternative that perceives Jaffa as a relational field in which nationalism and urbanism, identity and place are simultaneously contested and confirmed in everyday interactions. I offer a dialectical reading of the urban, national, and class

critique of the "dual society" paradigm in Palestinian-Israeli studies, which posited the existence of two essentially separate societies with distinct and disconnected historical trajectories. As an instance of the broader analytic bias which Ulrich Beck termed "methodological nationalism," I argue that this paradigm had chained sociological analysis of ethnically mixed towns to the category of the nation-state and thus concealed much of their interstitial complexities. The theoretical perspective of relationalism is proposed to address the deficiencies of current approaches to Palestinian-Israeli relations and thus change the focus of analysis from *a-priori* relations of exclusion between reified "communities" to a space of social transaction, failed mediation and binational liminality. In light of this interpretive paradigm, a revisionary conceptualization of the colonial encounter makes visible, as Albert Memmi has noted, the dialectic "enchaînement" between the colonizer and the colonized



Fig. 2 Faint Jewish attempts to reclaim the mixed city

relationships which have not been over-determined by national identities and state ideologies. The argument I put forth is thus not a liberal argument of multicultural peaceful co-existence, nor is it an argument of urban ethnocracy as total exclusion.

scales of position and action that produce Jewish spaces within Arab spaces and Arab spaces within Jewish ones, rather than one ethnically-homogenous urban space (as in Tel Aviv) or two divided parts (as in Jerusalem). Such a perspective allows a

that produces in the process multiple intentionalities, identifications, and alienations.

The notion of liminality – one of anthropology's gate-keeping concepts – is a state of mediation as well as a state of rupture.⁶ It describes an existential condition, socially and culturally defined, which centers on the threshold (*limen*). It is a state of limbo, "betwixt and between" normative structures of power. Marking prevailing structures of power, it also engenders an "anti-structure" which often involves the suspension of historical time and a break from "normal" routine. Liminality, however, is often a moment of failed mediation. Mixed towns may thus be seen as the most powerful example of political-cultural liminality and its simultaneous failure. Their Palestinian citizens form a "trapped minority" crucified between (the Israeli) state and (the Palestinian) nation. Within Israel they are excluded twice over: they are denied equal resources and political recognition from the

municipal authorities as they are excluded from political representation on the national level (in the Supreme Arab Monitoring Committee, for instance). Those who inhabit these cities are in a permanent state of exception.

As such, urban liminality has two contradictory effects, which may be labeled "disabling" and "enabling" respectively. It is disabling for it reproduces a place where Palestinians cannot express and perform their legitimate national identity. Moreover, it is seen, both by insiders and outsiders, as a place of social anomie, political fragmentation, and moral crisis. In addition to the prevailing social problems (such as crime and a lagging educational system), mixed towns lack mechanisms of social control, partly caused by the disintegration of the centralized family structure, which fails to serve as a mediator, and to protect its members. The result, however, is not the emancipatory dissolution of patriarchy and male domination, but rather the emergence of a

⁶ In anthropology, liminality refers to the quality of the second stage of a ritual in the theories of Arnold van Gennep, Victor Turner, and others. In these theories, a rite of passage involves some change to the participants, especially their social status. It is thus a moment of transition and transformation.

dissociative neo-patriarchal mode of domination, which is predicated on violent virility and territorial masculinity. In sum, mixed towns suffer from the disadvantages of modern urbanism without any of its benefits – fragmentation devoid of anonymity's freedom. Conversely, Jaffa's contact zone also facilitates binational social encounters and Jewish-Arab coalitions. Paradoxically since the October 2000 events, it functions as an "enabling environment" for new claims of equal citizenship, binational cooperation and Palestinian presence. While obviously unable to stand up to state-led attempts to Judaize the city and to market forces of gentrification, Jewish-Arab initiatives such as *Café Yafa*, *Autobiography of a City*, *Re'ut-Sadaqa* and others nevertheless produce powerful discourses of resistance and a symbolic re-Palestinization of the city from below.

Urban Colonialism from a Relational Approach

From a broader historical and comparative perspective, ethnonational mixed towns underwent several major transformations.⁷ Under Ottoman, British, and Israeli rule, they gradually emerged as a distinct city form. Bound by demography, discourse, and history, this socio-spatial configuration simultaneously symbolizes and reproduces dialectic urban encounters and conflicts.

The history of ethnically mixed towns in Israel/Palestine since the 16th century is an obvious manifestation of the power of urban colonialism and its vicissitudes in the Levant. In the wake of Ottoman rule and throughout the 20th century, the powerful intervention of European planning ideologies and Zionist projects of

territorial expansion resulted in an urban regime that geographers have recently termed "urban ethnocracy." This regime of governmental power and ethnic control is notably predicated on the radical division of urban space between the affluent and politically dominant Jewish settlers and the weakened Palestinian community, which is systematically barred from access to land reserves, economic resources, and policymaking circles. A critical anthropological and historical outlook, however, seeks to problematize such linear geographical trajectories. Diachronically, I argue, mixed towns evolved from *millet*-based ethno-confessional structures to modern nation-based configurations largely determined by the logic of the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. This notwithstanding, ethnographic sensibilities and ethnohistorical inquiry should make us wary of treating mixed towns as one monolithic unit. In the case of contemporary Israel, for example, spatial segregation,

ethnocratic control, capital accumulation, and political alliances vary considerably between Lydda/Lod, where indexes of segregation and poverty are the highest, and Jaffa and Haifa, which display more varied socio-spatial patterns, with Haifa especially offering pockets of more equitable distribution of wealth and access to property, amenities, and political influence.⁸ Geographers have usefully devised means of classifying different modalities of the "urban ethnic spectrum," from *assimilation* through *pluralism*, *segmentation*, and *polarization*, all the way to *cleansing*.⁹ To address this diachronic and synchronic variability, the perspective of *relationality* is proposed. As relational historian Zachary Lockman convincingly shows, in the historiography of Israel/Palestine, ideologically motivated scholarship has laid the basis for the model of the "dual society." Institutional sociologists such as S.N. Eisenstadt have posited the existence of two essentially separate societies with distinct

and disconnected historical trajectories:

The Arab and Jewish communities in Palestine are represented as primordial, self-contained, and largely monolithic entities. By extension, communal identities are regarded as natural rather than as constructed within a larger fields of relations and forces that differentially affected (and even constituted) subgroups among both Arabs and Jews... This approach has rendered their mutually constitutive impact virtually invisible, tended to downplay intracommunal divisions, and focused attention on episodes of violent conflict, implicitly assumed to be the sole normal or even possible form of interaction.

Equating societies in general with nation-state societies, and seeing states and their national ideologies as the cornerstones of social-scientific analysis, the "dual society" approach has been the main interpretive framework characterizing research on Israel/Palestine. This

7 Taking the Ottoman conquest of 1517 as a point of departure, we can identify six chronological urban configurations, each of which evolved within the context of specific socio-historic circumstances. The six configurations are as follows: The Prenational, Precapitalist Ottoman Sectarian Town (1517-1858); The Protonational, Mercantile Mixed Town (1830-1921); The Bifurcated Nationalizing Mixed Town (1917-1948); The Truncated Town as War Zone (1947-1950); The Depopulated Colonized Mixed Town (1948 to date); The Newly Mixed Town (1980s to date).

8 The main case study for Yiftachel and Yacobi's analysis, Lydda/Lod is the paradigmatic case of urban ethnocracy with high segregation rates and a radically disempowered Palestinian community subject to concerted attempts at Judaization. Jaffa, however, has only one third of its 20,000 strong Arab population living in a predominantly Palestinian quarter (*Ajami*), while another third lives in the mixed area of Jerusalem Blvd. The rest is scattered in the eastern part of the city (Tel Aviv Municipality Statistical Bureau, 2006). Haifa, which entertains a predominantly well-off Christian population, has become the home for an emerging urban middle class of liberal Palestinians who settled in previously Jewish-dominated neighborhoods and thus display a third residential pattern.

"methodological nationalist" stance is a deep-rooted paradigmatic epistemological position that cuts across the spectrum of both Palestinian and Israeli political viewpoints and operates by fixating social agents as independent oppositional actors (settlers vs. natives, colonizers vs. colonized). The relational analysis of Jewish-Arab mixed towns I put forth, while not disregarding the internal processes inherent to each community, avoids the blind spot of the dual-society paradigm and takes the relationship between the Jewish and the Palestinian population as its central object of study. Moreover, in this view, the Palestinian "minority" becomes not merely a passive ethnonational group marginalized by the state, but a key and active agent in the historical making of Israeli society and the Palestinian-Israeli conflict at large. An important clarification is in line here. While this paper proposes a relational and postcolonial reading of ethnically mixed towns in Palestine and later

Israel, such a reading by no means intends to overwrite Palestine's colonial history. In fact it proposes precisely the opposite: while drawing on urban colonialism as its point of departure, it reveals "the fissures and contradictions" of such projects. Mixed towns are exemplary sites where colonial regimes played their most radical role. This notwithstanding, it is also there that they (fortunately) failed in their attempt to instigate and to sustain a stable regime of complete ethnic separation. While such attempts at ethnic dichotomization were effective in terms of residential segregation in some cities, when it came to other aspects of urban synergy, they were often subverted by external resistance and internal failure. The relational reframing of Jewish-Arab mixed towns should be viewed in contradistinction to three different images of the city prevalent in Middle Eastern studies: the classical colonial city, the divided city, and the dual city. These tropes are not only popular and politically

efficacious metaphors of racial segregation, ethnic violence, nationalist struggle, and class division, but also serve as sociological ideal types and geographical models underwriting urban analysis.¹⁰ The classical model of the colonial city has been a major gate-keeping concept in such analyses. Following Fanon's foundational work on Algiers, urban colonialism has since been viewed through the Manichean divide between citizens and subjects, Europeans and natives, colonizers and colonized.¹¹ Much scholarly attention, for example, has been drawn to the role of urban planning and architecture in visualizing the rational power and civilizing mission of colonial regimes in the Middle East. Colonial demarcations between the (Arab) native town and the (European) *ville nouvelle* signified the superiority of Western modernity and, concomitantly, the absence – perhaps even improbability – of non-European modernities. The colonial city was thus only nominally one city, while in fact it constituted two

radically different life worlds and social temporalities. The violent climate surrounding Arab-Jewish urban relations since the advent of Zionism may induce observer and participant alike to subscribe to a classical colonial paradigm à la Fanon. While this may be an appropriate description of the situation in the West Bank and Gaza, citizenship configurations in mixed towns inside Israel, and in particular the presence of Palestinian citizens within them, problematize this political and theoretical perspective. Urban mix in Jaffa, Haifa, Acre, Lydda, and Ramla presents a historical and sociological context that complicates a space which no longer corresponds to Fanon's "world cut in two." By posing a theoretical challenge to this idealized polarized dichotomy whereby divisions and frontiers are "shown by barracks and police stations," ethnically mixed towns of the type we have historicized call for refinements of these analytical tools. An interesting case in point

is historian Mark LeVine's characterization of Tel Aviv as a colonial city, which appropriated and dispossessed Arab Jaffa of its land, culture, and history. While this was certainly the case in the first half of the 20th century, the classic colonial city subsequently ceased to provide a nuanced analytical framework. The victory of the Zionist forces and the ensuing Palestinian tragedy of the Nakba rocked the foundations of the social and political system in Palestine and gave rise to a new political subject – the Palestinian citizens of Israel. Henceforth, despite state-funded projects of Judaization, unbreakable glass ceilings, and limited mobility, Palestinians in mixed towns nevertheless chose to participate in the politics of citizenship. Thus, while Palestinian towns in the occupied territories, such as Ramallah, Nablus, or Hebron, remain sharply colonized and cordoned-off by powerful external forces, Palestinian residents of mixed towns within Israel find themselves in a different predicament

9 Geographer Fred Boal devised a classification system for the study of ethnically mixed cities which he designated the "Scenarios Approach," where a scenario is defined as an imagined set of ethnic circumstances in a particular city. A quick indicative categorization would subsume U.S. cities of the early twentieth century under the label of Assimilation category; late twentieth century Toronto under Pluralism; contemporary U.S. Black ghetto under segmentation, places like Jerusalem and Belfast under Polarization; and Sarajevo in the early 1990s under Cleansing. Within this simplified classification, Palestinian-Israeli mixed towns would probably range between *polarization* (Lydda, Ramla), *segmentation* (Jaffa, Acre) and *pluralism* (Haifa).

10 I follow Bodnár's excellent analysis of the theoretical relations between these key metaphors here. See, Judit Bodnár, "Metaphors We Live In: Dual Cities, Uneven Development and the Splitting of Unitary Frames."

11 This is best exemplified in Fanon's own words: "The settlers' town is strongly built, all made of stone and steel. It is a brightly-lit town; the streets are covered with asphalt, and the garbage-cans swallow all the leavings, unseen, unknown and hardly thought about... The town belonging to the colonized people, or at least the native town, the Negro village, the

vis-à-vis the state. Making claims of entitlement in mixed towns, Palestinian citizens of Israel tend to channel their resistance to party politics, civil society, and local-level (municipal) spheres, rather than to the politics of decolonization. While many of them invoke narratives and images of colonization, these are better seen as mayday calls of disenfranchised citizens rather than collectively organized calls of a national liberation movement. A recent example is the eruption in 2000 of the second Palestinian uprising in Jerusalem, the Galilee, and the occupied territories. Triggering Pan-Palestinian solidarity and frustration, it bred a momentary surge of heated demonstrations on the part of Palestinian residents in mixed towns and amplified those voices that called for redefining Israeli citizenship to include its Palestinian citizens more fully. Even these events, however, failed to mobilize urban Palestinians within Israel as long-term active participants in the national struggle. In terms of

patterns of political awareness and mobilization, then, mixed towns once again emerge as markedly distinct from colonial cities.

To recapitulate the discussion on the classical colonial city: urban colonialism in mixed towns has worked in different ways from Ottoman rule through British administration and ending with the Israeli state. Except for moments of radical confrontation (e.g. in 1936 or 1948), these cities, by virtue of economic exchange, commercial collaboration, and demographic inter-permeation, posed a serious challenge to the logic of colonial segregation. For cities like Haifa (where joint Jewish-Arab mayoralty and administration persisted until 1948) and Jaffa (whose relations with Tel-Aviv, as LeVine shows, were nothing but intertwined), the history of colonialism points also to its own political and conceptual limitations.

The divided city is the second powerful trope and urban archetype, one which conjures up slightly different images of separation walls, barbed

wire, and police patrols. They evoke barriers of race, religion, and nationality, encoded in dualistic metaphors of East and West, uptown and downtown, north side and south side. Represented by archetypes such as Jerusalem, Nicosia, Berlin, or Belfast, these towns predominantly reproduce formal discrimination through differential entitlement to citizenship and planning rights. The status of East Jerusalem is perhaps the strongest case for distinguishing the divided city from the ethnically mixed town. In addition to the explicit project of Judaization, which is more implicit in mixed towns, post-1967 Jerusalemites are not Israeli citizens but merely permanent residents.¹² The unabashed state violence that Palestinians encounter on a daily basis dissuades even the most optimistic activists and analysts from wishful thinking of equal footing and interaction. The third image I write against is the dual-city model. While the metaphor



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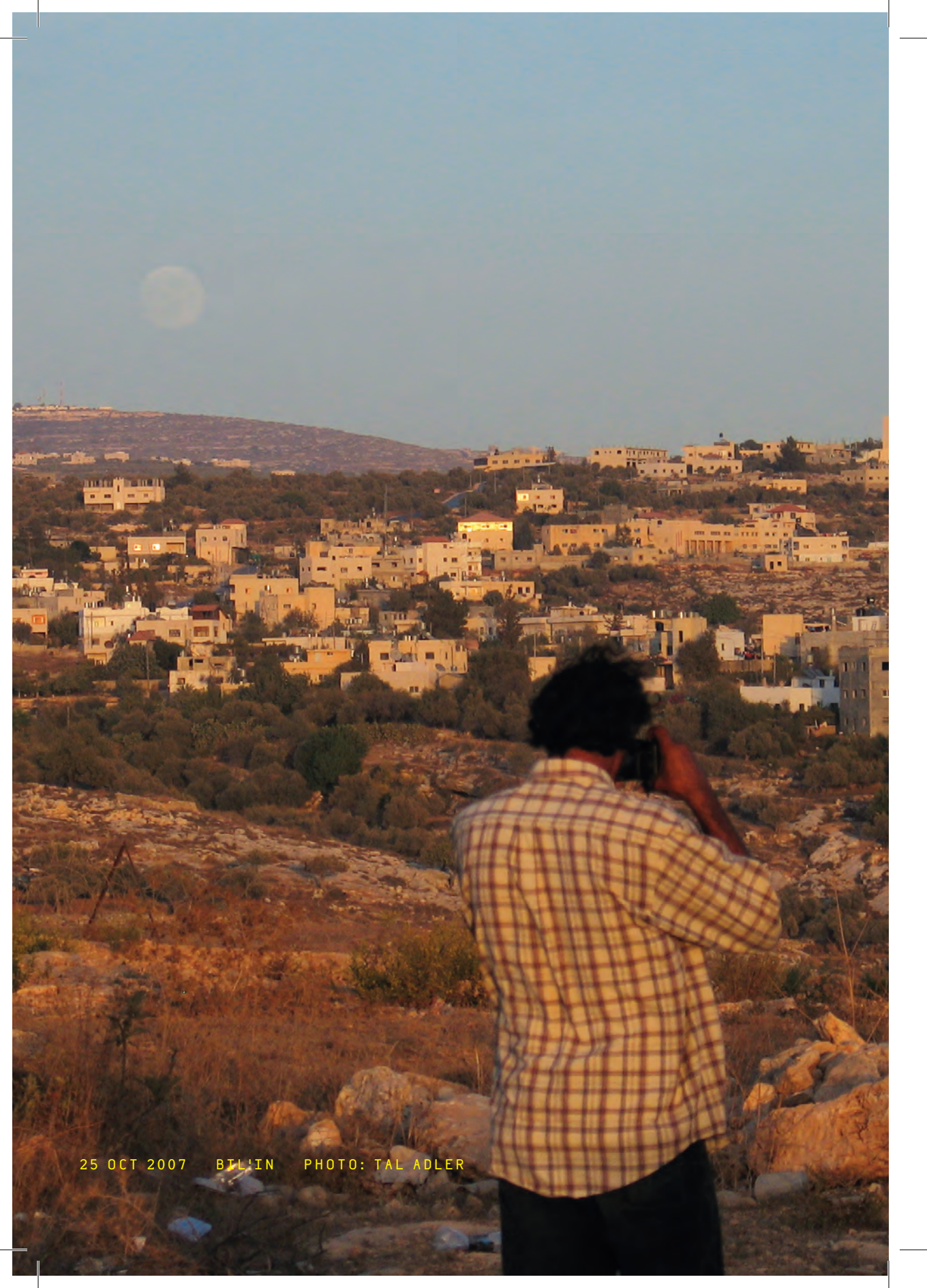
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25 OCT 2007 BIL'IN PHOTO: MAYA PASTERNAK



25 OCT 2007 BTL'IN PHOTO: TAL ADLER

of duality has been applied to colonial and divided cities alike, it became associated within urban studies with economic restructuring and the vicissitudes of late capitalism. In an age of globalization and increasing disparities between global North and South, the notion of "duality," which theorizes the contemporary city as a site of unequal production of space, successfully captures the uneven nature of social and urban change. Even in the context of advanced capitalism where this concept emerged, however, Mollenkopf and Castells – editors of the *Dual City* book – conclude that the dual city idiom is imperfect. As Bodnár aptly argues, "while there are powerful polarizing tendencies, dichotomies will not suffice: the intersections of class, race and gender inequalities are more complex."

The concept of urban duality is predicated on the primacy of capital-based dynamics and class structure, often at the expense of ethnic dynamics, cultural factors, and communal relations. Thus

the dual city paradigm often reduces multi-varied urban differentiation to the duality of formal and informal labor, increased professionalization and capital flow. This analytic weakness notwithstanding, in treating the period of decolonization in the Middle East, the dual city approach has greatly contributed to the understanding of the agonistic transition from colonial occupation to postcolonial self-governance. In her *Urban Apartheid in Morocco*, Abu-Lughod argues that the "caste cleavages" of social and spatial segregation instituted by the French in 1912 were progressively transformed by the late 1940s into a "complex but rigid system of class stratification along ethnic lines." This, however, was replaced in turn by systemic class-based residential separation, which emerged in the 1970s.

In the context of ethnically mixed towns in Palestine/Israel, the continual presence of ethnonational conflict does not allow class to overwhelm or supersede ethnicity. The creeping neoliberalization

medina, the reservation, is a place of ill-fame, peopled by men of evil repute. They are born there, it matters little where and how they die there; it matters not where, nor how. It is a world without spaciousness; men there live on top of each other... The native town is a crouching village, a town on its knees, a town wallowing in the mire. It is a town of niggers and dirty Arabs."

12 See, Human Rights Organization B'Tselem's definition of permanent residency vs. citizenship. "Permanent residency differs substantially from citizenship. The primary right granted to permanent residents is to live and work in Israel without the necessity of special permits. Permanent residents are also entitled to social benefits provided by the National Insurance Institute and to health insurance. Permanent residents have the right to vote in local elections, but not in elections to Knesset [Parliament]. Unlike citizenship, permanent residency is only passed on to the holder's children where the holder meets certain conditions. A permanent resident with a non-resident spouse must submit, on behalf of the spouse, a request for family unification. Only citizens are granted the right to return to Israel at any time" (www.btselem.org/English/Jerusalem/Legal_Status.asp).

Con f

of the Israeli economy and real estate in the last two decades, the recent emergence of a new Palestinian middle class, and consequentially the growing number of young Palestinian professionals who choose to live in mixed towns have introduced class into an already complicated urban matrix, which has become more fragmented and diversified rather than dual. Thus the model of the dual city, as well as of the divided city or the colonial city, does little to provide an adequate framework for explaining and interpreting residential choices, urban planning dynamics, electoral coalitions, and urban violence in these towns.

To conclude, I argue that research on this issue can greatly benefit from a new comparative conceptualization of mixed towns as a historically specific socio-spatial configuration. Insisting on the importance of a joint analytic framework, it is important to bear in mind that these towns emerged de facto – that is to say, not as a theoretical, ideological, or

deterministic model but in practice – as a new type of city that resulted from the historical hybrid superposition of old and new urban forms.

Out of the collusion of the old Ottoman sectarian urban regime and the new national, modernizing, and capitalist order (both Palestinian and Zionist) – there emerged in the first half of the 20th century and, more dramatically, since 1948, a new heteronomous urban form. Bearing traces of the old one, it was in fact a fragmented amalgam of various city forms.

If the story of mixed towns has a moral to it, it is perhaps that nationalistic attempts at effacing and rewriting history as part of an effort to create a country (or at least a cityscape) which is ethnically cleansed are bound to fail. This could perhaps provide a "mixed" space of hope.

fronting the Iconic

Myth : Revisiting Jaffa // Salim

Virtual Return Fifteen Years Later [Salim Tamari]

My reflections on the "virtual return" to Jaffa were written over a decade ago in an anti-nostalgic mode. These remarks, which included a dialogue with Rema Hammami, were meant to mock (or rather humor) the obsessions of Palestinian returnees, particularly after the Oslo agreement of 1993-94, with their past, and with the iconic status that the historical city of Jaffa acquired in their imagination as a Paradise Lost. Certainly the present marginalized status of the city, as a slum extension of Tel Aviv, and the squalor in which the Arab inhabitants live, created an understandable contrast with this past.

Since these lines were written, the situation has deteriorated considerably. Many of those "returnees" have either given up their hope to settle in Palestine, many of them returning with despair to their adopted cities and countries. Those of us who live in the Occupied Territories also began to experience the blockade in a very personal way. Jaffa, Jerusalem, as well as all of the Israeli territories were now banned destinations. Permits to enter these areas were scarcely given. Even though I was born in Jaffa, and part of my family still lives there, it is no longer possible for me to get there, except by infiltration.

One of those few occasions took place last winter (2007) when the group Liminal Space in collaboration with the Palestinian Association for Contemporary Art (PACA) organized a field trip to Jaffa, Ramla, and Lydda (Lod). The highlight of the event was a walk into the gray zone (liminal indeed) of Manshiya, located on the borderline between Jaffa and Tel Aviv, now reconstituted by the municipality of Tel Aviv as a high rise tourist area. Only the resilient and stubborn mosque of Hassan Bek (the ruthless Ottoman governor) is still standing as a marker of a bygone era. The trip ended in a visit to the gentrification schemes of old Jaffa. The old port, Ajami, and Jabaliyyeh are now being relentlessly pursued by developers and contractors, hounding the remnants of the pauperized Palestinian community in order to build expensive mansions for the Tel Aviv and international jet set, seeking an exotic taste of the Orient, without experiencing the danger of living in the Third World. This 2007 visit to Jaffa reinforced earlier impressions, but also created new ones that challenged earlier perceptions. At the heart of the new situation is the manner in which the current changes drastically limit the housing options open to the poorer population (mostly Arab) of the city.

One also witnesses a sense of encirclement and community disintegration in Ramla and Lydda – both of which were included in this visit. The highlight of the visit was a night tour of Ramla led by the city's young urban planner, Buthaina Dabit, who has been leading a campaign against the city's marginalization by the municipal

Tamari & Rema Hammami

authorities. This year I also became aware of the triangle that these three cities constitute for the Palestinian Arab community. There is a great deal of mobility between them, as there was over sixty years ago. But in Jaffa there is constant pressure, by the municipality and planners, to push the remnants of the Arab community from the marina, as well as from Ajami and Jaballiyeh to other points inland – into the housing projects near Abu Kebir, and further east, towards Lydda and Ramla. In Ramla, the Arabs tend to concentrate into the area of the Ghetto, as their zone is semi-officially known (it is thus designated on official municipal maps). Both cities have also become dumping grounds for collaborators, who have needed Israeli protection since the first Intifada (1987-92). This explains, to a large extent, why drug lords and the Arab criminal underworld is concentrated in Ramla and Lydda.

One feels, however, that people are fighting back. The gentrification schemes, with their urban renewal and transplantation schemes of poor communities, have been resisted on a daily basis, sometimes with success. Youth clubs in the three cities have been fighting drug pushers and apathy. The spirit of the people, however, seems to be broken, as the community itself has become helpless and lethargic. The main hope of young people is to get out. This malaise is beautifully exemplified in a film by Kamal Ja'afari, *al Sateh* (The Roof, 2007), an intimate portrait of daily life in Ramla, Jafari's hometown. The film is a double take on the author's own double exile: his life

in Germany as a professional filmmaker, and his own internal exile in Ramla's squalid existence. Jafari also makes the important observation of the triangular relationship that existed historically between Ramla, Jaffa, and Lydda. *Historical* because these comprised the urban network that connected the central coast of Palestine in a matrix of commerce, transport, and social bonding, creating an unparalleled modernity that was disrupted by war. *Contemporary* because the remnants of the Arab community after the 1948 war continued to seek strategies of survival in a much narrower corridor that linked the three cities. You can read volumes about it in monographs on urban (mis)planning, and urban degradation, but seeing the film allows you to capture the scene in one glance. Once again, the literary (and cinematic) imagination proves superior to social science.

**A
HISTORY LESSON
(SALIM)**

The city of Jaffa was the most important commercial and cultural center of Arab Palestine before the 1948 war. At the end of April of that year, the city was captured by the combined Jewish forces of the Haganah, Irgun, and Lehi. Except for several thousand people, its 70,000 inhabitants fled during the fighting or were expelled, and were never allowed to return to their homes. The following pieces were selected from a series of electronic memoirs/reflections initiated by Salim Tamari in 1995 and exchanged by a group of twelve Jaffa exiles living across the globe. The correspondence was later taken over by two young academics living in Jaffa, Andre Mazawi and Haytham Sawalhi, and transformed into a Web page on the city of Jaffa (www.yafa.org).

Today we went again to visit Old Jaffa. My companions had less emotional baggage in that they were already veterans of this Via Dolorosa and the objective this time was much more clearly defined – to eat fish at the Rauf and Athena restaurant in the Jabaliyya quarter. Since it was the first day of the new year according to the Julian Calendar, we stopped at the approaches of the city by the Russian church where my uncle Fayeq got married more than half a century ago. The doors were bolted and the nuns refused to open the place for us, so we climbed the fence and stole some bergamot from a leaning tree.

This time we approached the city from the lower rim by the harbor. I noticed that the old Hanna Dumiani soap factory had been renovated and sandblasted. They not only removed the Arabic inscription of the owner's name but added Hebrew motifs to the eastern entrance of the building, surmounting it with the Star of David.

Even with the dilapidated state of the buildings, the view looking up from the harbor is spectacular and

still recalls the nineteenth-century woodcuts of David Roberts taken from the sea. The best way to capture this panorama is to stand between the Armenian convent and St. Michael's church with your back to the sea.

There we met eight Russian nuns gathering pebbles from the seashore. One of them was angelically beautiful.

It must have been the Day of the Russians, because soon afterward we entered the Catholic church when the evening mass was about to begin, and it was packed with Soviet immigrants.

At the top of the hill stands the wide open space that was the dense heart of Old Jaffa before it was dynamited and bulldozed by the British at the start of the Palestine Rebellion in 1936 to clear it of underground resisters.

Now named Kedumim Square by the Israelis, the plaza is lined by old Arab buildings converted into cafés, art boutiques, and restaurants offering overpriced food. All over the place young Russian couples were promenading and taking photos of the sea and of themselves.

Below the plaza lies a small but attractive archeological museum displaying mainly Hellenic and Roman artifacts. Placards narrating the history of Jaffa decorate the walls. In the manner of Ruth Kark in her book on Jaffa, the Israelis in this museum have managed to expunge virtually all traces of Arabs from the history of the city. Here are the relevant dates of modern Jaffa as outlined in the museum brochure¹:

1750:

**ESTABLISHMENT OF
JAFFA'S FIRST JEWISH
HOSTEL**

1799:

**CONQUEST OF JAFFA BY
NAPOLEON'S FORCES,
OUTBREAK OF THE
BUBONIC PLAGUE**

1820:

**REVIVAL OF
JAFFA'S JEWISH
COMMUNITY WITH
THE ESTABLISHMENT
OF A HOSTEL AND
SYNAGOGUE BY**

ISAIAH AJIMAN

**1832:
CONQUEST OF JAFFA BY
THE EGYPTIAN FORCES**

**1881:
FIRST GROUP OF
JEWISH PIONEERS,
BELONGING TO THE BILU
ORGANIZATION ARRIVES
IN JAFFA**

**1903 + 1905:
JAFFA SUFFERS A
CRIPPLING CHOLERA
EPIDEMIC**

**1917:
EXPULSION OF THE
JEWISH COMMUNITIES
OF JAFFA AND TEL
AVIV BY THE TURKISH
ADMINISTRATION**

**16 NOVEMBER 1917:
CONQUEST OF JAFFA BY
ALLENBY**

**1936 + 1939:
ANTI-JEWISH**

**DISTURBANCES
THROUGHOUT THE
COUNTRY [THIS IS HOW
THE GREAT PALESTINE
REBELLION AGAINST THE
BRITISH IS DESCRIBED]**

**14 MAY 1948:
JAFFA IS LIBERATED
DURING THE PASSOVER
FESTIVAL BY THE JEWISH
UNDERGROUND**

**24 APRIL 1950:
TEL AVIV AND JAFFA
BECOME UNIFIED.**

Despite the museum's silence about Arabs as past or present inhabitants of the city, it seems that the tourist board is expecting large numbers of them this summer: a special brochure has been printed in Arabic and thousands of copies are stacked at the museum's entrance. Unlike the chronology above, the Arabs are mentioned here, and in no uncertain terms.



25 OCT 2007 BIL'IN PHOTO: MAURICIO GUILLÉN



27 OCT 2007 JAFFA PHOTO: MAYA PASTERNAK

**TOWARD THE END
OF WWI THE CITY
WAS CONQUERED BY
GENERAL ALLENBY,
USHERING IN THE
PERIOD OF THE BRITISH
MANDATE. THE PORT OF
JAFFA (THE SOLE PORT
AT THE TIME) SERVED AS
THE POINT OF ENTRY FOR
THE INCREASED JEWISH
IMMIGRATION WHICH
CAME TO THE LAND.
THE JEWS SUFFERED
FROM POGROMS AND
PERSECUTION AT THE
HAND OF THE ARABS.
THE ATTACKS REACHED
A PEAK SHORTLY BEFORE
THE DECLARATION OF
THE STATE OF ISRAEL IN
MAY 1948.**

**JEWISH DEFENSIVE
ACTION LED TO THE
FLIGHT OF MOST OF
THE CITY'S ARABS,
AND SHORTLY AFTER
THAT PART OF THE
CITY WAS SETTLED BY
THE IMPOVERISHED**

**JEWISH FAMILIES WHOM
THE WAR HAD LEFT
HOMELESS.**

At this stage we decided we had had enough history and proceeded to the fish restaurant. This, incidentally, is a ritual shared by all Palestinian "returnees" to Jaffa. After being slapped by the gentrified and de-Arabized city and treated to a laundered version of their history, they treat themselves to a sumptuous meal by the sea in order to forget.

In our case we were lucky to find the Rauf and Athena empty except for the Gazan illegal waiters eager to exchange views on the coming Palestinian elections. Our waiter was from the Khan Yunis camp and a distant relative of Hasan Asfour – a former communist running on the Fatah list. He was trying to find a way to sneak back into the Strip to vote for his cousin.

REMA'S JAFFA

I always go to Jaffa with a sense of emotional trepidation and leave with diffuse anger and resignation. My final feeling on the way home to Jerusalem is generally that I don't want to go back. Going to Jaffa for someone who grew up with it as an iconic myth, a place that no other place can ever measure up to, is bound to bring disappointment.

My feeling of being burdened by Jaffa, this place that exists only in the world of lost paradises, is no different from that of any other child of a Jaffaite. For there are no "former" Jaffaites – they never really left in 1948 but still carry it around with them everywhere and always. I would love to be able to walk through the city without being weighed down by its past and my duty to that past – just to be able to be fascinated by the architecture and the people who live there now, to be able to call them "Yaffawiin" in some meaningful way, instead of referring to them as "the present inhabitants." Alas, to do so would mean being burned at the stake for collaborating with a reality built on the demolition of dreams.

My first trip to Jaffa was in the spring of 1989. My aunt who lives in Jerusalem had wanted to take me earlier, but because it was intifada time, any movement beyond the perimeter of Shuafat and Salahiddin street was seen as a move into uncharted and potentially dangerous territory. My aunt had left Jaffa when she was eleven and had spent her teen years in Beirut, a far more open environment than she ever could have experienced in Jaffa – witness the tissue-wrapped photos she keeps of herself and her Brazilian girlfriend in 1950s movie-queen bathing suits at the *plage* in

Beirut. In Jaffa, she was never even taught to swim like her brothers because she was a girl.

I don't remember much about the city from that first trip. Mostly it was the problematic quest for the family house in Jabaliyya, what had been the new southern suburb of the city. (Not long before my visit, my younger sister had tried to find the house as well, and a cousin mistakenly took her to the house of my father's cousin where the nervous Arab occupant let them in, but then proceeded to show them his revolver.) We drove past my great uncle's house, now the residence of the French consul. Built in the 1940s, it was and is a grand modernist Bauhaus mansion, all straight lines and cream-colored stream-lined volumes. My aunt said it had been her uncle's dream house and one of the most modern in all Palestine. She also said that he was from the most conservative branch of the family and that his wife and daughters rarely went out. So much for architectural determinism.

"From Bauhaus to our house." My family's house was lost or, even worse, destroyed. We kept circling and turning back down the same narrow residential road, while my aunt pointed out Said Hammami's house, the Kanafani family's pink stone house on the adjacent corner, and so on. Then she would recalculate, confused: "Our house should be here. . . ." Suddenly it struck her: the grotesquely ugly two-story pebble-brown Israeli building was actually *our house*, now concealed under a hideous facade of pebbled-concrete. We got out of the car and she started crying, "They've buried it! Our house is in a tomb!!" Some Arab workmen were digging up the pavement and came

over to see what was the matter. I explained, and perhaps to make us feel better one of them said, "Yes, yes. We know the Hammami family. All of these are Hammami houses, and we still call this Hammami street."

My aunt was too upset to go inside and got back into the car. Across the house's upper floor, emblazoned in Hebrew and English, were letters spelling out its new identity, *Beit Nurit* – "House of Light." I went ahead to the large electric gate which was now the front entrance, though originally it had been backside of the house. Because the entrances had been switched and additions made, and because the original character of the place was hidden under the concrete shell, it was difficult to tell what was where. What did show through was the original three-arched veranda and entrance, though most of it was now enclosed. When I saw the arches I had a sudden shock of recognition based on an old family photograph taken in front of this veranda, which back then had a huge asparagus fern growing up one side. The photo had that slightly out-of-focus, dream-like quality peculiar to old photos. It showed a large family, with young girls in white frocks and bows in their hair lined up in the front row. I always noticed how innocent they looked, but perhaps that was something I read into their expressions, knowing what was going to happen to them a year later.

The gate was open so I walked in. I found myself in the large *liwan*, the womb of the house, which still had its columns and original italianate tile floor. It was full of people who somehow didn't enter my field of vision: I was remapping the *liwan*'s former

reality, a process that excluded objects and people not part of that earlier moment. Then someone spoke to me in Hebrew, and I was brought out of my dream. A woman in a white medical coat was asking me things I didn't understand. I looked around and realized that the *liwan* was full of retarded children. When I answered in English, the woman walked off and returned with a large blonde Germanic looking matron, also in a white coat. She looked like the female jailer in *Seven Beauties* or a heftier nurse Ratched from *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest*. She asked me what I wanted, and I replied that this was my grandfather's house and I just wanted to look at it. For some reason I was surprised at her reaction, which was nervousness and agitation.

She became very flustered and said, variously, that I must be mistaken, that it couldn't be true, and besides, how could I know it was my grandfather's house? I replied that my aunt who grew up in the house was sitting right outside in the car. The woman told me that before I looked further she had to get the director. After a bit I was ushered upstairs to the director, ensconced in his desk and emitting an aura of deep and expansive self-confidence. "Sit, sit, come in come in. Yes yes, do come in," he said in that pushy way that Israelis seem to understand as warmth. "Here, I want to show you something." I followed him to the landing where he indicated an odd colored frieze on the wall. He asked me to look closely, and then proceeded to explain with what seemed to be glee that the frieze depicted the return of the Jewish people to the Land of Israel and the creation of the Jewish state. He ended with a kind of hymn to the

success of the Zionist dream. I was speechless at what I could only take as a form of sadism, and mumbled something like: "Look, I just want to look around the house." Without waiting for an answer, I proceeded to do so.

On subsequent visits, the occupants changed from retarded children to incapacitated old people. This made the visits even more painful, since when you stopped visually excavating the place in search of the original structure you looked up to find yourself surrounded by hunched up and drooling old men and women with unkempt hair lolling in plastic chairs as if sedated. You walked past them as if they didn't see you, like walking through a gallery of macabre statuary. Our house had become a dumping ground for unwanted people – God's waiting room. It occurred to me that in their earlier lives these pathetic souls may have played their part in making the Victory Frieze on the second floor possible.

There were many things about Jaffa that my aunt was unable to explain to me – nor did she really know even the Jabaliyya neighborhood where she had grown up. At first I attributed this to her youthfulness in 1948, to the fact that she had only a child's-eye memory of her environment. Though this was partly the case, it was also due to the fact that she had been a girl in a conservative community and could not roam about freely like my father who was about the same age. She told me how her movements had been further circumscribed: Once, playing with neighborhood children in the street outside her house, they had spotted an older man in a tall tarbush and a suit

riding by on a bicycle at the end of the street. They all began jeering and making catcalls at him. As he turned his head to look at them, my aunt realized in horror that the comic figure they'd been mocking was my grandfather. He saw her as well but with his usual self-control kept pedaling away while she died a thousand deaths knowing what she would face when he came home. After this incident she was no longer allowed to play outside and thus stopped being able to see her playmate Ghassan Kanafani², who she says used to be the instigator of games of make-believe.

Although all of my aunts went to school, the main function of schooling of young girls seemed to be the "finishing" necessary for young ladies. Thus needlepoint and music figure strongly in my aunt's depiction of her early education. I gave my sister in Boston the only thing we inherited from our grandmother: a garishly colored petit-point embroidery of an eighteenth-century French lady in a pastoral scene. The piece was such a dilemma – ugly and kitschy yet simultaneously something to be cherished as having belonged to my grandmother.

Although the family had a dining table, my aunt told me that they preferred to eat sitting on mats around a short-legged round table in the kitchen. The image intrigued me. The Bauhaus architecture, the needlepoint, the missionary school education and all the while there was this (secret?) preference to eat sitting on the floor. I could picture the empty dining table standing proud but forlorn at the end of the *liwan*, while happy voices emanated from the cramped kitchen.

**A DATE
WITH MURJANA
(SALIM)**

Yesterday I went to Jaffa for my first (probably also my last) rendezvous arranged on the Internet. It all began four months ago when a young woman introduced herself on my screen as wanting to talk with somebody in Ramallah. She is a computer technician from Tel Aviv, born and raised in Jaffa. When I suggested that I might come to Jaffa on a Friday afternoon, she said she would show me around.

We decided to meet by the clock tower at 2:30 p.m. I told her to look for a man with gray hair. She described herself as blond and wearing high heels. Liza Bouri, who is visiting us this winter, was dying to go to Jaffa, her birth place, so I took her along, and Rema and Alex came as well. Liza cried all the way in anticipation of the encounter with her lost city. Later, she told me that she was crying because her father died without having the chance to revisit Jaffa.

We arrived fifteen minutes late. Murjana was waiting next to a bakery. She was indeed blond. Actually, her hair was platinum silver with streaks

of gold. She suggested that we meet her family. We all went to a new working-class neighborhood that Russian Yuppies have been moving into and where her family lives. The mother is a social worker with a fighting spirit. She belonged to a community group that was trying to get Arab representation on the city council. The father, a mechanic, had just awakened and greeted us in Hebrew – to Liza's great discomfort.

Language actually was a problem in this household. Murjana spoke Arabic with strong Hebrew inflections, and the elder brother cannot read or write in his native tongue. Only the mother knew proper Arabic. They all mixed their talk with a liberal sprinkling of Hebrew.

The family – four sisters and two brothers – was close, but the daughters, at least according to Murjana, spoke of their family's oppressive protectiveness. The younger sister had gone to study in Marseilles and married a French student, but because he was a Christian the daughters did not dare tell the family.

When we finally went on the tour we found that Murjana, our tour guide, hardly knew what was where. She could not identify any landmarks except for the French Hospital (where I was born) and the church of al-Khader. At al-Khader, we saw young Jaffaite boys and girls playing in the yard, and Liza started crying again. She was taking pictures of everything that moved. We passed Yafet Street and my maternal grandfather's house. Fakhri Jdaii, my mother's distant cousin, still has his pharmacy there and pays rent to Amidar – the Custodian of Absentee Property. We did not stop; it was late and Fakhri would have felt obliged to invite this large crowd for dinner.

One of the most memorable aspects of the outing was seeing the way Murjana related to Jaffa. She had absolutely no feeling for the place. Freedom to her meant Haifa, where she had an occasional job, and a place away from family oppression.

To her, growing up in Jaffa meant growing up in squalor. The remnants of the community were the poorer Arab villagers who had been forced

to relocate to the city when their homes were destroyed in 1948.

Today, of Jaffa's total population of 70,000, Arabs constitute about 20,000. Less than a quarter of these are original Jaffaites, the rest being refugees from Salama, Rubeen, Shaykh Muwwanis, Manshiya, and so on, as well as workers from the Galilee employed in Tel Aviv. Unlike the situation in Haifa, the communal bond uniting the Arabs of Jaffa is very weak. There is also a strong feeling of confessionism and worse – atomization. Prostitution and drug gangsterism are rampant, and the few pockets of nationalist groups are completely isolated.

To us, Jaffa cast a very long shadow.

A city abandoned and now in the process of being rejuvenated or gentrified by Jews seeking abandoned Arab houses – or pushing for Arab houses to be abandoned.

One of the most moving moments was our visit to the harbor where Rema narrated how her father, Hasan Hammami, as a teenage boy embarked upon a boat with his family – along

with hundreds of other families – on 10 May 1948, leaving Jaffa for the last time in the direction of the ship that took them to Beirut and permanent exile. As they embarked, gun shells were exploding all around them, spreading panic and mayhem.

Last year, Hasan came on a visit as an American tourist. He went straight to his house in Jabaliyya, next to the Christian cemetery. The house was abandoned. Then he saw a light next door were the Andrawus family used to live. He vividly remembered the Andrawus girls he used to lust for as a growing boy. It was 9:30 in the evening and despite protests from his wife and daughter, he knocked at the door. To their utter astonishment, they found the four Andrawus girls, now matronly ladies in their sixties, facing them at the door. After a tearful scene of embracing and hugging, and many lemonades later, they told him that none of them had married, since "all the men of stature" had gone. That says a lot of what happened to the city. Murjana was completely oblivious to this. Her main interest was in taking us to the Hinnawi

Brothers' ice cream shop were they had twenty-two flavors.

After leaving the harbor, we went through the main thoroughfare of Ajami, now called Yafet Street, past the French Hospital, past Terra Sancta, past the Ottoman fountain, Sabil Abu Nabbout, and finally past Kemal Pharmacy, on top of which stands the house of my grandfather, Salim Jabagi, where my mother and her twelve siblings were born. Now it is occupied by two Moroccan Jewish families who, ten years ago when I went to visit with Suad, denied us entry. Diagonally across the street is the decaying house of Elias Tamari, where my father and my uncles Fayeq, Abdallah, and Emile, and my two aunts were born.

Ajami today is a divided quarter. Only the disintegrating old mansions of the patrician Jaffan merchants bespeak its former glory. Beyond Yafet, going west toward the sea, one faces squalor everywhere. Arab and Jewish prostitutes mingle and fraternize, and drug dealers are everywhere. By the seashore, Arabs are encouraged

to relocate south (to housing estates near Bat Yam) and a new marina is being built for rich condo invaders.

Gentrified single-story houses are sprouting up everywhere. For the last decade, Ajami has become the real estate destination of hip Jewish artists, gallery owners, professionals, and foreign embassy staff. There is an easy coexistence between the newcomers and the destitute Arab community. In the middle have remained few established families of Jaffa and another dozen nouveau riche Jaffaites who made their fortunes from building contracting and drug dealing.

By the old water reservoir (*Hawuuz*), Murjana pointed out a vacant lot confiscated from her grandfather. In 1949, Amidar took his two-and-a-half dunams away and offered him compensation. He refused the money and contested the confiscation in court. Since he had not left the city, he had a good case. But he lost, and the money was deposited in his name in Bank Leumi. He refused to touch it. When he died fifteen years later, the family could not trace the money. But they still

hold fast to the land deed, their family patrimony.

Now we moved on to the Old City. It was here that the Great Palestinian Rebellion began in 1936. And it was here that the British, in an operation reenacted by Arik Sharon in Gaza forty years later, moved in with a huge force and blasted a Y-shaped passage linking the harbor to an opening toward Clock Square, bulldozing the rubble to make swift passage for armored cars.³

The Old City today encapsulates the magnificence and tragedy of historic Jaffa. The Israelis – meaning the greater Tel Aviv-Jaffa Council – have completely renovated the area as a major tourist attraction and an "artists' colony," an operation later replicated in Old Safed and in Ayn Hawd.⁴ Outwardly the place is attractive if you are ignorant of its historical context, full of restaurants, cafés, galleries, promenades, and so on. It is a favorite vista for Arab and Sephardic newlyweds who come here with video teams for photo opportunities. Several signposts

and coin-operated machines narrate the history of Jaffa in four languages (not Arabic). Just as in the archeological museum, nowhere is there an indication that this was once a thriving Arab city – the biggest and richest in Palestine. The taped narrative mentions Philistines, Phoenicians, Mamluks, Turks, and British who, we learn, all had their share in plundering the city until it was delivered by the combined Jewish forces of the Haganah and Lehi in May of 1948. A ragged sculpture of Napoleon Bonaparte, who seized the city in the year 1800, points his finger to a restaurant overlooking the harbor.

The cafés and restaurants were blaring music and full of mixed Tel Avian and tourist clientele. Rema pointed out a remarkable absence. There were no young people around except for the two wedding parties being photographed. Even the noisy café bar with disco music by the harbor landing was full of couples over fifty. We differed on how to explain this. Rema and Alex thought it was the antiseptic atmosphere of the neighborhood, self-consciously quaint

but intimidating. Murjana thought it was the prices, the fact - intentional - that no young couple could afford a cup of cappuccino in Old Jaffa.

On the way to the harbor, I met an old student of mine showing an Egyptian friend of hers the town. This strange encounter brought me back to reality. Jaffa is really a figment of the imagination. There is no connection between the city of our parents and this bleached ghost town. But Arab visitors construct the past from their memory (or their parents' and grandparents' memory) using the rubble as their nodes.

Only in one short lane the great city has retained its past – that is, the stretch between the old mosque, past St. Michael's Orthodox monastery and the attached church, down the stairs to the old harbor. Here the walls, the staircase, and even the engraved Greek and Arabic signs have been retained. The feeling is eerie and haunting, and here there is complete silence. Thanks to the Greeks, the Arabness of the city has been preserved.

REMA'S VERSION

Between my first and my last trip to Jaffa there have been others, the most painful perhaps being when I accompanied my father on his first visit "home" since he left as a boy in 1948. The most recent was with Salim, Liza, and Alex. I wanted to meet Murjana because I so rarely get to meet contemporary Jaffaites – people many of the originals do not even consider as being really of Jaffa but as latecomers who are just posing as *Yaffawiin* while the authentic ones are in exile. I also like visiting Jaffa with Salim because he harbors many of the same resentments about the oppressive reverence with which children of Jaffaites are supposed to react to the place, as well as the desire to resist the overwhelming bitterness one feels about the subversion of Jaffa's history.

As we headed toward Jaffa on the Tel Aviv highway – as opposed to the "Beit Dajan/Yazur" route I am usually forced to take on family pilgrimages) I realized it was going to be an emotionally charged visit because of Liza's return for the first time. I had obliquely thought of the trip as a visit to the Jaffa of today through the person of Murjana. However, it turned into the colliding of the two Jaffas – the one of loss and dreams and the one of everyday lived-in places.

Jaffa is not marked as an exit on the main highway – you have to know to get off at the exit marked "Kibbutz Galuyot." One wonders why, but most likely rather than being a conspiracy Kibbutz Galuyot is for some reason a more important marker on the Israeli map of geographic meaning than Jaffa. The main road into the city begins with 1950s housing projects and then dissipates into

an industrial area; you only start picking out that you are near Jaffa when you see dilapidated old buildings with orange-tiled roofs dotted in between what seem to be grimy mechanic shops and crossroads attempting to lure you in more hopeful directions. One has to be totally committed to visiting Jaffa in order to make it through this maze of unmarked directions and one-way streets.

Finally, we reached Clock Square. By now we know that it is best to park on the right side of the prison-fortress in the sandy parking lot overlooking the sea. It is at this point that one always feels pulled in two directions: whether to walk up to the Old City or around the square and old market area. That day it was decided for us by Murjana, who had arranged with Salim to be waiting near the clock tower. So we filed down the main square, attempting to piece together various bits of information that could serve as Liza's introduction. Past the mosque and the lurid tropical juice cafés we crossed the street to the clock, and on the opposite side was a "blonde" leaning against a doorway – Murjana. What struck me was not the blonde streaks in her hair (I was once teased by Gaza women that I couldn't be from Jaffa because I didn't have "frosted" hair), but the fact that she was wearing a blouse and jeans too tight to put things in the pockets, but was not carrying a bag – women always seem to have a need to carry things. The group was, I think, a bit surprised by this tall attractive woman who was also clearly quite shy and not sure about what to do with us.

Murjana insisted that before anything we must go home to meet her family, who were waiting for

us. This immediately raised the problem of old-versus-new Jaffa. If we were to get caught at her house, we probably would not be able to do what Liza had been waiting for all her life – visit the lost Jaffa of her father. In this one brief moment all the contending needs of the array of Jaffaites came up against each other. The Jaffaites of the here-and-now wanting to welcome us into their homes and learn about us as "real" Palestinians living in the West Bank or the diaspora; and us, who saw ourselves and wanted to be seen as Jaffaites, wanting to celebrate our "Jaffaishness" with Murjana and walk around uncovering the "real" Jaffa from underneath the Israeli signs and landscapes imposed on "our" city.

Of course we made the courtesy call to Murjana's family, who lived not far from "my house" though on the other side of the main road. In asking Murjana what this neighborhood was called, she looked confused and shrugged: "*shu barifni?*" – "who knows?"

Her neighborhood had all the marks of the failed housing rehabilitation projects that stand dejectedly around Ajami. A few years ago the New Israel Fund had decided to start doing projects in the Arab sector. Jaffa, as the metaphor for Arab communities in need of rehabilitation (Read: drug addicts, thieves, and prostitutes), was taken on as the showcase project. Money provided largely by the Los Angeles Jewish community went into "urban renewal," especially in Ajami where the exteriors of houses were returned to their original Venetian-style splendor, while a pedestrian walkway and small children's park

were added. But the people living in the houses selected for rehabilitation were the poor remnants of a community that had been literally destroyed, and all of their attempts at civic control over their own lives had been quickly and systematically neutralized. So it was not long before the pink stucco was either soiled or splashed with graffiti, the houses and park now standing as eloquent reminders of the futility of prettifying the environments of fundamentally marginalized and oppressed peoples – at least when the prettifying is undertaken by the same forces that marginalize and oppress them.

Murjana's family lived in a relatively new one-story house that had not been rehabilitated and that could not have figured in our Jaffa dreams. We were led into the *liwan* where we were met by Murjana's mother – the best Arabic speaker of the family as well as the strongest personality. We were introduced to the family in dribs and drabs. Murjana's father, who had just woken up, shuffled in; the beautiful red-headed sister came and sat with us; two very uninterested brothers who had just awakened filed by at various intervals with hastily mumbled greetings and even hastier departures. The father was very quiet. It seems that whenever he tried to speak Arabic, Hebrew words came out. This linguistic unease perhaps explained why the brothers, who we were told spoke no Arabic, seemed to avoid us. The beautiful redhead had diligently majored in Arabic, but she too was shy to speak. This meant that the matriarch was our main point of contact. She taught in the public school system and was actively involved in the community and municipal politics, explaining

**A VISIT
TO THE DEAD
(SALIM)**

how Jaffa's managing to get one Palestinian representative in the Tel Aviv municipality (into which the Jaffa municipality has been dissolved) after forty-five years was a great achievement for a community so divided among and against itself.

Murjana's mother was very good at the contemporary political and social situation, but of no use in satisfying Liza's need for confirmation of her family's link to Jaffa. In fact, Murjana's family recognized none of the original Jaffa family names we lobbed at them, or simply acknowledged that they'd heard the names but were not able to provide any of the hoped for genealogical itineraries or their connection to contemporary sites which Jaffan exiles so deeply need. I was beginning to get frustrated – we were being corralled into a very unnecessary lunch made by Murjana, which would prevent us from seeing the city in daylight and leave no room for the fish dinner at the end of the day, always the needed transition from the pain of lost Jaffa and back into the world of the living.

I thought that my frustration was on Liza's behalf, since it seemed so unjust for her to be cooped up in someone's living room in Jaffa while the sun was going down on the city she had so long longed to explore. In retrospect, however, it seems clear that I am also not ready or able to visit Jaffa as the contemporary place it is. I am still too overwhelmed by the desire to uncover that past, to find the Jaffa hidden under the new signs and to make it live again through the stories of my father and other exiles, then connect them back to a pavement I walk on, a storefront now boarded up, a clump of old cypress trees in a front garden.

Last Sunday Suad, Beshara, and I went to visit the Jaffa cemetery in Jabaliyya.

We were looking for the remnants of my family. My mother had mentioned that some time in the late thirties, when she was in her teens, the Jaffa cemetery near the city center in Ajami had to be moved since the dead were crowding the living. An outlying plot in Jabaliyya was chosen since at the time it was at the southern edge of the town. The dead were dug up and heaped in collective family plots. Rich people built family crypts known as *Fustuqiyyat* laced with marble and embellished with highly stylized verses celebrating their occupants.

The poor were dumped in holes marked by concrete blocks. All this seems inconsequential today since all three Arab cemeteries have become squalid heaps. All that remains of their beauty is their location – a magnificent hilly plot overlooking the Mediterranean.

From the western edge of the Greek Orthodox cemetery, you can see Ajami to the north and the beginnings of Bat Yam to the south. Soon the Israeli plans for Jaffa's gentrification will

extend the marina project to this point, and both the dead and (some of) the living will be enjoying the view.

My two companions were not interested in my quest and had to be dragged in. Suad's father was born in Manshiya, died in Prague, and was buried in Amman. She went to visit his grave twenty years ago accompanied by her mother, who slipped near the grave and broke her pelvis. They never went back. Beshara was still shaken from the morning boat tour of the Jaffa harbor and the unbearable kitsch of the renovated lofts surrounding the old town. He was particularly annoyed when the Arab waiter in the restaurant – also called Beshara – addressed him in Hebrew. Of the three, only I have a fetishism for the dead.

The three Arab cemeteries, where there is a progression of decay, are separated by walls. First the Muslim cemetery, a sloping field of thorns and brush dotted with uniformly melting white marble. Rema had earlier claimed to have located the grave of her grandfather, Shaykh Ali

al-Hammami, among the thorny shrubs, but I do not see how. Next, the Greek Orthodox cemetery is similarly disintegrating, but with a few family crypts valiantly withstanding time and the sea breeze's devastation. Finally, the Catholic cemetery, with an air of a fading beauty queen, some new marble here and there but not enough to mask the cruelty of years.

This time we entered the Orthodox cemetery and asked the caretaker, a gaunt and shabby man in his sixties, if he knew of any Tamari graves. At first he suggested that we go to Yazur (only God knows why), but then suggested we look in the northwest corner where the pre-1948 graves were. It was a hopeless quest. Very few of the older graves were left intact, and among those only an archeologist could decipher the script. Eventually I could make out some older names: Qahush, Musa, Khoury, Burtqush. Then I came across a grave with a name I recognized, Nicola Dabbas – Aunt Margo's father, the father-in-law of my uncle Fayeq. But mostly the old graves were covered over by new ones. Since the cemetery was too small to

accommodate the new dead and very few of original pre-1948 Jaffa families were left to maintain their family plots, the newcomers (from Ramla, Lydda, and the Galilee) had begun to displace them.

What astonished us, however, was the Russian invasion. All over the place the old Arabic grave slabs (*shawahid*) were being replaced with Russian ones. In Jaffa there was a small Russian Orthodox community, attached to the Russian convent – so obviously some of these were the nuns and monks. But that does not explain the sudden flood of Russian-inscribed graves in the 1980s and 1990s. The most logical explanation is that many of these are Soviet immigrants who came to Israel disguised as Jews, or as Christian spouses of Jewish immigrants. Many of them had occupied portions of Arab graves and carved their niches on top of the marble slabs. You could still see many of the Arabic inscriptions underneath the Russian ones. Nearer to the entrance – among the more recent burials – we also saw Hebrew graves carved on top of the Arab graves.

Invariably they would have a small cross on top and a Slavic name in Hebrew script, Ruth Davidovich, for example, who died 14 February 1989.

Beshara – already in a bad mood from the boat trip – was foaming by now. "First they take the 'abandoned' houses in Jaffa, then they displace Arab workers from their jobs, and now they have occupied our cemeteries!" he fumed.

It wasn't clear who "they" were. The main displacers of Arab abandoned houses in Jaffa were Bulgarian Jews who came in the 1950s. But in the 1980s and 1990s, it was the Russians and Ukrainians who began to invade Jaffa and Tel Aviv, with heavy connections with the Russian mafia in Israel.

We sought enlightenment to all these mysteries from the caretaker, but he was more interested in confusing us. He led us by the hand to the newly-built Orthodox chapel, still fresh with new paint and not even consecrated yet, near the cemetery's entrance. The Orthodox community,

he told us, had tried to get a plot for the chapel outside the cemetery, but the municipality would not grant one. But we were curious about other issues: "What happened to the older dead? Why so many Russian names on the graves? Who are those Hebrew Christians?" The man's lips were sealed. Either he didn't know, or he didn't want us to know. Suad decided he was subcontracting the older graves for the newly dead.

On the way back to Jerusalem, with Beshara driving and Suad directing, we got completely lost.

1 "Old Jaffa" leaflet distributed by the Old Jaffa Development Corporation.

2 Palestinian writer, poet, and activist, assassinated by the Israelis in Beirut in 1973.

3 This surgical act of urban cleansing was captured in its razor sharpness in three photographs shot from the air that can be seen in Sarah Graham-Brown's *Palestinians and Their Society, 1880+1946: A Photographic Essay* (London: Quartet Books, 1980).

4 A picturesque village in the Haifa district whose population was expelled during the 1948 fighting but which was not destroyed. It was transformed into an artists' colony in 1954 and has been designated as a tourist site.

* Salim Tamari is director of IPS's Jerusalem affiliate, the Institute for Jerusalem Studies, and an associate professor of sociology at Birzeit University.

* Rema Hammami is assistant professor of anthropology at Birzeit University and the coordinator of research at Birzeit's Women's Study Center.

"TABADUL"
(SALIM)

Every new visit to Jaffa dulls the novelty of the encounter. The dramatic fades away, and the mundane prevails. But the excitement is always there, in part because there is an element of trespassing. We go there without a permit, and therefore our presence is "illegal." But we also trespass on people's existing reality by invoking a past which they, the Jewish majority of present-day Jaffa, do not recognize or choose to suppress or – most likely – are completely oblivious to.

Recently we began making greater efforts to observe the existing realities of Jaffa and suppressing the (nostalgic?) past. Which basically means that you skip the sea, the restaurants, the artists' quarter, the churches, and the mosques. You must also skip the cemeteries. Especially the cemeteries. (Rania, Brigitte, and I were expelled from the Jabaliyya cemetery last month by two Jaffa thugs wearing swimming shorts for showing disrespect for the dead.)

So now we meander around the streets and let our feet guide us. We

let the faces and the dialects and the smells leave their traces on us. Last week we began by buying manaqish from Abul 'Afyeh's pastry shop and set out on a mission of discovery. Rema insisted on visiting the music shop across from the police station. The man was a Moroccan who lives in Holon and has been in Jaffa for a long time. He was very eager to show us his collection of predominantly Arabic music. Um Kalthum, Abdel Wahhab, and Layla Murad were dominant. (No sign of Fairuz, who does not seem to have much appeal to the Sephardic community.) He was impressed to see that we were familiar with Andalusian *Muwashahat*, which seemed to be his favorite, and he ended up by selling us some Ladino CDs – mostly lamentations over lost love in Andalusia – and some tapes of Moroccan singers.

He was curious to know where we came from, since we conversed with him in Arabic and broken Hebrew. I showed him my Palestinian passport with the birth entry: Jaffa 1945.

Lzra Akaamija
Konzepte
Produktion: Azra Aka
Schauspieler: Saeed Al-
Bharani, Nami Osman
Sonder-Vest
Produktion: Azra Aka
Schauspieler: Saeed
Al-Brarani, Nami Osman

Übersetzt von:
Christa Saeed
Schauspieler:
Christa Saeed





DOCUMENTATION: FRONTIER VEST AZRA AKSAMIJA

Shlomo: "And where in Jaffa were you born?"

Me: "Ajami."

Shlomo: "That's very curious, because I came to Ajami in 1948! I was a teenager then. Isn't that a coincidence! You left exactly when I arrived! We could have met then."

Me: "I don't think so."

Rema: "It was what you might call a 'tabadul' [exchange]."
[ironically]

Shlomo kept repeating the word, "Tabadul . . . tabadul" as if in a trance. Then all of sudden it dawned on him, and he said loudly: "Aah . . . **TABADUL!**"

Then he smiled and nodded sadly in recognition.

He asked if I still knew anybody in Jaffa. I mentioned the pharmacist Fakhri Jdaii, a distant cousin of mine. He

said that Fakhri is the best "doktoor" in Jaffa. He has been going to him for years, and Fakhri always prescribes treatments that work. "You see, we are Arabs like you, and here is the proof," he said, pointing to the cassettes.

Untitled // Artur Zmije v



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Photo:
Roni Lahav

Photographs taken in Lydda (close to the Wall) during the meeting between members of the local Arab community (many) and members of the Jewish community from Nir Zvi (two people).

The aim of the meeting was to discuss 'why the Wall was built.'





Photo:
Roni Lahav





Photo:
Roni Lahav

Multiculturalism

in Common Spaces

// Yossi Yonah

* A presentation given during the
third Liminal Spaces conference,
Holon, 27.10.2007

What I'm going to speak about is related to my book about multiculturalism in Israel. I will not, however, discuss the book. I would like to talk about something related to the MIT project pertaining to urban planning and development, which I was asked to join. I was invited to participate in a conference about Jerusalem in the year 2050. Truth be told, I didn't know much about Jerusalem – I don't like the city, and I didn't know anything about urban planning either, so I was quite surprised and even voiced some reservation, but in the end I went there and gave a talk about Jerusalem as a multicultural city of mixed neighborhoods. In fact, we were asked, Palestinians and Israelis, how we would like to see Jerusalem in 2050. We were told to disregard the current reality, and envision our own imaginary grounds. I wasn't quite sure what they meant; whether they wanted our forecast on how the city of Jerusalem would eventually be, or whether they wanted us to write about our ideals, our aspirations, of how the city should be. Eventually I wrote an article which combined both elements: partly forecast, partly aspirations; possibly more aspirations than a forecast, because, as I told you, I don't know much about Jerusalem. So I was thinking about a multicultural city of mixed neighborhoods, and thereby I was able to connect issues of urban planning with one of many interests of my research – multiculturalism. It was a very interesting challenge for me to combine these two fields – multiculturalism and urban planning. The first distinctions that came to mind were between two kinds of multiculturalism with respect to urban planning. I called them "segregationist multiculturalism" and "integrationist multiculturalism." When we think about segregationist multiculturalism, we have in mind distinct neighborhoods with distinct cultures, community centers, schools, and so on. It ought to be stressed that when we talk about multiculturalism, we are not just talking about heterogeneity; we are talking

about multiculturalism as an ideal, as a moral ideal, whereby the different communities are allowed, granted the rights to Jerusalem, and of course, preferring this ideal, this interpretation of multiculturalism whereby we maintain mixed neighborhoods, people living in the same neighborhoods though having different cultures. In this context I would like to say something in parentheses: I don't deny the legitimacy of segregationist multiculturalism, but what I suggest is this – supposing that people want another option, that option should be granted to them. And indeed, some people want this option. We have to recognize, on the other hand, the right of other people to have segregated neighborhoods, for instance ultra-Orthodox Jews in Jerusalem, or if we have ultra-devout Muslims in Jerusalem who would like to have their own segregated neighborhoods. But my idea is that what is currently missing in the city, that might be very interesting to envision for the future, is the other option, of people living side by side in the same neighborhood. As I said, in order to envision the future I went back to the past. And when I went back to the past, my parents' experience naturally sprang to mind. So I did a little research with my parents, mainly with my mother, because they came from Iraq and lived in the city of Ramadi, which is in the Suna triangle. So I interviewed my mother. I said: Mom, tell me about how you lived there, in Ramadi with the Arabs. Was there a Jewish quarter (*Harat el'yahood*), a segregated neighborhood for the Jews, as in Alexandria and other places? She said, no, there was no *Harat el'yahood*, there was something totally different. We had real mixed neighborhoods. Just to illustrate to you how she described it in her own words: "Muslims and Jews were scattered randomly across the city, separated only by small distances of 10 to 15 yards. Next to our house lived the Hussein family. Next to them, the Jewish family of Saleh Elmuaalem. Across the street there was the house of a Muslim family, Diab Elrahmu, and next to them, the house of the Jewish Habush family, and then the Muslim family Ismail Elbana, and then the house of the Jewish family of Saleh Elbasa, and so on." From this I got a picture. This is what I want for the future, even though it was in the past. The city of Ramadi is not that distinct or special. Under the Ottoman Empire this was a very ordinary state of affairs in Palestine. I read a little on the subject, and came across a book by Abraham Marcus who wrote similarly about Aleppo: "The confessional boundaries were so clearly drawn and religious beliefs so little open to debate that people could associate freely in various spheres without compromise. Sharing a common cultural heritage, Muslims,

1 Abraham Marcus, *The Middle East on the Eve of Modernity: Aleppo in the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Columbia UP, 1992), p. 43.

Christians, and Jews were hardly strangers to each other."¹ So it seems that this was actually a very common experience for Christians, Jews, and Muslims under the Ottoman Empire and probably elsewhere, though I did not research that. We must realize something very interesting. Jews, Christians and Muslims lived side by side and shared many things... The interesting thing about it, what allowed it, is that religion provided very strict and distinct boundaries. Everyone knew his place. There was no romance across religions. Intermarriage was very rare, if at all. The fact that religion was so well ingrained in the people, allowed them this very close proximity, because there was no danger of really intermarrying, of creating a hybrid of homogeneous community. It was homogeneous culturally speaking, but people remained separate by religion. Something happened since then; what happened, concentrating mainly on the case of Israel-Palestine, is that nationalism came to the fore, and it brought secularization with it. The secularization is very interesting in this respect. Once people become secular, there are no longer boundaries preventing their mixing with each other. This was not the liking of nationalism. So its way to create clear distinction between "us" and "them" was by physical segregation, segregation of neighborhoods. The role of religion as a demarcating mechanism has declined, and nationalism by itself did not provide an adequate substitute – an alternative symbolic mechanism ensuring rigid social distinctions. Hence, segregated neighborhoods, segregated cities, was the answer successfully provided by nationalism. This is the answer embraced by Zionism. Lev Grinberg wrote about that: that the national project was threatened by the city, by the possibility that citizens might develop a society where people of different religions collaborate on certain kinds of activities, such as labor unions, that was very successful in Jerusalem in the 1930s. Later, the Zionist movement refused to go on with these kinds of activities because it felt that they would undermine its national aspirations. This is the situation we have to this day in Jerusalem, and throughout Israel.

There are, however, some other things happening. Unintended consequences of nationalism I call them, and here I would like to make a distinction regarding the possibilities of mixed neighborhoods. As I said before, if we had a vision of fully planned, top-down, mixed neighborhoods, the government would encourage the creation of heterogeneous neighborhoods – not heterogeneous cities, but heterogeneous neighborhoods within the cities. The government in Israel

would not do that. At least for the time being, such projects are not in the offing because the government is still very much interested in the segregationist project of nationalism. This is what I call the unintended consequences of nationalism; what Israel has been doing in Jerusalem and in other places within the 1967 borders, practically suffocating Arab neighborhoods, disallowing urban development. Let me just mention a very dramatic fact: since the creation of Israel no new Arab neighborhood or new Arab city has been established, except sixteen settlements for the Bedouins in the Negev, and even then not because the Israeli government was interested in their welfare, but for other national reasons. This fact creates a real problem for Arabs, because they need some space (for expanding families, etc.). What does one do when there is no opportunity to create one's own neighborhood or city or village? This gave rise to a very interesting phenomenon of Arabs sporadically moving into Jewish neighborhoods. One example is, of course, Nazareth. You have Arab Nazareth and the city of Upper Nazareth, where I think by now there are 5,000 or more Arabs moving into Jewish neighborhoods, thereby creating types of mixed neighborhoods not designed top-down, but rather ones that emerge from the bottom up. Obviously there are problems in this respect. Last night we discussed some of the problems or shortcomings from the point of view of the Palestinians, because if you move into a Jewish neighborhood, you are forced to give up, to some extent, your culture, your way of life, because you are integrating into a very hegemonic Jewish neighborhood; you have to send your children to a Jewish school, you might forget the Arabic language, have no place for religious worship, and so on. So we have this kind of mixed neighborhood that works from the bottom up, but of course, it is not accompanied by the very ideal of multicultural mixed neighborhoods that I am talking about. I see it as kind of a train: the more the Israeli government suffocates the development of Arab neighborhoods, the more Arabs will have to move into Jewish neighborhoods. It happens in Beer Sheva too – Bedouins who move into Beer Sheva, or, obviously, in Ramla-Lod, Jaffa, Nazareth, and Jerusalem, where you see Arabs moving into the French Hill and other neighborhoods. What we have here, I would say, is a crippled kind of mixed neighborhoods. If I think about my idea of mixed neighborhoods designed top-down, providing the opportunity to develop for people of different cultures, to preserve the culture, we don't have that here. Now, of course, when I envision Jerusalem or other cities in Israel, I envision it top-down, hoping that one day

it will happen. It is not forthcoming, but I still hope that maybe these unintended consequences of nationalism will bring back what used to be in the past, which also wasn't top-down – what happened in Ramadi or Aleppo was not developed from this point of view, it was not taken by governments; it happened naturally. The question is, whether things that now happen naturally will allow real multiculturalism. As I said before, in the past religion took care of that. Usually, when people move into mixed neighborhoods, Jewish neighborhoods, this would be one of their distinguishing features – those Palestinians would not hold on to observance or to religion very tenaciously. Whether they do or not, they think this is a big compromise in terms of their culture. Who knows, something might happen in the future that would compensate for that. Again, I cannot see anything in the offing in terms of government initiatives, in terms of developing civil society, in terms of developing movements or parties in Israel that would push for it; not even in Tel Aviv, which is considered an enlightened and tolerant city. One ought to bear in mind that this is an Arab-free city. So there is this paradox, in many ways it is considered a very tolerant and cosmopolitan city in terms of sexual norms, and it is a home (a shaky one, to be sure) to migrant workers from many countries the world over, but, as one of my colleagues put it, perhaps it can be so enlightened and tolerant because it has managed to throw all the Arabs out. So the real challenge is to find a sizable sector in Israel that would wish for mixed multicultural cities of mixed neighborhoods. I'm not all that optimistic in this regard. But I am nonetheless hoping that the unintended consequences of nationalism would inevitably lead to this end, even if the overwhelming majority of Jews are not willing to embrace the ideal of multicultural cities with mixed neighborhoods.

Female Speaker:

My question is about the terminological use of multiculturalism. How do you relate to the very critical international debate on the question of multiculturalism? Because you take it as a positive model, while in both England and France it is virtually a taboo term. So I was somehow impressed by that very positive use you made.

Male Speaker:

I was trying to put myself in your mother's vision, and I have a question: do you think that people who move outside and live in these so-called mixed quarters do not maintain a strong relation with their center?

Yossi Yonah:

What is the center?

Male Speaker:

With the center, which means with their village, with Arab culture, religion; sometimes they might become even more fundamentalist, because they want to protect their children...

Yossi Yonah:

Well, I'm shifting from advancing a vision to describing an unplanned social process, thinking that these processes would lead eventually to the implementation of the vision. It is the bottom up process that might lead to a desirable state of affairs. Let's consider again what is happening today on the ground. Arabs, due to limited housing possibilities in their villages, wish to move to Jewish neighborhoods. This would be the beginning, so it is a minimal demand. Let me give you an example. Since the late 1970s or 1980s, about 450 communities, communal villages, have been built in Israel. The interesting thing about these villages is that they are fashioned after the white flight in America following the integration program. It is often the case that those who move there are Ashkenazi Jews who don't want to live with the Mizrahi Jews. They flee the urban centers and build their own community villages. It reflects a segregationist tendency within Jewish society itself, but one of the consequences was that Arabs were not allowed in, to any of them. This was brought before the Supreme Court, and there was the famous Katzir case, and this also has to do with the previous comment about multiculturalism. It was actually an abuse of multiculturalism by the people who live in the community villages, saying: don't we have a right to preserve our culture? The Supreme Court, however, decided that in these cases there is no distinct culture to be preserved, because there is no ideological or cultural uniqueness characterizing these villages, and it ordered the State of Israel, the Jewish Agency, and other institutions involved in the establishment of these communities to allow the Qa'adan family from Baqa el-Gharbiyyah to buy the house. The funny thing about it is that it took about five-six years to implement the court's ruling in this case, because they found a hundred ways to delay the court's decision; in fact, they simply ignored the decision. Then the court had to intervene over and over again, and only two months ago, I think, they were allowed to move in. In a sense, this is the problem, so at least lift the restrictions. But if we have already mentioned this case, I would like to make one related comment: it was an interesting case because Adalah (The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel) came up and said we don't want to represent the Qa'adan family. Who represented them? The Association for Civil Rights in Israel.

So why did Adalah refuse? They said, what's going to happen? The Qa'adan family will buy a house in a Jewish village, they're going to give up their culture. What we want is to have our own villages, so that we can preserve our culture. We don't want that, we don't want to merge, integrate in small numbers within a Jewish neighborhood, because then it means that we are relinquishing our unique culture. So you have this very interesting interplay here of philosophies, of visions, interests, etc. The purpose of the example was to demonstrate the kind of restrictions put on the movement of Arabs within Israel, not allowing them to go into Jewish neighborhoods, which means either you have to lift restrictions or you have to do something top-down, there's no other way around I think, but going top to bottom without detailed visions of the city, but enabling a situation whereby Arabs and Jews, those who want to do so, mix, because as I said before, segregationist multiculturalisms are also legitimate, if you don't want to mix. It's also a right not to mix. At least allow for this option, for integrationist multiculturalism.

Now, as to the comment about religion: My parents were never fundamentally religious. This is what is interesting about religion in the Arab world. Religious fundamentalism among Mizrahi Jews, Middle Eastern Jews, actually has increased in Israel. This is the interesting thing. It means that in many quarters, Jewish quarters, cities where Jews live, especially in Iraq, they were going through some kind of secularization there, and you see this intensification of religious tenacity in Israel, where you already have the separate neighborhoods. So this is both very interesting and contradictory. So yes, I admit that we have given their religions a definite and major role; you might not be very happy about that, and I'm not even suggesting that we now have mixed neighborhoods, and intensify religious tenacity of people, no. So we have to be futuristic in a sense of trying to see what new venues may be entertained so that mixed neighborhoods will not have to replicate what happened in the past. We do not want to give up nationality and embrace religious ways of life tenaciously. I am not suggesting that. Regarding the comment about the international critique of multiculturalism. Yes, I am aware of that, I am aware that multiculturalism now is not very popular in many European countries, having all these bad experiences with multiculturalism. I don't buy it though. I have to say it very definitely, I don't buy that, because I think that France, Britain, and other nations don't play it right, or don't play it honestly when they voice this criticism of multiculturalism, calling

multiculturalism the source of the problem. No, the source of the problem is that France, Britain, Belgium, Germany, have not opened their gates well enough to integrate those peoples. The fact that they were forced to stress their culture was actually a part of the exclusion-inclusion dynamics. If Germany or France were more inclusive, there probably would be less need for segregationist multiculturalism. Multiculturalism is sometimes a reaction to the practices of exclusion and marginalization that the nation-state exercises. To blame multiculturalism for the exclusionary practices of the nation-state, as far as I'm concerned, is a bit dishonest, unwilling to identify the real problems.

Female Speaker:

France is very different...

Yossi Yonah:

I'm aware of this difference, of course. The French model is a very strict, rigid republican model, and the British model is less strict and republican. You can generalize a bit, and a lot has been written about that recently, for instance Rogers Brubaker, an expert on European nationalism, in a very interesting article published in 2000, entitled "The Return of Assimilation," analyzes these tendencies to retreat from multiculturalism in Germany, France, and Britain. So I'm aware of the subtleties, or rather – the major differences between different societies, but again, I think that on the level of our present discussion, it is okay to generalize and say that what is common to these societies is the so-called disillusionment with multiculturalism, and as I said I'm putting it in quotation marks, because I still think that the problem should be located within the exclusionary practices of the nation-state, and not in multiculturalism per se. That is my opinion.

Male Speaker:

I just want to go back again to Jerusalem. Looking at this situation, united Jerusalem is a modern form of multiculturalism. I'm not just talking historically, of course, in the sense of realizing the policy of the State of Israel. I would like to know how you think we can look at it in the sense of re-planning.

Yossi Yonah:

I'll tell you what happened.

Female Speaker:

I think there's a very successful model in London. Of people living together... I live in a neighborhood full of Hasidic Jews, Muslims, there's even a street called the West Bank right near my house. Turks, Vietnamese, West Africans, and they're all

there together, and everyone is happily practicing his religion. There isn't this sense that people are losing themselves within that. So I'd like to know what you mean when you say disillusionment in multiculturalism.

Male Speaker:

Where is that?

Female Speaker:

In Putney, London.

Male Speaker:

You made this suggestion, if you draw the practical implication of what you were saying, you were saying, well for God's sake lift these restrictions for Palestinians moving into Jewish neighborhoods. Isn't it also important to emphasize that a great part of the problem is giving them the choice to develop their own communities?

Yossi Yonah:

That's what I said.

Male Speaker:

So in addition to lifting these restrictions, it's like lifting the restrictions or actually keeping that segregationist model of multiculturalism which is, I think, the biggest problem actually, that Palestinians within Israel aren't really being allowed to develop their own towns or villages.

Yossi Yonah:

That's what I said. When I talk about segregationist multiculturalism and integrationist multiculturalism I don't mean that we've got to look at them as mutually exclusive. They've got to live side by side. All I was saying is that people who want to preserve their cultures and live in segregated areas, have every right to do that and we have to allow them to do so under certain conditions, never mind encourage, but we've got to allow them of course. On the other hand I'm saying you've got to promote integrationist multiculturalism whereby people who want to live in mixed neighborhoods are able to do so, and that means to lift restrictions or to build new cities and towns that would allow Arabs and Jews to co-mingle if you wish. So this is my answer to you, and I think that we see eye-to-eye on that.

As for your question, I am not much of an expert on what happens in Jerusalem, so I'll speak in general. What does it mean, for instance, that the mayor of Jerusalem, the Israeli government, are terrified by the growing number of Arabs within the metropolitan area of Jerusalem? What do they do? They either build walls to stop them from moving in, or continue to build segregated Jewish neighborhoods in order to assert

Jewish dominance in the city of Jerusalem. What can be done? I don't know what can be done to undermine, collaborate, mitigate this sort of top-down harsh urban planning jointly done by the Israeli government and the city of Jerusalem. I wish I had an answer. With respect to disillusionment, what I mean is manifested, for instance, by these states upholding these ideas of putting restrictions on immigration, having selected immigration policies, putting obstacles in the way of naturalization, saying that if you want to become a citizen of the state, you have to know the language or the constitution, in America they talk about social studies whereby you've got to learn the American heritage, and then you go to Germany and you've got maybe to learn more, with emphasis on German heritage or French heritage, you cannot wear a Hijab – this is what I meant by the disillusionment with multiculturalism.

Radical

Discontent

// Eyal Danon

Nowadays for a smaller and smaller proportion of Israelis, the land in which we live was once a non-Jewish space; it was an Arab realm, foreign and threatening or familiar and intriguing, but real. For most of us, the land has never been a non-Jewish territory. The natural way in which the land's Jewishness is accepted may imply that individuals and societies develop an intimate relationship with the surroundings and landscape in which they are born; an intimacy which renders natural something which is, in fact, an artificial product, something which only slightly more than sixty years ago was a wholly different landscape.

The successful Judaization of the landscape of Palestine reinforces the recognition that myths and stories are powerful tools in the shaping of subjects and landscapes. Zionism's success is possibly the most radical example in this respect. The story of the Jewish people's affinity with the Land of Israel, and the introduction of Zionist settlement in it as the continuation of a

historical sequence of Jewish national presence may be deemed the most conspicuous Zionist creation. In this sense, Zionism's most significant product and its most effective tool is the narrative. Zionism succeeded in reshaping the Jewish subject and the territory it allotted him by virtue of the narrative it created.

The success of the Judaization of the land, of the landscape, is absolute. For us, Jewish Israelis, there should be only one Israel, a direct continuation of an ancient national Jewish entity. This is the most perfect expression indicating the success of the Zionist Movement's takeover of the territory, as well as the success in shaping the new Jewish subject, the one who believes the story. This short essay was written from the perspective of a product of this enterprise. It sets out to trace the two elements at the core of Zionism – the human element and the land – as well as the impact of the Zionist shaping enterprise on the everyday life of Israel's Jewish citizens.

Zionism's two foci – the renewal of the individual and the shaping and takeover of the land – were based on the notion of the "negation of exile," namely the negation of Jewish existence and the characteristics of the exilic Jew, alongside negation of the country's years of existence without Jews, namely – negation of the Palestinian existence in it. In both cases, one is concerned with radical discontent regarding the reality of the two major objects of Zionism – the Jewish individual and the Land of Israel. Zionism will radically change both, while erasing 2,000 years of history, and skipping back in time to the biblical past where it found the historical justification for the entire process.

Zionism, as a European national movement, endeavored to recreate the Jewish subject as an antithesis of the European Jew, the product of years of exile. Even though its target audience was composed of subjects who lived in Europe in the

mid-19th century, in present-day Israel the major political forces still regard Zionism as a revolution that has not ended. We, Israelis, are still regarded as requiring a process of shaping and education in order to strengthen our hold on the land and our bond with it. This pedagogical move is manifested throughout the education process of the Israeli child – from kindergarten, through school, to military service, continuing even into his adult life. Zionism still tries to produce "new Jews"; this holds true of my generation and that of my children – we are all still subjected to an educational process intended to shape us as Jews who are confident of their right over the land in which they live, and who regard their very life in it as a realization of a historical right granted to our patriarchs who dwelled in this land in biblical times.

I came across an example of the association made during the socialization of the Israeli citizen during Israel's war in Gaza last December (2008).

My ten-year old son came back with Bible class homework from the Book of Joshua and with questions from his tutor about "Operation Cast Lead," the name given to the Israeli attack on Gaza. The connection made between the story of Canaan's conquest by Joshua in his war against the Canaanites, and Israel's present-day war in Gaza generated a type of disturbance, making the raw materials comprising Israeli identity and the tools shaping it appear less transparent and self-evident. For a split second a door had opened, granting a peek into our operation mechanism.

The homework in Bible included questions about the conquest of the land, the annihilation of its inhabitants, the nation's right over the land, and other questions about the stories of the land's conquest as recounted in the Book of Joshua. Nowhere were my son and his classmates asked to pose questions or be critical of the story told. The land's conquest and the expulsion of its inhabitants

were introduced as resulting from a just move which is not supposed to invoke moral dilemmas. Nowhere was the question asked, whether it is just to conquer and expel, by what right, or what the Divine Promise is on whose behalf this was done.

Even if this were a mere curricular coincidence, such a link between the recent Israeli war in Gaza and the biblical past can be seen as the core of the Israeli educational system. It generates a national identity and identification with the ancient Israelites whose chronicles the Bible recounts, and is intended to make us and them a part of a continuous national entity. My ability as a parent to offer an alternative for that narrative is very limited, since it is reinforced and supported by so many interactions experienced by the Israeli child – in school, on television, in literature, and also since his exposure to another narrative or other possibilities of reading the biblical stories, necessarily differentiates him from his classmates.¹

The Bible, which is presented in Israeli schools as a history book, is taught as a basic textbook providing justification to the goals of Zionism and proof of its rightness. The Israeli educational system cannot promote critical reading of the Bible and the undermining of its status since this would cut the ground from under its feet. Thus it is interesting that precisely the approach regarding the bible as history, one that seeks proofs of its rightness, is not originally Jewish, but rather Christian. The ideas of Jewish Zionism, as they crystallized in the second half of the 19th century, may be read as a later reincarnation of Christian ideas that may be dubbed Christian Zionism.² The great interest in the Holy Land was a Christian practice for centuries, while the Jews maintained a spiritual affinity with the land and did not regard pilgrimage as a goal of Jewish religious life. Like Christian theology, Zionism, too, was based on the permanent discontent with reality and the present,

and outlined a radical ideology intended to bring about a change in order to reconstruct a glorious past. This denial of the present and preference for the imagined over the real is an element which exists in both Christianity and Zionism, forming a major motivation for these ideologies as they approach the focus of their interest: the individual and the land.

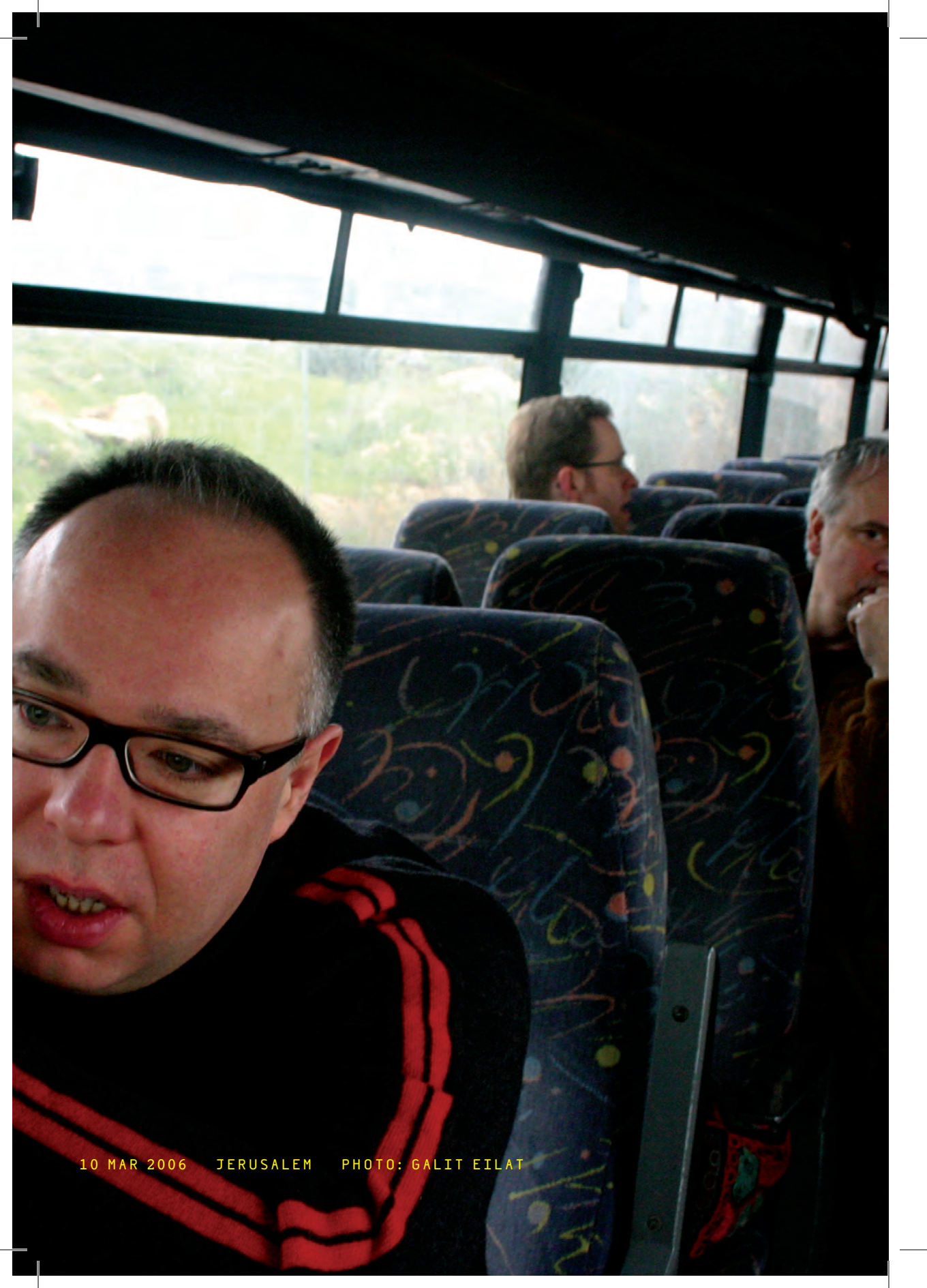
The roots of Christian Zionism lie in the theological struggles which led to the establishment of the Protestant Church. The struggle between Catholicism and Protestantism led to an important turning point with regard to Christianity's relation to the Holy Land. The advent of the Protestant Church and with it, additional currents in Christian faith, such as Puritanism in the 16th and 17th centuries, and Evangelism in the 18th century, represented discontent with the old ecclesiastical establishment and its tradition of exegesis and precepts, preaching a return to the original

scriptures. Through its influence, the status of the Holy Land began to change, from a site of a punishment and strengthening of faith, as it was for the pilgrims, into a site of learning. Perception of the land as a site which enables human transformation, already held by the pilgrims, was maintained, but the Protestants introduced preference for learning via experience, rather than by interpretation of texts, hence the voyage to the Holy Land became central to the study of the Bible and a part of the reshaping of the devout believer via learning. Christian theology drew a link between the land and the text, between a site in the Holy Land and a biblical story. The land was perceived as a dormant text that must be revealed in order to approach sanctity. The obsession for reading the land will pass on to Jewish Zionism, and form a milestone in the construction of a new Jew, confident of his right to the land, knowing through his intimate acquaintance with it, that by his very return to the









10 MAR 2006 JERUSALEM PHOTO: GALIT EILAT

land he is renewing an ancient national Jewish presence.

In his book *Land/Text: The Christian Roots of Zionism*, Yoad Eliaz discusses the centrality of vision in relation to the bond with the Holy Land. The association between the text and the land requires vision, observation of the land, which makes possible the shaping of the Christian or Zionist subject. In both Christian and Jewish travel literature, the journey to the Holy Land begins by turning one's eyes away from the starting port, from reality. Eliaz cites two examples from Christian and Jewish travel literature. At the beginning of Joseph Klausner's journey to Eretz-Israel, he describes how the ship draws away from Odessa: "My eyes looked at the shore, but I could see nothing, as if my eyes were covered by 'cataracts'."³ Another example cited by Eliaz involves the journey of pilgrim Paula, who is described standing on the deck, looking away so as not to see her children as they part.⁴ Despite the great difference between them,

both these examples preserve the principle of turning the gaze or looking away, and the inability to observe reality. One may construe this gesture as symbolizing the true essence of the journey to the Holy Land. It requires dissociation from the present and reality, and a connection to the sacred past. As a journey of self-rectification or reshaping, the moment at which the gaze is turned is fundamental, and has a double meaning: the turning of the gaze from the concrete reality of Christian or Jewish existence will lead to turning away from the concrete reality of the land itself and its indigenous inhabitants once the traveler arrives there. The appropriation of the Holy Land is made possible by turning away from reality, and observing it exclusively from the perspective of its sacred past.

Vision is given precedence since it creates a physical link between the subject and the Biblical story. Only someone who has seen the sacred sites first hand, the light that shone

1 In the 1960s Dr. George Tamarin conducted a study among Israeli children about the influence of ethnic and religious prejudice on moral judgment. First published in Tel Aviv in 1963, and subsequently in *New Outlook* in 1966, the study explored the influence of nationalism on their moral judgment in terms of the presence of prejudice in the ideology held by school children, and the influence of uncritical study of the Bible in state schools in Israel on the inclination for the emergence of prejudice (especially the idea of "the chosen people," and the acts of genocide carried out by biblical heroes). I first heard of Dr. Tamarin's study in Galia Zalmanson Levi's essay, "Teaching the Book of Joshua and the Conquest," see: <http://readingmachine.co.il/home/books/1130066483/1130068804> <http://www.geocities.com/abumidian/josua.htm>

2 For elaboration on the Christian roots of Zionism, see: Regina Sharif, "Non-Jewish Zionism: Its Roots and Origins in England in Relation to British Imperialism, 1600-1919," http://www.al-moharer.net/falasteen_docs/regina_sharif.htm; Hilton Obenzinger, "American Palestine: Herman Melville, Mark Twain, and the Holy Land in the 19th Century American Imagination," http://209.85.129.132/search?q=cache:_N2e-6tbtdIJ:wwwlib.aub.edu.lb/~webcasar/Activities/PastEvents/

on the Biblical heroes and on Christ, is capable of believing. We are concerned, however, with vision which prefers the imagination to reality, the past to the present, since reality is no more than a guise hiding the sacred essence of the land. It is a vision at work in both present and real time and space, yet focused on neither; it enables one to detach oneself from them. Vision is a way to connect to the past, to skip the present and eliminate the temporal dimension via spatial presence. The subject, whether a devout Christian or a Zionist Jew, may thus prefer the sacred past over the real present, the sacred space over the real one, thereby reaffirming and strengthening his faith. This is the desired change caused by on site presence, making for introspection which cancels reality, creating before the viewer's eyes a reconstruction of the sacred Biblical past.

Of all the Christian traditions that have entered Jewish Zionism, the tradition of turning the gaze away from reality and opting for fiction

may be considered the most significant. Despite the many metamorphoses of various Zionist traditions prevalent in the pre-state and early state years, and what nowadays appears as Israeli society's eschewal of grand ideologies and myths and its transformation into a cynical consumerist society, this dimension has remained extremely central, and its impact on contemporary Israeli society is immense. Most of us, the Jewish citizens of Israel, regard the society in which we live as a part of the realization of a Divine Promise. The justification for the existence of the State of Israel is found in the stories of the Bible. The reality which includes a Palestinian presence, occupation of Palestinian land, an oppressive regime, and denial of human and civil rights – all these are met by near-total oversight, a turning of the gaze by large parts of our society. The roots of this oversight may be traced to this ability and need to ignore reality, of turning the gaze away from reality, intended to enable the

story to exist without it being undermined by reality – an approach already prevalent among Christian pilgrims.

The interpretation of the space by either Christian or Jewish Zionism corresponded with the reshaping of subjects in the service of ideology. It was suited to populations of immigrants or travelers, but not the indigenous population. It may be argued that only one who is foreign to the land can ignore its real essence and regard its landscapes as symbolizing another existence, a radical view of reality which, in fact, eliminates it. The influence of this discipline on the indigenous people of the land is weakened, and therefore the practices of pre-state and early state Zionism lose much of their appeal to native born Israelis. This may account for the fact that pivotal political and ideological powers now exist in Israel which regard the Zionist mission as an unfinished process: whether in terms of the shaping of the Zionist-Israeli subject who does not meet the criteria of faith in

the ideology and story of the land, or in terms of shaping the space, parts of which are not yet "Judaized." Thus, initiatives for pedagogical programs for reinforcement of Zionism and the Jewish heritage among the children of Israel are frequently presented, in amendments to the State Education Law defining its goals, as in the 2000 and 2003 amendments where the Israeli Parliament (Knesset) stated these goals:

1. *To educate a humanist individual, who loves his people and his country, a loyal citizen of the State of Israel, who respects his parents and family, his heritage, his cultural identity, and his language;*
2. *To bequeath the principles listed in the Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel and the basic values of the State of Israel as a democratic, Jewish state, and to engender respect for human rights, for basic liberties, for democratic values, for obedience to the law, for respect of the other's culture and views, and to educate and*

strive for peace and tolerance between peoples and nations;

3. *To teach the history of the Land of Israel and the State of Israel;*

4. *To teach the Holy Scriptures (the "Torah of Israel"), the history of the Jewish people, Jewish heritage and Jewish tradition; to bequeath the awareness of the memory of the Holocaust, heroism and martyrdom, and to teach to respect them.*

- *The goals of State Education in Israel as detailed in the Dovrat Report*

Later on in his report, Dovrat, who headed a committee appointed to examine the condition of the state education system, notes that:

The State of Israel is a Jewish and democratic state. As such, its educational system must strive to strengthen the Jewish identity of its pupils, to shape the conceptual core which forms the foundation for the existence of the nation in its land, the national home of the Jewish people, which, as such, serves as a Jewish center and a

Lecture%2520texts/Fall0607/HiltonObenzinger'spaper.doc+landscape+bible+israel+palestine&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=33;
Keith W. Whitelam, *The Invention of Ancient Israel* (London: Routledge, 1996).

3 Yoad Eliaz, *Land/Text: The Christian Roots of Zionism* (Tel Aviv: Resling, 2008), p. 186.

4 *Ibid.*, p. 73.

focal point of identification for every Jew the world over.

In recent years additional programs have been

and Shomron: Every Jew's Story" fig. 1 – which indicates the continued view of the territories as connected to the Bible, and of Jewish

Tel Shiloh is located in southern Samaria, approximately 30 km north of Jerusalem, halfway between Ramallah and Nablus. The



1 Jewish kids dressed in "Biblical" costumes, image from the website of the campaign "Judea and Samaria: The story of every Jew," <http://www.jstory.co.il/>

introduced aimed at strengthening Jewish identity and heritage, among them "One Hundred Basic Concepts in Heritage, Zionism, and Democracy," and the core program intended to create uniformity between the various educational streams, offering bonuses to schools teaching extra lessons in heritage.⁵

Another fascinating example of the link between the land and the book (the Bible) is evident in the campaign of the Yesha⁶ Council – "Yehuda

settlement in the West Bank as a continuation of the same ancient national Jewish existence. The website launched especially for the campaign,⁷ presented a map of the Occupied Territories, Judea and Samaria as the settlers call them, with reference points of sites in which the Biblical stories took place. The association between story and geography generates the proof for the rightness of Jewish settlement there today. The story of Tel Shiloh may serve as an example:

site has been populated since the Middle Bronze Age (ca. 1750 BCE). It is a high hill, easily accessible by climbing, but only from the north. At its peak the settlement extended over some 7.45 acres.

The word Shiloh is first mentioned in the Bible in the Book of Genesis (in Jacob's blessing his son Judah). As a specific place, however, it appears only in the Book of Joshua: "And the whole congregation of the children of Israel assembled together at Shiloh, and set up the

tabernacle of the congregation there. And the land was subdued before them" (Joshua 18:1). The Holy Ark was kept in Shiloh; later on in the book of Joshua it is hinted that Shiloh was also the de facto capital of the twelve tribes. In Shiloh, Hannah prays for a son. In her despair, she makes a vow to dedicate her future son's life to the service of the Lord. Hearing her prayer, the priest Eli promises, in the name of the Lord, that she will be granted a son. Her son will be Samuel, one of the most influential figures in the nation at the time, and the one who transformed it from a cluster of tribes into a kingdom.

The Ark was taken from Shilo for spiritual reinforcement during the war against the Philistines; the Israelites, however, were defeated, and the philistines took the Ark as a plunder. Subsequently, Shiloh itself was destroyed, probably by the Philistines. It took nearly 21 years before the Ark was returned to Jerusalem by King David. Despite its destruction, however, it appears that Jews remained

in Shiloh until 722 BCE – the year in which the Kingdom of Israel was destroyed by Assyria.

Shiloh was a center of pilgrimage and the construction of houses of prayer by worshipers of all three monotheistic religions. Its ruins include mosaic floors and diverse archaeological finds. Its significance and the archaeological wealth in it have attracted various research expeditions, among them the Danish expedition (1926-31) and the group headed by Dr. Finkelstein of Bar Ilan University (1981).

It is easy for us, as secular Israelis, to dismiss the settlers' campaign as detached from the mainstream of Israeli society, regarding them as a group of messianic extremists who have taken the Zionist enterprise one step too far, endangering themselves and society as a whole. The settlements in the territories occupied in 1967, however, cannot be dissociated from the Zionist enterprise as a whole. They are based on the same ideology,

5 For information about the "One Hundred Basic Concepts in Heritage, Zionism, and Democracy" see: http://www.education.gov.il/moe/klali/mea_musagim.htm.

6 Yesha is an acronym for the Hebrew names of Judea, Samaria and Gaza (Yehuda, Shomron, Aza) used by parts of the Israeli political right and the settlers to designate the Occupied West Bank.

7 <http://www.jstory.co.il/>
The site presents its goal as follows: "Judea and Samaria – Information Administration" is an a-political Zionist body striving to reinforce the affinity of the Jewish people to two of the major provinces in its homeland where the dramatic events that constituted our nation, as we know it today, took place. The places where God was revealed to our patriarchs, where David led his father's flock, where the Hasmoneans fought the Hellenists – are all in Judea and Samaria. The bitter debate between Israelis from different ends of the political spectrum is well known. We have no intention of adding fuel to this fire. Our goal is very different. We would like to enable Israelis to experience Judea and Samaria in a profound and fundamental manner. It is our view that Judea and Samaria are not the core of the Palestinian problem, but rather the focal point of Israeli existence. It is a perceptual change ultimately capable of influencing the political decision which we will all have to take, as one nation.

supported by the same systems of government, and mainly – they are underlain by the same narrative. The settlement enterprise in the Occupied Territories is indeed associated with the religious right wing, but in effect – and this is congruent with the settlers' position – it is a direct and natural continuation of the secular Zionist enterprise. It is a continuation thereof without the secular guise which characterized Zionism in its beginnings. The power of the narrative as the "operating system" of Israeli society greatly deviates from the settlers' circles. It has always had immense influence, certainly after the establishment of the State of Israel, when it had at its disposal the powers of the establishment and the state, hence it was very difficult to oppose to it. In this context I review the history of parts of my family, Jews who have lived here for several generations, long before Zionist settlement. It is very likely that they were Arab-speaking Jews who perceived themselves as part of the Arab

community, and yet adopted the Jewish national narrative. I wonder whether such things can evolve differently. Could there have been a Palestinian-Jewish identity which would have symbolized a type of intercultural link and introduced an opposition to the national narrative that has taken over not only the Zionist subjects who have come here on its account, but over the local Jewish identity as well?

As aforesaid, Zionism focused not only on the creation of a new subject, but also on the creation of a new territory for that subject. The Christians deemed physical settlement of the land significant; there were Christian colonies which incorporated theological thought and science, and regarded the study of the land on the spot as a type of religious practice. Only Zionism, however, succeeded in shaping the land itself, its landscapes, and population makeup according to the story, in the sense that if proof for the justness of the story in the landscape is insufficient, we

shall shape the landscape so as to make the proof correspond with the story.

The most significant and revolutionary element in the takeover and Hebraization of the land was the Hebraization of the map. Two committees were set up for that purpose: the Committee for Determining Hebrew Names in the Negev and the Government Names Committee.⁸ The Hebraization of the map was an act of reversal, reversal of Arab names into Hebrew, as well as reversal of the ordinary relationship within the practice of cartography: instead of a map which is a representation of the territory, it introduced a map which is a model by which the territory may be shaped.⁹

Until the establishment of the State of Israel one may describe Zionist cartography not as an act of taking over the space, but as a gradual takeover – of time, of history.¹⁰ It was a graphic expression of the Zionist narrative, of the continuity

between biblical times and contemporary reality. The elimination of the temporal dimension acquired a spatial manifestation here, on paper, on the map, and only later would it be given a spatial expression in the territory itself. This will happen after the establishment of the State, when the powers of the state and the army were at the disposal of cartography and the state was able to implement its model without the indigenous population being there to present any opposition. This is a radical example of the link between cartography and the military. Mapping is a known tool in the service of the army. Here, however, the army works in the service of cartography by making possible the shaping of the landscape according to its model, creating a territory where there is no longer a temporal or spatial gap between the story and the land. Theretofore, the Arab landscape was perceived as a foreign, threatening territory. On the map there were enclaves of known Jewish areas, but it was mainly

foreign land. In the wake of the 1948 War, when the Names Committee was set up to Hebraicize the map of the Negev, the names it heard from the Arabs who remained there, sounded foreign to its members.¹¹

*The names we found not only rang foreign to our ears; they were also inaccurate. Their meaning was unclear, and many of them were no more than random names of people or derogatory designations. Many of them were offensive due to their somber meaning which reflects the nomads' frailty vis-à-vis the difficulties posed by nature.*¹²

Interestingly, even though the map of Palestine before 1948 appeared as foreign, threatening territory due to the "blanket" of Arab names which covered it, this multiplicity of foreign names could not undermine the myth of "a people without a land returning to a land without a people." This continuous view of the land from the perspective of its sacred past, while disregarding its

The Judea and Samaria – Information Administration regards settlement in Judea and Samaria as the implementation of the affinity between the Jewish people and its land. Nevertheless and despite the link and support on the part of the Yesha Council, the Administration does not represent the Judea and Samaria settlement movement, which has its own agenda and speakers. Furthermore, the Administration does not promote an essentially religious message. Mostly secular, its team promotes this concern out of a broad cultural-historical-national view, rather than religious belief. The Administration will engage in several fields, among them: advertising campaigns; website content; encouragement of participation in trips and events; audience-targeted propaganda, and participation in panel discussions.

8 The Committee for Determining Hebrew Names in the Negev was established by David Ben-Gurion. Its main role was to determine Hebrew names for "geographical objects." The Committee held 29 sessions over ten months, during which 561 Hebrew names were affixed to sites south of the line between Ashkelon and the Kidron Brook; only 29 of them names of settlements. The result was published in 1950. It was the only map of the Government Survey Department where the Arabic name of the place appeared next to its new Hebrew name. The map

מספר קואורדינטות
ועדה לקביעת שמות בנגב
משרד ראש הממשלה

ח ש מ ר ה

מספר קואורדינטות

| | | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|--------|-----|
| Khalīj al - 'Aqaba | ספרץ עקבה | | .1 |
| J. ar - Riyāhiyya | ג'בל א-רִיחִייה | 130880 | .2 |
| W. ar - Riyāhiyya | ודי א-רִיחִייה | 130880 | .3 |
| W. al - Misrī | ודי אל-מִסְרִי | 140880 | .4 |
| W. Umm al - Jurf | ו. חם אל-ג'רף | 140880 | .5 |
| Umm Rashrash | חם רִשְׁרַשׁ | 140880 | .6 |
| Maqb al - 'Aqaba | מקב אל-עקבה | 130880 | .7 |
| J. al - Misrī | ג'בל אל-מִסְרִי | 140880 | .8 |
| 'Ain al - Qattār | אין אל-קַטָר | 130880 | .9 |
| W. ar - Radāda | ו. א-רִדָדָה | 130880 | .10 |
| as - Suwaidā | א-סוּוַיְדָה | 140890 | .11 |
| Sail 'Imrān | סַיִל עִמְרָן | 140890 | .12 |
| Umm Khunaiqa | חם חֻנַיְקָה | 140890 | .13 |
| Mā' al - Qittār | מא אל-קַטָר | 140890 | .14 |
| J. Abī 'Alāliq (ḥanīs) | ג'. אביר אל-עֵלִיק (חַנִּיס) | 140890 | .15 |
| W. Rakhama | ו. רִחַמָה | 140890 | .16 |
| Tall al Aṣfar | תל אל אֶסְפַר | 140890 | .17 |
| ad - Dafiyya | א-דַפְיָה | 150890 | .18 |
| 'Ain ad - Dafiyya | אין א-דַפְיָה | 150890 | .19 |
| Bi'r Ḥandis | בֵּיר חַנְדִּיס | 140900 | .20 |
| W. Ḥandis | ודי חַנְדִּיס | 140900 | .21 |
| J. Umm Quṭf | ג'. חם קַטְף | 130900 | .22 |
| J. Umm Buṭṭuma | ג'. חם בֻטְטוּמָה | 130900 | .23 |

was published after the cease-fire agreement with Jordan on April 3, 1949. Ben-Gurion instructed to ignore the Green Line. Under his encouragement and approval Hebrew names were given to settlements, ruins and geographical features within the boundaries of the Jordan-held West Bank, beyond the Green Line in that area.

The Government Names Committee is a public committee appointed by the Israeli Government, engaged in naming settlements and other features and spots on the map of Israel and changing pre-1948 Arab names with Hebrew names. All State institutions must abide by the Committee decisions. The first Names Committee was established, on the order of the High Commissioner, Sir Herbert Samuel, by the Jewish National Fund (JNF/ KKL) in 1922, and was called "The Settlement Names Committee under the auspices of the JNF." It operated in this format until 1950, subsequently given official status and subordinated as a unit in the Prime Minister's Office.

9 One may see how the Christian and Zionist characteristics of preference of the imagined over the real and the past over the present apply here as well. The map is being shaped according to the biblical story, rather than the actual reality of the land.

10 Meron Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape: The Buried History of*

ideological circles such as the settlers in the Occupied Territories, such tours are held in the context of study

of local geography and the bible, whereas among secular audiences they are held in the context of leisure culture.



3 The ruins of the Abu Sneina family house in the village of Ijlil (today in the municipal territory of the cities of Herzliya and Ramat HaSharon)

Even though the Hebraicized map is an artificial tool, the fact that the power mechanisms serve it lends it validity and a hold. The educational system, road signs, the postal service, the transportation system, and the

press – all use the Hebraicized map, relating to the landscape as a Hebrew landscape; therefore, the Palestinian citizens of Israel, the ones who remained here, are also forced to adopt the new map, and with it – the new landscape,

in all its interactions with the government. The result of these systems of socialization operated by the State in the service of the narrative is that an entire stratum of Israelis born here accepts the Hebraicized landscape as

totally natural. We succeed in creating intimacy with the landscape, therefore the grand narrative has lesser sway over us. Reality is perceived as the natural thing. The fact that the reality of the space in which we live is a structured reality, the result of a violent process of shaping that has unrecognizably changed the territory, remains unknown. The implication of this ignorance is crucial to every aspect of our everyday life as Israelis. Ignorance of the basic facts regarding the country in which we live, the inaccessibility of the information, and the reluctance to search for it enable the State of Israel to continue sustaining a regime of occupation and oppression without having large parts of the Jewish population in Israel challenge the justness of the causes and means.

The concluding report of the Names Committee states that "nine years ago, the map of our country was poor in names."¹⁴ To the committee members, an Arab map is an empty map indicating an

empty land. A Hebrew map is a full map, hence the country is now full. In other words, the process of takeover and reshaping is complete. It is interesting to review it from a Christian perspective – rejection of the local reality of the land, view of only that which enables rejuvenation of the past, scientific research, mapping, and finally takeover. From an empty land to a full land which fulfills its destiny as an expression and a proof of the biblical story. This story once served the Christian establishment, and once again – the Zionist establishment. *fig. 2*

The result of the Hebraization process was de-synchronization of the landscape, so to speak. This is best manifested by the updated Mandatory Map which fleetingly offers an opportunity to observe both landscapes and both times together, before the Palestinian map was erased, and with it the landscape. (*fig. 3,4*)

Zionism and Christianity imagined the Holy Land in the same manner. The

the Holy Land Since 1948 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000).

11 In the Names Committee work, precedence was given to the biblical story over scientific proof. In Zionism as in Christianity, the bible holds precedence, forming a proof even when the goal of the search for proof is to prove its truth. The Committee has always preferred to give a biblical name to a given site even when there was no sufficient proof as to its location. The Negev, and subsequently the entire country, became a space where a biblical landscape may be created by imagination, without need of scientific proof. The story overpowers everything, arranging the power systems to serve its purpose.

12 Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape*, op. cit., [Central Zionist Archive KKL/5/17204].

13 Perusing the Arab map of the land, one finds the map of the Jewish Diaspora in Europe. These are two sides of the same coin. The two maps represent liminal time and space in which the nation and land are presented according to Zionism, until it eliminated the liminal loss in which they were trapped. It ultimately led to the end of time in an act imitating Messianic realization, and revived the Jewish ownership of the land.
14 Benvenisti, *Sacred Landscape*, op. cit., p. 38.

Christian pilgrims, travelers, and scholars depicted it and settled in it. The Zionists shaped it practically and directly, to make it conform with the imagination. The imagined community¹⁵ used the imagined narrative in order to shape the territory – landscape, people, etc. – in congruence with its imagination. The modeling was so effective that only at certain places, where signs were left, where there are loopholes and gaps between the landscape and the cloak of names covering it, in the space between signifier and signified, one may pinpoint hints of another story; signs of another existence, another narrative insisting on leaving its imprint on the landscape, refusing to be erased. Everyday anew, we, the Jewish citizens of Israel, seem to choose to cling to the story told us, instead of confronting the reality of our life in this region. It is precisely the adherence to the Zionist narrative that leaves all of us in a state of concurrent presence in a liminal space and time, between past and

future, between East and West. In this respect one may say that Zionism extracted the Jewish people from its history in contrast with its professed goal. The adherence to the past and disregard for the present, while relying exclusively on power to enable such existence, render Israel a society with not only an imagined past, but also an imagined present reality; a society which still regards itself as a type of re-realization of a grand existence, and not a society whose objective is to ensure real, secure, and egalitarian life to anyone living under its auspices. The question arises: when will we take the pill that will make us tear down the curtain of illusion and see the desert of the real in which we really live?

15 Benedict Anderson's notion of the 'imagined community' is highly relevant here since it takes into consideration the significance of the imagined narrative. See: Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (London and New York: Verso, 1983).

Not-Yet-Ness

// Reem Fadda

1

Introduction

In a recent visit to the Palestinian Territories by performance artist and curator Coco Fusco, I asked her what she thought was the reason for the influx of professionals, especially art-related practitioners, to this troubled area. These people, she suggested, feel that they are in a place where history "is being made." History-in-the-making is an interesting concept in this regard. People realize that time in this place is of consequence, an insight which they witness in 'real' time. The present tense seems to contribute towards futurity or time continuum. In the concept of 'our' time and space, I think it is important to capitalize on how 'our' aspect of understanding may become a platform for others as well, not as a way to essentialize or hegemonize, but to provide

an opportunity for communal practices and adoptions. Cultures are founded on cohabitation and shared-ness. The limits of the context's specificity ought to be broken up in order to facilitate broader understanding, possibly even a solution.

The Palestinian issue has currently entered an interesting phase. With the collapse of functional politics and a spatial metamorphosis or disfiguration, we have come to face a new set of questions regarding its 'nationalistic' project. In what seems to be a time of stagnation, I see a time where existentialistic formulas need to be challenged and reconsidered within parameters of the known. What happens spatially when hysteria leads to physical disintegration of applicable spatial logic, and ideas of what constitutes the norm are being derived from political and social practices that are clearly reformulated and reexamined

organically yet impulsively? This is a place where nationalism comes into question, along with belonging, patriotism, identity, and the jumble of adherents of nationalism. I find that it has entered the 'not' zone where everything becomes possible. I would even go as far as to vouch that this state of stagnation and digression can become a place of surrender for claims of universality. It is an open space for contemplation about existential dilemmas that pertain not only to the Palestinians or the Israelis, but to time in general. Imagination becomes necessary for provisions and scenarios of possible futures, together and with others. Maybe this is all mere day-dreaming or wishful thinking.

I recently attended a conference organized in New York City by CUNY and Columbia University entitled "Crisis States: The Uncertain Future of Israel/

Palestine." It was reassuring to find that not only me and the many artists I know obsess about this question of futurity, but the academics as well.

Voices were raised asking direct questions related to its past and future. Questions of temporality, spatial rationale, and existential continuum are essential here, in Palestine as well as in Israel. We must find formulas as to how and in what shape the foreseeable future could persist. Maybe these formulas need to be created from a blend of elements brought on by reality, theory and aesthetic interpretation, yet mixed in with a huge dollop of openness and a drive stemming from reclaiming agency through decolonization, towards the future.

I find it most interesting that a place such as this nevertheless serves as a quintessential case of modernity. In this context, the actual severance from history – from the 1948 War (*Al-Nakba*)

and the many unfolding realities that have ruptured geographies, to Bantustans and other present-day enclaves – has compromised this sense of continuity in our comprehension of time. Furthermore, this continuous radical, forced rupture with our past transforms it into an obsession with our timelessness; our contemporaneity is heightened as is our futurity. Duly and obsessively, we never forsake the past. Hence a new vocabulary is created for the interpretation of our modernity, distinctly characterized by a forceful relationship with our time. The violence of these ruptures recalls the need for stratagems of dealing with an exceptional temporal reality. For me, this interest in time makes it all the more a political act. We find that many attempts fall short from the messianic, and in their simplest form – are attempts at liberatory politics.

2

Not-yet-ness

I would like to highlight a temporal term which I encountered in reference to the Palestinian question in an article by Prof. Grant Farred, "Disorderly Democracy: An Axiomatic Politics," a term which, I find, adds to the notion of history-in-the-making. The term is "not-yet-ness." Farred used it to reflect on the current state of affairs of the nationalistic project taking place in Palestine; I find the term very appealing context-wise as well as in its temporal "potentialities" a-la Agamben. Needless to say that the term 'not-yet', in its literal sense, is not new in its philosophical expansions. In the following paragraphs I will trace it back to Heidegger, Benjamin, and Iqbal.

First, in the crude political interpretation of the Palestinian

context, not-yet-ness refers to the state of not being a state, or a sovereignty in the traditional sense that is not fully reinstated or wants to create its own permutations and understandings of what constitutes a sovereign project. According to Farred, "The Palestinian's is a struggle for and against a sovereignty whose not-yet-ness, whose persistent incipience, constitutes the very spectral substance that undermines all those other adjoining, contiguous sovereignties..."¹ In this sense, the Palestinians have the agency to claim, interpret, and create viable understandings of sovereignty away from didactics of enforced power relations. Here one begins to see the hints alluding to self-proclamation and calls of decolonization.

Unpacking the term "not-yet-ness" within that context from a more theoretical point of view, one finds that it unfolds multiple

meanings; that which is, and which is not. Or that with the potential to be, but is not. My major attempt in understanding the temporal aspect within this sense is by conflating it with human agency. So in this permutation, it is interesting to see that this term conflates with the Agambenian notion of "potentialities" in that it always retains the negative or a state of lackness; the same state of lackness or "not-ness" that invokes restlessness or need for change brought about by the subject's ability and knowledge to realize one's lackness.

According to Alam Khundmiri's interpretation of poet Iqbal, "to be potential means: to be one's own lack, *to be in relation to one's own incapacity*."² Potential, according to this understanding, holds the possibility of becoming an actuality, very similar to that of the not-yet; at the same time, it also holds the potential not to be or not to do.

The major claim that I find so evident in this concept is that of agency and 'action.' The 'to do' is the real source of energy that also finds itself attached to a temporal reality, and always somehow seems to be neglected or undermined. The spirit of 'to do,' 'to make,' 'to build,' 'to create,' and many other verbs that denote action becomes highlighted within this context, once again illustrating how action becomes enjoined with the temporal. Furthermore, the highlighted rigor in this concept is its inexplicable cycle of self-regeneration. Agamben insists on highlighting words of action such as 'having.' He is primarily concerned with how potentiality retains 'knowledge and ability.'³ To be capable of harnessing one's own 'absence' or 'privation,' means that one has 'faculty' and 'power.' In this instance one asserts his capacity of garnering free will and agency. "To be free is... *to be capable of one's own*

impotentiality, to be in relation to one's own privation."⁴

The term's temporality, that which evokes a strong reference to futurity while still anchored in the present and past, is fascinating. Iqbal established modernity as that which is projected towards a future, while always being driven by a past. The 'not-yet' is a constant caller in his poems.⁵ This refers to Heidegger's *Dasein*, that which sees its Being-in-the-world as a perpetual, hermeneutic continuum, empowered by a sense of agency, free will, and awareness.⁶ Iqbal realized the importance in assuming a non-fatalistic attitude towards the world, one where agency and transformation again unfold. "Iqbal is in full agreement with the humanists that man makes his own history... Iqbal would have agreed with Heidegger that destiny is a mode of authentic existence and that everything does not have a

destiny. If a man becomes a thing he loses his destiny, he acquires it by becoming free. To act freely is to act historically, and to act historically is to defy death."⁷ So in acting within the parameters of the not-yet, one claims agency and free will, in order to act on his potential and with knowledge that he is doing so in a historical framework, owning his history and thwarting, towards a future.

3

Agency & the Messianic Drive

Not-yet, in its capacity to incorporate all tenses leading to futurity, is still a phrase with a negation. This status of negation or not, however, somehow manages to introduce an assertion, alluding to a somewhat prophetic force or voice of that which is about to happen. Free will and agency are conjured to assert the future implicit in the not-yet. In this prophetic drive

we are brought to messianic interpretations that seem to have also been quite natural to this place. The agency we have spoken so vigorously about is now capped in individuals who seek change. Once again, time here conflates with the subject. Messianic time renders prophets of "radical change," as Iqbal refers to them. According to the intellectual Alam Khundmiri, Iqbal's understanding of the role of prophets was that *a prophet becomes a destroyer, a creator and an agent of change. Iqbal's strong passion for the prophetic example does not betray his revivalistic attitude; on the contrary, it indicates a passion for time as against the static eternity of the mystic, a search for reality in the process of becoming rather than a changeless being, a passion for striving against the traditional quietist attitude, and, above all, a desire to plunge into the process of history for the creation of novelty.*⁸

The need becomes insurmountable in the state of the not-yet to produce those agents of change. Active ruptures, implemented with agency and a revolutionary drive, counter violent ruptures in time aimed at severing the past from the present, as in the case of the colonial occupation of Palestine. The aim is to stride away from our timelessness and recapture our past with messianic force. This, of course, is very much an understanding inspired by Walter Benjamin's position on history and the need for change. The messianic or revolutionary moment is to be conceived as a rupture or an interruption of the current situation. This is an important transformation in the idea of what constitutes revolution, since it has long been regarded as the end-point of progress and of historical development. Revolution is, therefore, theorized as an element in the norm of progress,

whereas disaster and crisis are intrusions. Benjamin turns the tables, with revolution becoming the interruption of progress, conceived as a cumulative development of the logic inherent in disaster, which is immanent in the present.⁹

The messianic translatability from Iqbal and Benjamin meets at a reclaiming of the past through adopting change as a catalyst. This brings the revolutionary mode into a new set of variables and a new role in relation to our history and time. In the not-yet of our times and within the Palestinian situation, an insurmountable desire comes about to recapture our sense of time by evoking our agency and provoking change, real change.

- 1 G. Farred, "Disorderly Democracy: An Axiomatic Politics," *CR: The New Centennial Review* (Michigan State University) 8(2), Fall 2008, p. 59.
- 2 M.T. Ansari (ed.), *Secularism, Islam and Modernity: Selected Essays of Alam Khundmiri* (New Delhi/London: Sage Publications, 2001), p. 189.
- 3 G. Agamben, "On Potentiality," *Potentialities: Collected Essays in Philosophy*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Palo Alto, CA: Stanford UP, 1999), p. 179.
- 4 *Ibid.*, p. 183.
- 5 Ansari, *op. cit.*, p. 214.
- 6 M. Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans.: John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (New York: Harper & Row, 1962).
- 7 *Ibid.*, p. 186.
- 8 *Ibid.*, p. 181.
- 9 W. Benjamin, *Illuminations: Essays and Reflection*, ed. Hannah Arendt, trans.: Harry Zohn (New York: Schocken, 2007).

The Road to Gaza :

1: Universal Rituals

in a Local Context

The local matters of the place, the changes occurring in it and the ones forced upon it, as well as its observation from the perspectives of a passerby and a resident – all of these necessarily generate changing and new relationships which call for special analysis... In order to have something to say, one must pose the question, whose answer does not necessarily constitute a solution to the problems.

...

The place speaks out, as if it had a tongue; it recounts the story of its people: their history, culture, cruelty... their struggle, their sources of pride and their misery, despite the people's attempts to deny or affirm this or that interpretation. After all, logic is a reflection of the world.

...

Urban planning of cities, their architecture, symbols, and landscapes are all political. This is sevenfold true under the circumstances of an illegal Israeli occupation, which tries to take control of land, destroys thousands of houses, isolates the towns and villages, builds settlements and paves roads in the service of the military machine and the occupying settlers. Art and science set out to research, observe, and change not only the landscape and scenery, but also the meaning, without withholding it completely.

...

To draw nearer – this is what a man can do in order to discover life in the place or the place in life. Ironically, even though the individual's life is shorter than the life of the place, the fast changes and revolutionary metamorphoses of places elicit the feeling that he lives more than one lifetime, and stands on multiple ruins. In this there is an evocation of the experience of the ancient Arabs who cried over a withering fire or a tent carried away by the

// **Khaled Hourani, Ramallah 2006**

desert wind.

...

In Palestine, the occupation makes both man and the place lose their way, their compass. A fifty year old person undergoes a hundred years' worth of experiences. A place of a mere 2.5 acres undergoes the transformations of an entire universe. Let us take Kalandia as an example, and follow the life of one individual, Nabil, our artist friend, who is 55. Already in mid-life, the place, for him, had more than a single meaning; meaning here is not merely revolutionary, but also cumulating, urgent and constant; almost denying what had been retained by memory.

...

From Kalandia Nabil flew to Egypt on his first trip to Alexandria. The place represented the airport, which duly is the gateway to the world, with all the connotations embedded in the words airport and airplane, launch, movement, freedom, hope, and the anticipation of the development of aeronautics...

The window to the world. The other places have become closed out. The airport was officially closed at the outbreak of the war. The last international flight took off in 1967.

...

Kalandia is also home to a refugee camp that symbolizes the Nakba; the Palestinian Catastrophe of 1948. Half of its inhabitants carry Jerusalem IDs, and the other half carry West Bank IDs, aptly representing the 1967 War and its repercussions... and the Separation Wall and the checkpoint... a continuation of the occupation and its policies.

...

Within these connotations, the area of Kalandia, with the airport,

checkpoint, camp and wall, are an exemplary record of the social and political transformations, at least since 1967.

...

From the Palestinian and global perspectives, the Kalandia checkpoint is the most conspicuous among the hundreds scattered throughout the West Bank, while Erez (or Beit Hanoun) is the most prominent in Gaza Strip. It is worthy to note here that checkpoints have various names and designations. Qalandiya checkpoint is referred to by the Israelis as "Qalandiya crossing" – the opposite of a checkpoint. This is also the name they use for the "Erez", "Karni", and "Philadelphia" crossings on the Gaza-Egypt border. King Hussein Bridge is also known as Allenby Bridge or al-Karama crossing.

...

The differences in names and designations are determined according to the position and side from which you stand. The permits issued by the occupation for some Palestinians, for example, are not called "exit permits from Gaza," but rather "entry permits to Israel." In a clear reference, meanings are switched – exiting a room within the house, rather than entering a house through a room within it, as if Gaza and the West Bank were external places from which you enter into Israel, while Israelis are totally forbidden to exit into the West Bank.

...

We will soon go to Gaza, having received the permit, the magnetic card and the ID card... and given the rare situation – no closure on the Occupied Territories...

...

Exiting from the Kalandia checkpoint, you go through gates which

remind you of house, hotel or shopping center entrances, and certainly not of entry gates into a new country... The Kalandia checkpoint is gradually coming to resemble Erez more, due to the multiple doors and control towers. The main difference is that in order to cross Erez one needs a user's manual in multiple languages to teach him the art of crossing.

...

Market-like stalls are scattered everywhere, and cars crowd in an act of defiance of life, competing with the Occupation on the ownership of roads and pavements. The taxi driver tells me "I must pick a driver who knows the roads well," adding that "It's not easy at all. The roads, my brother, have changed and there are no signposts." I decide to go with him, if only to continue the conversation. More than once he proves to me – I being the only passenger in his taxi – that he was right, and that indeed I no longer know the way. And indeed, you cannot trust the road signs, which totally ignore Gaza's existence. A small hill with a few houses on it on the other hand, is gives large conspicuous signs plus entry and exit arrows. All of a sudden, while driving on an international highway, the driver signals right, as though he wished to enter a farm or a side road, but this is the road to Gaza.

...

Alterations to the map, the planning of routes, and the road signs are all but innocent. The only remaining clue is a small road sign in Hebrew bearing the word "Gaza." The road continues, widening slightly only to narrow again, reaching a checkpoint in an atmosphere of isolation. A tourist's foot will not tread here place. There is no attraction to lure you. Here a world ends, and a hidden, forlorn world begins behind a checkpoint which is more

reminiscent of the entrance to an army base or a nuclear space station.

...

The horizon is blocked and nothing remotely resembles what the entrance to Gaza used to be like years ago; a two- or three-story building, barbed-wire fences, control towers, and body search points are located outside the mute building. Strict security inspections welcome you upon entry. The soldiers sit in a room behind thick glass, facing state-of-the-art computers. The room looks like a space station. Your picture appears on the screen as soon as you start waving your permit behind the glass, beginning with the process of entering alone. The cameras follow you, and the loudspeakers give instructions in a jumble of languages; they order you to stop and perform a self-search, turn around, take off your coat in the middle of this long tunnel leading to and from the Gaza Strip. The building and gates are intelligently built to keep you away from the soldiers, and you must obey the instructions whose exact source you cannot tell.

...

The decisive tone infuses you with a sense of emptiness and solitude. You are carefully watched. You don't know whether you should hasten your step or rather walk slowly. Whether you should put your hands in your pockets or not. The instructions of a poor director in an irony-filled play. You are controlled by the voice. All you have to do is obey the orders and keep silent. There is no one to hear you, and you cannot say or explain or inquire about anything. Once you enter the tunnel, the doors around you open and close automatically as in science-fiction movies. You become a receiver and an examinee, you cannot transmit; you cannot examine or

Speak to anyone. You are the one being addressed; a one-way contact. You are an object, not a subject, an a-priori suspect, surrounded.

...

What is important to you is to pass this examination successfully, and with minimal damage. One of the most perplexing moments is when the voice stops. Suddenly you are overcome by the feeling that your performance loses its meaning... What would have happened if someone were to photograph the entire process and erase the soundtrack? It would probably have turned into a first rate tragicomic scene. Comic because of the casual gestures and gyrating in the empty space, taking off your coat, and then putting it on again, then moving forward and back, waiting with no definite goal. It is especially funny for the first-timers, and bitterly sad due to the general context in which it all takes place.

...

Exiting from Gaza is more exhausting than entering. The process is more complicated and the wait is longer. There are inspection machines and x-rays and magnetic scanners and more, which could be much harder and even catastrophic for the deaf and mute.

...

The Erez crossing filters those entering Gaza, but it also hides that which lies beyond it. Once you have passed from Beit Hanoun into Gaza City, an exhausted, bombed country is revealed, full of pits and craters left by the tanks. And the congestion is stifling. Your hosts do not need to hear your experiences and tribulations, nothing's new and you have not come from the moon. There's nothing to say. You can only keep silent in the clamorous Gaza. One question hangs in the air: Is it worth living a life where

people are treated like animals or marionettes? Is it a life worth recounting?

...

The dominant culture now in this life of solitude and oppression has pushed towards the inward, and the self by force, and it has reduced the space of natural human contact and the ordinary grappling in the complexities of life. It has created totalitarian images and thoughts, and increased the sense of despair that hope of salvation will come. It has reinforced the conditions of isolation and racial segregation, and created an overwhelming sense of despair. The other – any other – is viewed as an enemy. The possibility of heterogeneity is omitted from consciousness altogether. Inner diversification of the self is likewise erased.

...

The war waged by the occupying country is total and directed at all citizens. It is not only aimed at military targets as the Occupier claims. The policy of collective punishment and invasion of the cities would not have been performed without a culture of exclusion and negation of the other and the treatment of every Palestinian as enemy. Suffice it to mention here the horrible sonic raids carried out by low-flying Israeli aircrafts on Gaza after the evacuation of the settlements. Children, women, men, and elders are deprived of sleep and live in a constant state of terror due to the formidable air explosions that occur in the Gazan sky.

...

It has also become manifest in the responses of Palestinians; martyr attacks prove that the other has become the ultimate enemy indiscriminately, while the self has been defined as a collective victim struggling on behalf of others, all others.

...

The conflict and re-Occupation brought about new elements and means unknown before the second Intifada, which have had greater devastative impact than all the Occupation years. The hopes of the Palestinian people for freedom, peace, security, and economic development have been diminished following the construction of the Separation Wall and installation of hundreds checkpoints in situ. The Occupation continues the policy of isolation, land expropriation, settlement building, and transformation of the Palestinian cities and villages into dissociated cantons. Further on, the Occupation declares its intention to plan an extensive road matrix; it intends to deepen Jerusalem's Judaization, cut off the Jordan Valley, and declare the Wall as Israel's permanent border.

...

Alongside all these, the obscure Palestinian national entity, founded on the basis of agreements which have been torn apart, has become paralyzed as a national authority, unable to stop the deterioration and to provide protection to land and citizens. The entire region suffers from deterioration and regression, of which the American occupation in Iraq is a quintessential manifestation.

...

Obviously one cannot examine the road to Gaza separately from international and regional influences, and Samuel Huntington's theory about "the clash of civilizations," and what has been dubbed the war against terror after September 11, 2001.

...

Israel has regarded the conflict with the Palestinians as a matter underlain by the terror issue. Doing so, it fully exploits unprecedented international circumstances, ignoring the very

heart of the problem – the illegitimate occupation it imposes on Palestinian land. What Palestinians are doing is resisting this occupation, while Israel calls its military operations, the erection of the Wall and policy of isolation a response to Palestinian violence... Therefore, it carries out acts of oppression, bombardment, expulsion, targeted killings, house and farm demolitions, road blocking and diverting – all as a form of racial discrimination under the pretext of self-defense... Such operations motivate some Palestinian factions to adopt violence; it creates a fertile ground for the emergence of a violent and oppositional culture, spawning a new generation of "martyrs" (*istishahdiyyin*).

...

The transformation of the Palestinians' cry, which is their natural claim for justice, into a mere issue of political violence, along with the conspiring international community, is what isolates Palestinians... It places them in a context they do not want, a context that deems them terrorist groups, asked to stop the violence. This situation negates historical logic; it is an attempt to de-legitimize the struggle against occupation, even its non-violent manifestations.

...

Then, surveillance towers and military checkpoints are placed. Roads are transformed. The landscape of the country is changed. The building of the Wall persists. The transformation of cities, villages, and refugee camps into enclosures, lacking architecturally, roofs, since walls and gates are provided. All this occurs under definitions that distort reality, and a culture that attempts to strangle history.

...

As far as the Palestinians are concerned, such pressure and the attempt to force them to accept the unacceptable are useless, and will not help them adopt a culture of acceptance and peace. For the Israelis, the political culture perceiving the Occupation as a natural right, and the belief that land may be confiscated and people isolated, are a sure recipe for deterioration. This will only reinforce the conflict and crisis, and thus more suffering and torture will be inflicted on the Israelis and the Palestinians alike...

... Working paper, submitted to the conference *Liminal Spaces*, Qalandiya, Palestine 2006

Tour of Ramallah // Yae 1



e 1 Bartana



May 19, 2006
PSS headquarters, Ramallah

The uniformed men work in the service of the PSS (Palestinian Security Services).

The Israelis, pretending to be Dutch artists, are suspected of being Jewish settlers, interested in buying Palestinian land.

The PSS arrest them in order to protect them from Palestinian kidnapers.

With the help of a local culture institution, they are released (not before they are served a cup of tasty "black coffee").





Two Israeli citizens on a research trip to Ramallah (zone A*, forbidden for Israeli citizens), escorted by a local Palestinian.

They take photographs of a construction site. 10 minutes later they are arrested by people in uniforms carrying guns.

The Israelis try lying to the soldiers, explaining that they are not carrying identity cards, and that they are from The Netherlands.

Later they are taken for interrogation by car following a jeep to an unknown location.

* Since the Madrid Conference in 1991, there has been a succession of international agreements on which some areas of the Occupied Territories have been transferred to the Palestinian National Authority. The territory has been divided into three kinds of administrative areas: Zone A, where the Palestinian Authority carries full responsibility for civil administration and security affairs; Zone B, where the authorities care only for the civil responsibilities and the Israeli Army still holds control over the area; and Zone C, where the Palestinian Authority has not got any kind of authority.

Asymmetries

in Globalized Space

// Alessandro Petti

The Road Network in Palestine- Israel

Prologue

*On the border between
Jordan and Palestine-
Israel, August 2002*

We wake up early in the morning. A hard day of waiting and sun lies before us. In order to come to Palestine with my wife Sandi and her parents, Anwar and Monira (all three with Palestinian passports), instead of taking the easy route via Tel Aviv, which is barred to Palestinians, I decided to cross the border with them over what Jordanians call the King Hussein Bridge and the Israelis, the Allenby Bridge. There are three border crossings between Jordan and Palestine: the Allenby/King Hussein Bridge is the closest

to Jerusalem. It was built on the lowest ground in the area, at the same level as the Dead Sea. During the trip, the heat rises and the air pressure drops; ears pop and sweat runs down as our bodies attempt to compensate. The taxi that has ventured into this inhospitable land is an old Mercedes with a dozen seats, dilapidated on any terrain.

Here we are now, on the Jordanian side of the border. In silence, we get out of the vehicle. Sandi and her parents walk off a few yards toward the entry point reserved for Palestinians.

Left on my own, my defenses naturally go up and my attention is more on the alert. A young man takes the luggage from me and I automatically follow him. I wouldn't know where else to go and there aren't any signs with information written in a language I can decipher. The boy, about eighteen years old, takes me to the front of a baggage track and sets the suitcases down on the rollers. He turns around, looks at me, and then leaves. It doesn't take a genius to understand that my

next stop is some seats set in the shade, out of the merciless August sun. A few minutes later I hear a voice behind me. I follow it and find myself at passport control. Everything's in order.

After five minutes, I'm already in the no-man's land. A ribbon of asphalt, fenced along the edges, with signs warning of landmine fields. Up ahead, there is the Israeli checkpoint. Two young men with rifles dressed in camouflage make us get out of the bus to inspect it from top to bottom. A short time later they make us get on the bus again, but we drive only a few yards. Another checkpoint.

The Israeli flag flutters on top of the only hill rising out of the dry plateau. We are stopped for another half hour. I don't know why or what we're waiting for. All of a sudden, a barrier lifts up and we are free to pass over the Israeli border. A surreal expanse of green spreads out in front of our eyes: palm trees and flower beds. *Welcome to Israel.*

The border is not a line. It is a space with depth to it. The materials of which it is made are the same as the ones in cities, but used differently. Here, for example, a retaining wall made out of reinforced concrete serves as a barricade. Inside the border, the rules are few but essential. All flow is strictly monitored and controlled. The border is a machine which tears apart everything that crosses it into separate, classifiable elements, only to put them together again one way or another when they exit. This applies to people, too, not just objects.

When I get off the bus, I am greeted by some young soldiers who look like American teenagers, with low-hung pants and baggy T-shirts. A female soldier comes up to me and asks me where I am heading. "To Bethlehem," I answer. "Follow me, please," she says.

They take me out of the "normal" line. I sit down and wait for the security staff. Another female soldier starts questioning me: Where am I headed? Whose house am

I going to? When will I be coming back? Where is my luggage? The same questions are asked in different ways for half an hour.

When the interrogation ends, another soldier shows me into a dressing room. Very courteously, he asks me to undress. He checks every single piece of my clothing, then goes out, taking my shoes with him. I find myself back where I started from, only shoeless. Two hours have already gone by since we got to the border and I wonder just how long we are going to have to stay here.

They take me into another room and ask me to open up the suitcases that are arranged on stainless steel tables, like meat in a butcher shop, easy to clean. Seated, I wait for every single thing I own to be inspected.

Truth be told, I was prepared for this treatment so I take it calmly, even when they tell me that my personal belongings may now be repacked after their vivisection: it's the same feeling you get when you come home to find a burglar

has dropped in during your absence. You feel violated: your dirty laundry, your agenda lying open, everything that's been touched by other hands, the hands of complete strangers. I try not to lose my humanity, and with great calm and dignity I fold everything as if I am about to take my leave from a Grand Hotel. I will my gestures into slow motion, trying to be as refined as possible in spite of the vivisection lab I've wandered into.

This particular procedure is reserved for Palestinians and anyone who has contact with them.

My clothes are now back in my suitcase. I think I've finally finished, but where is my passport? They tell me I have to pick it up in an office near the exit: this is where I'm told to fill in yet another form, and asked the same questions. Four hours to cross the border. The border is not a line: you cannot cross it by stepping over it.

Once I'm over the border, the heat clutches at my throat

and the light is blinding. We bargain with a taxi driver over the fare for the trip. The discussion goes on longer than expected because there are problems reaching Bethlehem. To get there, you first have to pass through Jerusalem. In theory, that would be the easiest route, but Palestinians are not authorized to go there. The taxi driver doesn't want to risk any of the rural routes because there might be roadblocks on them. We agree on a relay arrangement: the first taxi will take us as far as the outskirts of Jerusalem, and from there we'll have to get ourselves another ride. Along the road, we come across colony settlements and Bedouin tents. Two opposite ways of using the territory: one sedentary, one nomadic. The settlements are fenced in by walls whose foundations are dug into the ground, while the Bedouin tents are perched on the surface of the land. Immobility versus motion. Controlled borders versus freedom of movement.

At 2:30 p.m. we're on the outskirts of Jerusalem. At 3

p.m., curfew starts. We have to hurry. Yet another checkpoint. We get out of the taxi in the middle of a line of vehicles packed tightly together. We jump into a new taxi that turns around and goes back for a bit over the same road we've just taken.

I'm starting to give up on the idea of ever making it there, when the genius of self-organization suddenly comes into play. Whenever a new checkpoint is set up by the Israelis, the Palestinian taxi drivers respond by planning a new road to get around it. They take up a collection to lease a tractor and clear a few hundred yards with it: *voilà*, a new passage that circumvents the checkpoint. The soldiers know about it, but these are the crazed rules of the game and the Palestinians are forced to abide by them.

The taxi driver who's taking us on this part of the drive is a refugee; he risks receiving a fine that he won't be able to pay and being arrested, but what can he do about it? It's the only way he has to get by. After a long series of twists

and turns, we finally make it to the gates of Bethlehem. We get out of the car to find the entire family there to greet us. Our marriage, which took place a few weeks earlier in Rome, is celebrated in the family courtyard with singing and dancing. My thoughts turn for a second to the courtyards of Italy, lit by the blue glow of televisions, and to the same TV news story broadcast every year, about the mid-August exodus and counter-exodus and the bad weather that's ruining everybody's summer holidays.

Four years later...

On the border between Palestine-Israel and Jordan, August 2006

Tala, my daughter, was born in Bethlehem on a beautiful spring morning in the month of February. She was birthed in a clinic built with funds from the Japanese government and tended by a Palestinian nurse who spoke perfect Neapolitan,

learned during a long stay in Naples where he had studied. After the first few days spent rejoicing in her arrival, we find ourselves faced with a dilemma: how is Tala going to be able to cross the border and get out of the Occupied Territories? How will the border machine work on her, with a Palestinian mother and an Italian father? If Tala leaves Bethlehem as an "Italian" she'll only be able to come back as a tourist; if she leaves Bethlehem as a "Palestinian" she'll be treated as such by the Israeli army, meaning she won't be able to move freely around the Occupied Territories and Israel.

The border machine is interactive architecture. It changes depending on the citizenship of the person who crosses over it. As a prototype of biopolitical architecture, maybe in its purest form, it becomes more or less porous depending on the nation it belongs to: it constructs and deconstructs itself depending on the relationship that each individual has with the state, a regulating device that

mediates between birth and nationhood.

By being half-Italian and half-Palestinian, Tala puts the pre-established spatial and political order into crisis, revealing the fiction of national belonging and all the politics that stem from it. The mere thought of having to face the device with her that awaits us on the Jordanian border, the only entry and exit point for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, is deeply disturbing to me. The idea of being forced to be stripped bare by the border machine makes almost any certainty you have about your rights and existence falter.

We hire the usual group taxi, a dilapidated yellow Mercedes. Concerns about the trip are magnified by the sense of uncertainty. How many times have I heard it said that the real problem is not knowing what the rules are? At the beginning, I always used to say, "There must be someone who decides what you can and can't do!" Then I discovered that this void is a form of government.

Take the roads, for example. The Israeli army can decide for security reasons to blockade a given part of a road used on a daily basis by thousands of Palestinians. The blockade is enforced by deploying patrols, roadblocks and barriers. After a few months, even though the roadblocks have been removed, the Palestinians – fearful of running up against soldiers and being arrested – choose not to use the road anymore, thus leaving it to the exclusive use of the colonists.

This is what differentiates the rule of Israel in the Occupied Territories from South African apartheid. The separation here is not crudely imposed by *Only White* signs, but rather by a much more sophisticated system ensuring that the prohibitions will be internalized. You will never find signs saying "Forbidden to Palestinians – Reserved to Tourists and Colonists" along the roads used exclusively by colonists. The regime of prohibitions is implemented by verbal orders given by Israeli military officers who control a given area of the territory. Palestinians found

on a road prohibited to them or for which they lack the required permit risk being put into jail or having their vehicle confiscated. This is why Palestinians are forced to use group transportation vehicles that shuttle between one checkpoint and another. The border machine is not located on state lines; rather, it acts on the boundaries of Palestinian cities and villages.

To ensure ourselves some likelihood of crossing the border into Jordan, which is only open a few hours a day, we set out from Bethlehem at 4:30 in the morning. Luckily, Tala is sleeping. We get through the first checkpoint, called the container, without any particular problems. I'm the only Westerner in the bus, one of the few Westerners to take the roads reserved to Palestinians. The soldiers at the checkpoints have often asked me, "What the fuck are you doing here?" And I've always answered, "It's a long story, actually...". To save themselves the boredom, they almost always let me through. Having arrived as far as Abu

Dis, I'm beginning to think that this is a charmed trip, with a remarkable lack of snags, when we suddenly come up against a mobile checkpoint. They stop us and tell us that we can't pass this way. The passengers start to get upset. They start shouting, waving airplane tickets departing from the Amman airport. The soldiers pretend they don't hear. There's no point in arguing.

Tense and irritated, the taxi driver turns the car around and after a few yards sets off down a back road through the countryside. Tala wakes up: the car is rocking a little too violently to be mistaken for a cradle. I hold her baby seat against my chest as tightly as I can. We cut across a beautiful field of ancient olive trees. After a short while, we're once again on the main road, with the soldiers behind us grinning from the checkpoint. The road starts to go downhill and we gaze out the windows onto the extraordinary landscape of the hills of the Dead Sea, dotted by colonies and Bedouin camps. My thoughts turn toward the

nomadic city designed by Constant. I tell myself that its tragic dimension, rarely discussed, takes on concrete form in this place. I have always thought of Constant's *New Babylon* as a dystopia: the vision of a world in collapse, in constant conflict, not so much between nomads and sedentary peoples as between different conceptions of nomadism.

As I look out the car window, I recognize the encampments and the new colony expansions. Lost in my thoughts, I fail to notice that, instead of driving straight toward the Jordanian border, the taxi has detoured and is entering into Jericho. And I suddenly find myself in front of the mutated form of the border that I had crossed four years previously.

The first time I arrived here from Jordan, I first met up with the Jordanian police and then with the Israeli forces, assisted by a Palestinian police unit. Now the Palestinians have been moved away from the border and have set up a sham border of a non-existent

state on a piece of land measuring 150 by 500 feet. A barrier appears in front of our vehicle. We get out of the taxi and climb onto a bus that stops again after a few yards. Some Palestinian policemen climb on to check documents and luggage. The bus starts again, and stops a few yards later. They make us get off. We pick up our suitcases from practically the same spot where we made our entry.

The Palestinian border is like a service station that leads nowhere. I'm flooded by a sense of overwhelming sadness. The idea of Palestinian sovereignty appears to have achieved its final form in this place: a sovereignty exercised over a miniscule plot of land inside of which all procedures are complied with for a border crossing into... nowhere. The real border is five miles away. I'm flabbergasted: the police and the people in transit diligently recite their parts in this puppet theater. Everybody knows that it's make-believe, but no one objects to it. Back in the bus, we leave for

the real border, presided over this time solely by Israelis. As an Italian citizen in a taxi, I could have reached the border directly. Sandi and Tala, as Palestinians, had no way of avoiding this sham performance.

The trip from Bethlehem to Amman – less than 125 miles – normally takes more than eight hours. The puppet-theater border crossing has radically disheartened me. The day will come, I say to myself, when the Palestinians will climb out of their rundown buses, their overcrowded, stuffy group vans, and with a resigned but peaceful expression, say to the Israelis: "Fine, you win. This cannot be the dream of a Palestinian state that we nurtured for so many years. We don't want a fake state, a sham border. We simply want to live and move around freely like you. We give up on our state. We just want our rights."

We continue our journey, this time in the direction of the real border. After hours of waiting to be able to enter the border zone, the

moment comes to show our documents. Many Westerners with privileged passports do not understand the anxiety of people who are faced with the potential of being sent back. The Palestinian travel document is once again the paroxysmal expression of this control device. It's a travel document, not a passport, and it doesn't even specify a nationality. I've seen policemen at the airport stare at it with puzzled expressions and ask, "What the heck is this?" Whoever thought up this document didn't have the courage to write the word "Palestinian" in the box for "Nationality". The adjective "Palestinian" is becoming like the adjective "Jewish": a lot of people are too scared to even pronounce it. Bad consciences.

Even though Tala is registered on my passport, for the Israelis and Palestinians she's Palestinian, so she has to follow the same route as Sandi, a different one from mine. I don't object to this, I just ask the Israeli soldier to allow me to go with them, to let me follow the procedure

reserved to Palestinians. I want to give up my Westerner privileges, air conditioning, cleanliness and cold drinks, in order to accompany my family into the crowded buildings and hallways reserved to Palestinians.

The soldier informs me that this will not be possible and that I have to stick to the procedures for tourists. A confused jumble of questions comes to my mind. By accepting this treatment, to what extent do I make myself an accomplice to this madness? Why do all the things I've read not come to my aid, preventing me from going crazy with rage? To stop myself from dehumanizing the soldiers standing before me, I imagine that Nadav, Eyal, Ravit, Ronit and many other Israeli friends of mine might very well be disguised behind their uniforms and rifles. All I know is that I give in and, dazed, I watch Sandi and Tala walk away from me.

I enter into the area for non-Palestinians. Air conditioning and men in Bermuda shorts. I feel ashamed of myself for giving up and accepting this

privileged treatment. Me, here, with the tourists, and them, over there, hoping not to be sent home. Stunned, I obey the orders issued to me: pay here, open there, get up here, go there, step down, step up, sit down....

After a few hours, I cross the bridge. I'm in Jordan. I immediately start looking for the Palestinian exit, but it's not easy to find. The building is built in such a way as to prevent human traffic flows from ever meeting up, like in hospitals, where areas and routes for healthy people and patients are kept rigorously separated. Breathlessly, I search among lazy Jordanian policemen and sweaty tourists for the door connecting the area reserved to Palestinians with the area for everyone else. I finally find the door, and before opening it, I feel like Jim Carrey in *The Truman Show* when he discovers the hidden door in the painted blue skyscape that may possibly eject him into the real world.

The Diffusion of the Model

The flow control and surveillance practices are not specific to the Palestinian Occupied Territories. They appear in other geographical contexts – from Australia to East Asia to North America – and they take form in various ways: in the functioning of the toll-road bypass freeways in the large urban agglomerations of Los Angeles, Toronto, and Melbourne; in the use of highways as "sanitary cordons" to divide new settlements for the emerging classes from the informal settlements of Istanbul, Jakarta, and Manila; in the use of pedestrian bypasses in office center complexes.

Alongside the privatization that has taken place in many sectors during recent years, the system of private toll highways, ensuring speedier and more efficient travel, has taken on a rapidly growing role.





DOCUMENTATION: ETERNAL TABERNACLE SALA-MANCA













27 OCT 2006 LEIPZIG PHOTO: GALIT EILAT

In many cities, private highways have been superimposed directly on top of the old congested public transport network. The Riverside SR 91 Freeway in Los Angeles, Highway 407 in Toronto, and the CityLink Project in Melbourne are highway routes built as networks for bypassing crowded public streets. New major roadways in Istanbul, Jakarta, and Manila are used as genuine sanitary cordons that divide residential neighborhoods from the slums. This new generation of highways is used to bypass urban areas that are considered unsafe, and to restrict the growth of undesirable populations. The new toll systems that are built into the highway routes function as devices for control, for cataloging, and for automatic surveillance. Today, high technology has enabled control and surveillance to reach unprecedented levels of invasiveness and pervasiveness. SR 91 Freeway, Route 407, and Transurban CityLink are the names of the new bypass

road networks built in three major cities: Los Angeles, Toronto, and Melbourne. Toll highways built to bypass the overcrowded public roadways, they use electronic control systems for entry and exit points so that drivers are freed from having to stop at toll booths. Some have toll fares that vary depending on the time of travel and the traffic flow. The construction companies that built them offer reserved spaces for paying customers who want to get across the city quickly.

The Transurban CityLink in Melbourne, inaugurated in 1999, is 14 miles long and links the most affluent neighborhoods with the downtown area and the airport. Offering faster travel times, toll highways are capable of determining the lines along which future expansion of the settlements will develop. Given their size, this type of privatized space, which increasingly occupies the land of the large conurbations, puts the very notion of public space into discussion.

Projects like the CityLink can become pivotal in determining the evolution of a city's form because of the fact that they are structural and tend to set the agenda of what sort of urban space is being created for future generations. At issue is the future of public space itself, in its social, technical and aesthetic forms. This is true from the point of view of by-passing of traditional agora like markets and the parking-based streetscapes, to the further privileging of the super-regulated private spaces of shopping complexes, another cocoon for which the freeways is the link.¹

The creation of toll road spaces to travel from one area of the city to another contributes to the fragmentation of the territory: financial centers, luxury residences, shopping centers, and theme parks are the islands connected by toll networks that bypass spaces and populations in the archipelago of colonies found in major conurbations.

As we know, highway routes are not exclusively spaces for flows. They can also be sanitary cordons that separate affluent neighborhoods from the growth of slums.

In Istanbul, in the wake of a period of economic and political renewal, new settlements for the emerging class have sprung up. They offer "Western lifestyles," social uniformity, comfort and security from crime, and refuge from the multiethnic, chaotic, polluted city. Esenkent and Bogazkoy are two postmodern-style settlements built west of the city, composed of luxury apartments furnished with swimming pools and gardens. They are separated by informal villages with houses constructed willy-nilly along the highway routes that mark out the new class and identity confines inside the metropolis.²

The same highways that were considered instruments of progress and modernization in the modernist ideology have become obstructions

and barriers in Istanbul, blocking the growth of informal settlements. For Caldeira, the instruments of modernist planning have ironically been used opposite to how they were conceived.³ The separation between pedestrian and vehicular traffic, which for modernism represented a victory for human health, is seen in Istanbul to be a strategy for prohibiting improper use of the major roadways. The roads are actually sterilized of activities and people who are considered incompatible with the smooth space of flows. Individual private transport has been privileged, excluding the people who use public transport. Similarly, empty urban spaces, which in modernist planning were conceived as "the right distance between buildings" or "green belts," have been transformed into areas where sculpture-like, fortified "designer" buildings are located.

The use of the highway as a sanitary cordon may also be found in some Asian cities.

In the endless suburbs of Jakarta, gated communities, shopping centers, and office areas are linked by public or private toll highways. The privileged social classes have moved to the safest and least polluted places in the vast outskirts, abandoning the old, unhealthy city, considered to be dangerous, with its poor infrastructures. The major roadways that link the islands of the wealthy bypass the old city center by soaring over it.⁴ In Manila, to build the new toll-road bypass network, called the Metro Manila Skyway, various informal neighborhoods were demolished, forcing the inhabitants to evacuate. To reinforce exclusive use of the highway network that connects the residential islands, access is forbidden to traditional vehicles. Jeepneys, buses, and motorcycles are thus forced to use the old streets.

The creation of privatized spaces for flows has even invaded the spaces designed for pedestrians. Raised or underground pedestrian routes

have emerged in financial centers and for offices, connecting one building to another by bypassing the city streets. Because of this, the streets and squares that for years symbolized public life have slowly and inexorably been replaced by tunnels and skyway bridges. Access to offices by workers and executives is through tunnels and skywalks, without ever having to step out of their cars other than inside a private parking garage. Building entrances are monitored by video cameras and security staff.

The use of tunnels and pedestrian bridges has compromised the indiscriminate life and use of the public streets. In some business centers, simply going somewhere on foot automatically makes one suspect. The street, a place of human activity and chance encounter, has been transformed into a realm of fear and surveillance.

The Society of Control

During the course he gave at the Collège de France between 1977 and 1978,⁵ Foucault investigated the passage of a disciplinary society into a society of security, by which he means a society with a general economy of power which has the form of, or which is dominated by, the technology of security. Foucault pays particular attention to the distinction between discipline and security in their respective ways of dealing with the organization of spatial distributions. He provides three examples from history.

The first is the project by Alexandre Le Maître, in which the city is defined in terms of sovereignty; a distinguishing feature of this spatial project is the capital and its role in relation to the rest of the territory. Indeed, the relation between sovereignty and the spatial arrangement is fundamental, since the city

1 David Holmes, "Cybercommuting on an Information Superhighway: the Case of Melbourne's CityLink," in Stephen Graham (ed.), *The Cybercities Reader*, (London: Routledge, 2004), p. 177.

2 Asu Aksoy and Kevin Robins, "Modernism and the Millennium: Trial by Space in Istanbul," in *City* 8, 1997, pp. 21-36.

3 Teresa Caldeira, "Fortified Enclaves: The New Urban Segregation," in *Public Culture* 8, 1996, pp. 303-328.

4 Abidin Kusno, *City, Space + Globalization: An International Perspective - Proceedings of an International Symposium* (Collage of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor MI, 1999), p. 163.

5 Michel Foucault, *Security, Territory, Population: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1977-78*, trans. Graham Burchell (New York: Pelgrave Macmillan, 2007).

is essentially conceived in relation to the more global dimension of the territory, while the State itself is seen as an edifice. Foucault associates this spatial project with the age of law, in which the security mechanism is both a legal and a juridical mechanism. To explain how this mechanism of security functions, he provides the example of the treatment of lepers, who were excluded from the city by laws and regulations.

His second example is the town of Richelieu, based on 17th century political thought. The town was built using the form of the Roman camp, with the grid embodying the instrument of discipline: hierarchies and relations of power are established through the structural formation of the space. Discipline forms an empty, closed space; discipline belongs to the order of construction. Foucault associates this spatial project with the disciplinary age, the institution of the modern legal system. In order to explain how this security mechanism

functions, he provides the example of how the plague was treated between the 16th and 17th centuries, when the territory was subject to regulations specifying when people could go out and how they should behave at home, prohibiting contact, and requiring them to present themselves to inspectors, and so on.

The third example is Nantes, where the space was organized to give structure to the problem of hygiene, trade, and other types of networks.

An important problem for towns in the 18th century was allowing for surveillance, since the suppression of city walls made necessary by economic development meant that one could no longer close towns in the evening or closely supervise daily comings and goings, so that the insecurity of the towns was increased by the influx of the floating population of beggars, vagrants, delinquents, criminals, thieves, murderers, and so on, who might come, as everyone knows, from the

country. In other words, it was a matter of organizing circulation, eliminating its dangerous elements, making a division between good and bad circulation, and maximizing the good circulation by diminishing the bad.⁶

Foucault associates this spatial project with the age of security. To explain how this mechanism works, he provides the example of smallpox and inoculation practices beginning in the 18th century. The fundamental problem

will not be the imposition of discipline... so much as the problem of knowing how many people are infected with smallpox... the statistical effects on the population in general. In short, it will no longer be the problem of exclusion, as with leprosy, or of quarantine, as with the plague, but of epidemics and the medical campaigns that try to halt epidemic or endemic phenomena.⁷

Nevertheless, Foucault cautions that these three mechanisms can be found in

different historical periods and that one influences the other. Hence, a complex apparatus of discipline is required to make the security mechanisms work. They do not follow each other in succession and the forms that emerge do not cause the earlier ones to disappear. There is not the legal age, the disciplinary age, and then the age of security. Apparatuses of security do not replace disciplinary mechanisms; when a technology of security is put into action, for example, it may use or, at times, multiply juridical and disciplinary elements.

*In other words, in a period of the deployment of mechanisms of security, it is the disciplinary that sparked off, not the explosion, for there has not been an explosion, but at least the most evident and visible conflicts.*⁸

Foucault's schema helps us to arrive at a better understanding of how the wall built by Israel to encircle Palestinian towns, for example, is indeed a disciplinary mechanism, but

one which acquires force only by virtue of the security mechanism of the road system. Indeed, if discipline acts in an empty space through isolation, hierarchy, and repression, security, on the other hand, allows for a certain amount of circulation, making a division between good and bad circulation, since its objective is not to block flows, but to monitor them. Security, unlike discipline, does not tend to resolve the problem, but, rather, to manage probable events that are only partially controllable while attempting to minimize the risks.

Discipline gives architectural form to a space and considers the hierarchical and functional distribution of the elements as an essential problem: I think of how the Israeli guard towers and military camps are organized in the layout of a prison plan, to allow for surveillance even when there is no one observing and guarding from the towers, because all that is needed to influence people's behavior is the very existence of the mechanism.

⁶ Ibid., p. 18.

⁷ Ibid., p. 10.

⁸ Ibid., p. 9.

Security seeks, rather, to structure an environment based on a series of possible events or elements that must be regulated within a multi-functional and transformable framework: I think about how the permanent and mobile checkpoints work, not by attempting to resolve the problem of armed attacks once and for all, but, rather, by reducing their probability, in the same way that taking digital fingerprints for the identity cards issued to Palestinians by the Israelis marks the passage toward a bio-political power that invades the very nature of humanity, our DNA, transforming a people into a population, into statistical data.

For security, control of the road circulation is equally important as the juridical-legal apparatus and the disciplinary apparatus. The problem is not one of delimiting the territory, as it is for the disciplinary mechanism, or at least not exclusively so. *It is a question of allowing circulation, controlling it, distinguishing*

between good and bad circulation, and assisting movements, but in such a way as to eliminate the dangers inherent to this circulation.

I began this piece with a story, attempting to describe the asymmetrical functioning of the roads, for which there are no road maps prohibiting access or even written regulations. What we are dealing with here is not exclusion, a crude but blatant separation like South African apartheid. What we have here is a much more sophisticated regime. The problem is not about imposing a *law that says no* (if such a law exists) but about keeping certain phenomena at bay, within acceptable limits, *by encouraging their progressive self-annihilation. The mechanisms in this type of control become increasingly "democratic."* It is for this reason that the socio-political future of Palestine-Israel is so relevant to countries that consider themselves to be liberal democracies. It is here that forms of government will come into being which

will juxtapose freedom and domination, access and separation, liberalism and occupation.

Playgrounds (1995-)

// Peter Friedl





Ramallah, Nadi Islami
Ramallah, 2007





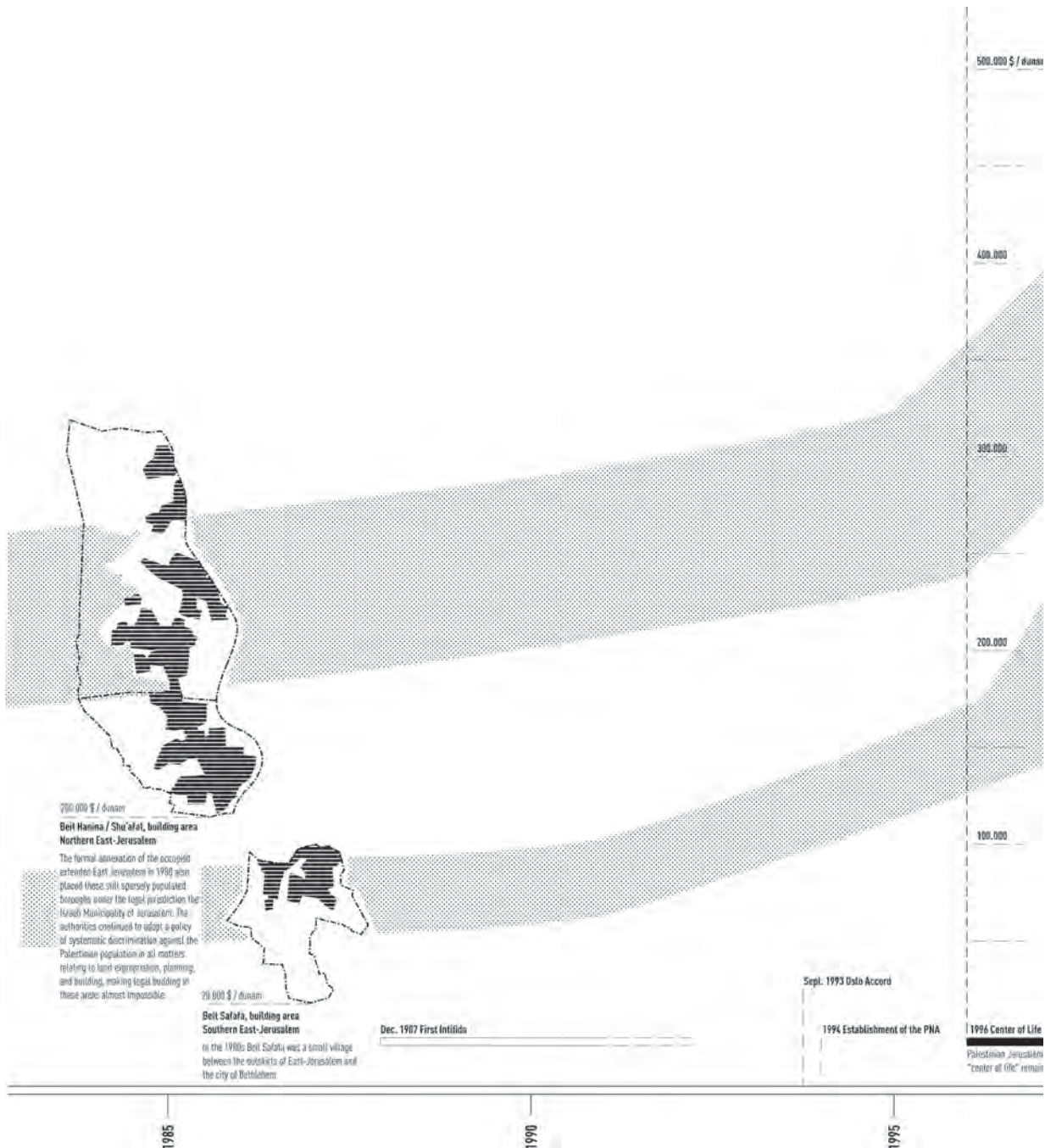
Qalqiliyah, Mala'ab
Baladiyet Qalqiliyah,
2006



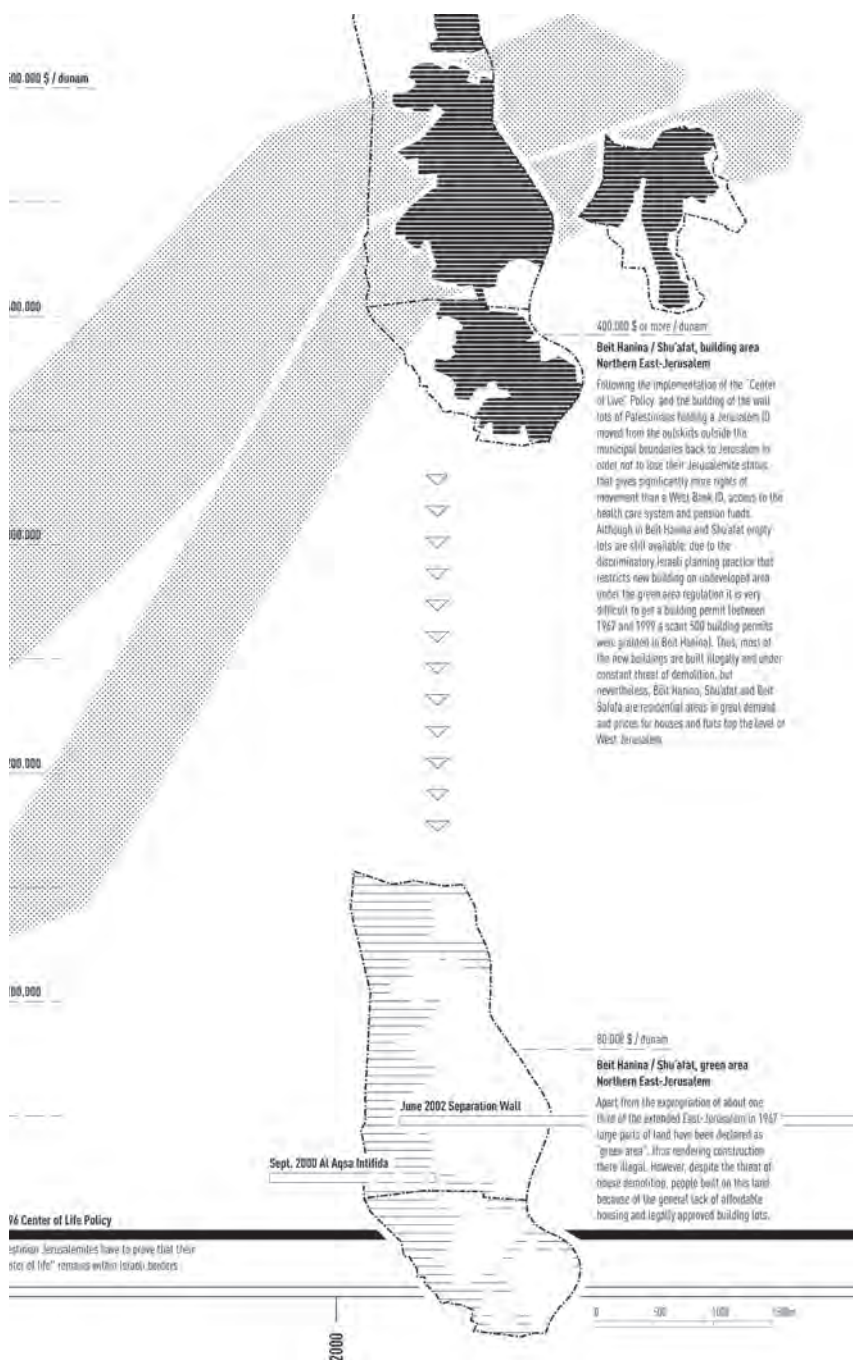


El-Bireh,
Isa'ad Al-Toufuleh,
2006

How much did you pay

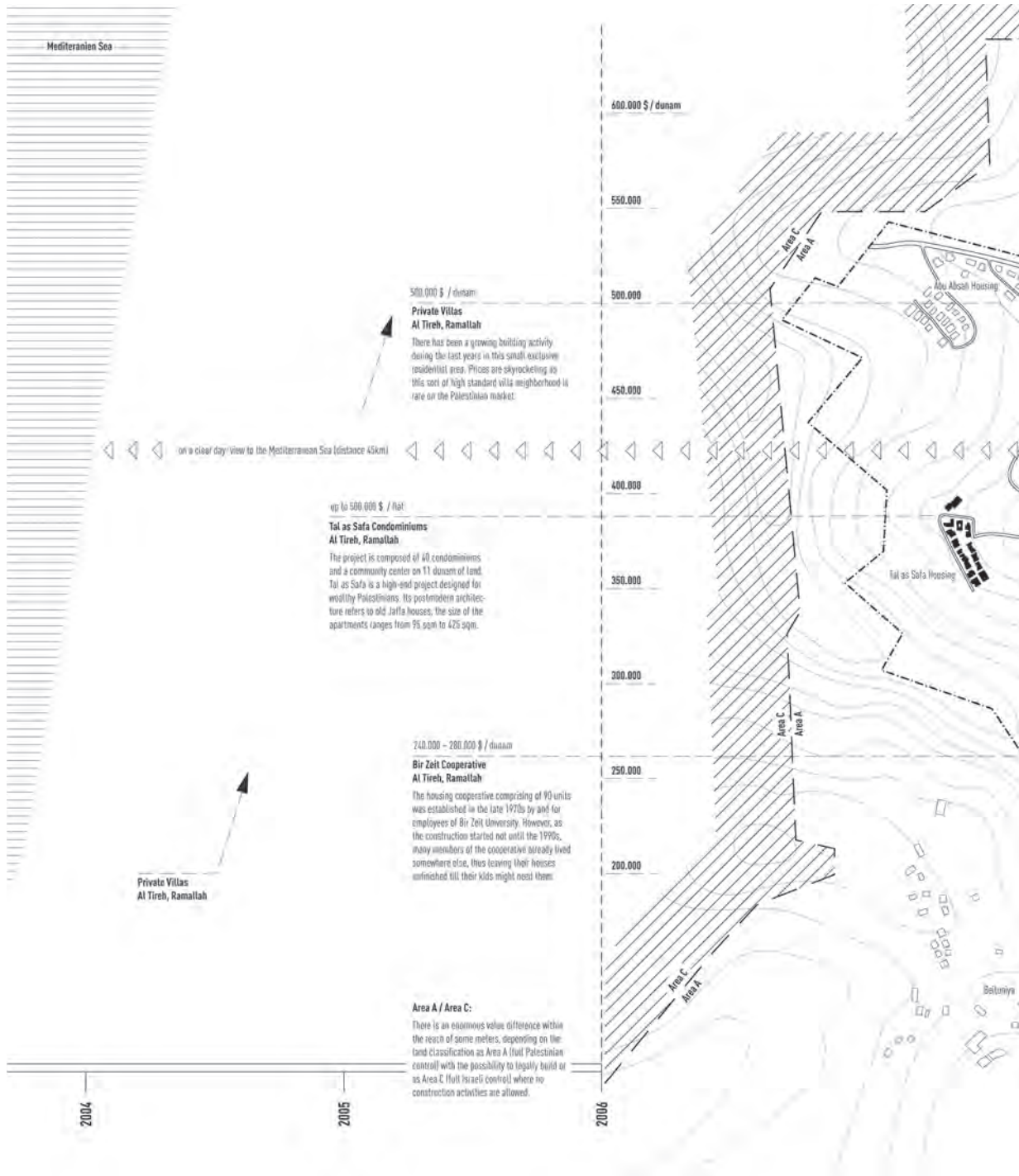


for this plot of land?

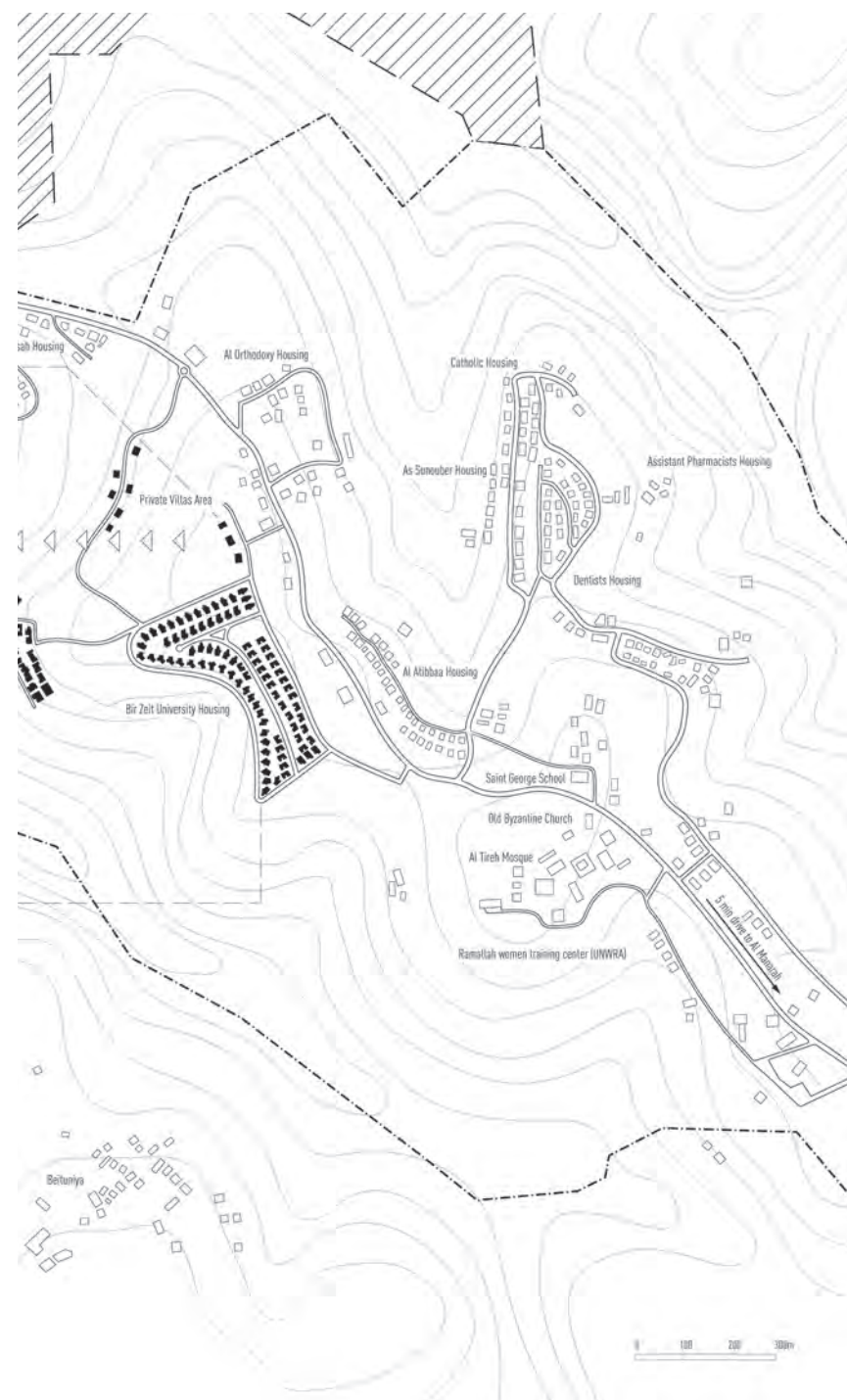


The maps are based on talks and interviews with inhabitants, architects, researchers, municipal employees, project developers and real-estate agencies, as well as on related studies and texts.

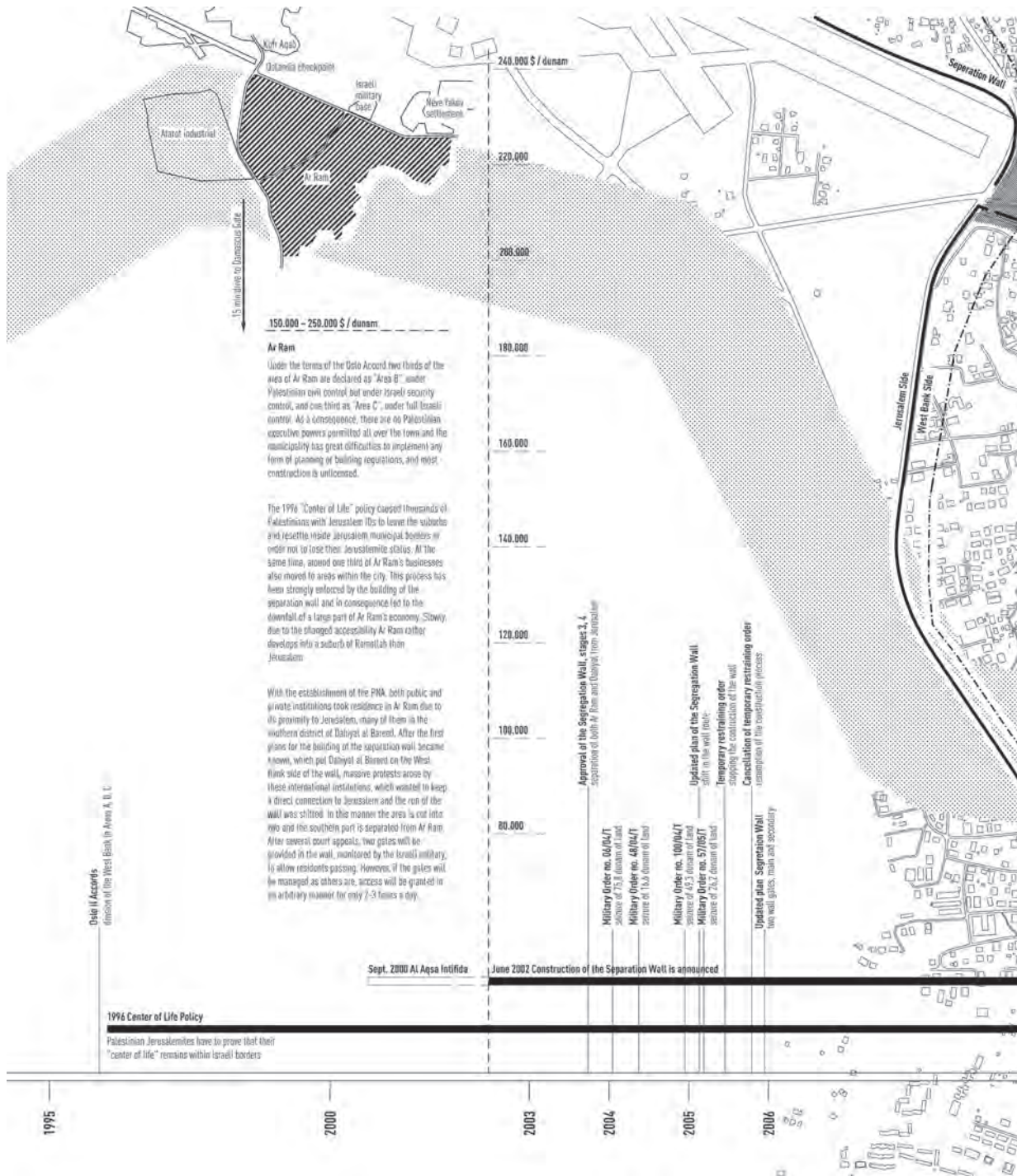
Land Value in Ramalla 1



h and East Jerusalem



// Sabine Horlitz & Oliv



er Clemens



Shuafat-Pisgat Ze'ev Pa 1



normamas // Oren Sagiv



Live Evil

Francis McKee

Kodwo touched one of the throbbing blisters and it burst over his shirt. Thick red syrup spread like a slow blossom across his chest. From the corner of his eye he could see shadows flicker and advance. Blood bubbled across his body and the shadows hissed his name, "Kodwo!" Kodwo!"

The sun hit his eyes and he finally woke up. Majd was jabbing him in the side with his elbow and a soldier was standing impatiently at the window of the minibus holding out his hand expectantly.

"Show him your ID," said Majd.

Kodwo dug into the bag at his feet, retrieved his passport, and handed it to the soldier. They were at a checkpoint, a gray concrete tower looming in front of them. Burn marks scorched the huge wall and the road itself. Now that he was awake he could see all of the soldiers properly. They were tense and restless, milling around the stationary cars. And still in the corners of his eyes, the shadows flickered. What was it, some optical trick of the light? Reflections, maybe, of the corrugated roof that spanned the giant holding shed they'd built for pedestrians. His passport was returned. Still the car sat in the queue.

Rima turned in her seat and passed something back to Majd. "What is it?" asked Kodwo.

"Ouija board," replied Rima. "Can't use mobiles here. See if





you can get through."

Majd grinned and placed the board between them. Kodwo shrugged. It was worth a go to pass the time. Maybe he could contact Sun Ra. He placed his hand on the board and Majd gently guided it around the board. Probably because he was sitting at the wrong angle in the cramped seat of the bus, Kodwo found it hard to reach the letters he hoped for on the matrix. "What's it spell, then?" he asked Majd. "Harry," he replied, mystified. "Who's Harry?" "God knows. Wrong number I expect." Kodwo sighed. "Could have at least found Miles – he must be somewhere in the underworld."

There was nothing more to keep him awake and so he dozed uneasily for another half an hour before the queue started to move.

*By the time Kodwo was dropped off at the hotel it was beginning to rain. Having picked up his key, he stopped to check the small set of bookshelves near the lifts, a library for guests made up almost entirely of books on the conflict in the West Bank. Said's *On Late Style* looked tempting and Kodwo was about to take it off the shelf when a strange guest tramped across the foyer to the reception desk. He was soaked and bedraggled, wearing an old blue pinstripe suit. His bony face was harsh but outdone by an electric shock of hair, stiffened with dried mud. He stood at the desk, unable to do more than utter inarticulate grunts and cries, his bony hands rapping the desktop urgently, as if in some version of Morse code rather than an attempt to gain attention from the frightened receptionist. Then, just as quickly, he walked out of the hotel.*

From his bedroom window high above, Kodwo watched the man tramp back down the street, oblivious to the rain, apparently oblivious to everything around him.

It was still raining when Kodwo next emerged from the hotel. He wanted to photograph Arafat's tomb. The last time he'd tried, a Norwegian diplomatic mission had descended on the scene and it became impossible to get a clear shot. Late afternoon on a rainy day should have ensured a solitary experience but when he reached the Muqata he saw something had changed. The tomb glowed in the fading light. The rain was turning to sleet, even snow. But the normally low-key military guard had been reinforced. Inside the marble vault, there was still just one soldier in dress uniform. Outside, however, there were armed men stationed at every possible vantage point.

Kodwo took a few desultory snaps, feeling pressured by the soldiers to move on as quickly as possible. He walked away, heading back towards the high tower block that loomed over the Muqata. They said the building was where the Israeli army had been based during the siege. A long, desolate wasteland separated it from the compound. The rubble of demolished buildings, littered with rubbish, was dotted with crows scavenging in the rain. To one side stood a tiny, makeshift stall made from white canvas, decorated with graffiti and telephone numbers. Inside, one old man sat beside a table of books and photographs covered in plastic – everything was in Arabic, but Kodwo guessed it was a kind of witnessing, remembering the siege of the compound. The man gestured for him to sit and offered him coffee, pointing grimly to the snow-dark sky. They sat in silence, inhaling the aroma, looking out across the wasteland.

Kodwo was tired and reckoned that was why the shadows kept bothering his eyes. Amidst the rubble, the crows seemed to flit into shadows as the twilight deepened. The birds were pecking at something viciously but in that light it was impossible to see what

they were attacking with such fury. In fact, in that light, with the snow falling heavier now, it might not have been crows. There was no perspective. They might have been dogs, even humans, on all fours, feeding crazily on some ungodly lump of meat.

Suddenly, a gaunt figure was striding swiftly across the empty waste ground towards the feeding frenzy. It was the mud man from the hotel foyer. He had a hammer in one hand and a clutch of sticks in the other. When he reached the animals, there was a painful scream as he leaned down and beat a stake into the largest of the beasts. The others tried to escape but two more were caught and dispatched, squealing and howling in the darkness.

The rest flew off. The muddy stranger stood up and strode across to the stall. The old man offered him coffee and he accepted, speaking fluent Arabic. Then he turned to Kodwo.

"Well, you called me... and your wish is our command. What next?"

"I called you?"

"Yes. 'Harry.' Remember?"

"Harry?"

"Houdini. Pleasure to meet you. Repeat another word though, and I'll stake you."

"What was that about?" asked Kodwo, nodding towards the waste ground.

"Vampires," Harry looked back at the troops circling the Muqata.

"They know, but they can't say it out loud."

"You said your wish is 'our' command. Are there more of you?" asked Kodwo, wondering what exactly was Harry anyway?

"Mmm. There are a few of us. We share an interest in the place. For me, it was professional." Harry smiled. "The

largest open prison in the world – escapology and all that. Fascinating."

Harry raised a bony, bloodied finger to his chapped lips before Kodwo could say more. "No time. We need to stop them from breeding."

He thanked the old man and tugged at Kodwo's jacket, pointing across the city. "There's a quarry beyond the Qalandiya refugee camp. That's where we're going."

It was a long slog. The snow turned to heavy, freezing rain and Harry kept up a demonic pace. Kodwo trailed behind miserably in the dark. Finally Harry stopped and waited for him to catch up. "It's here. The queen is roosting in a high crevice. I'll flush her out and you will finish her off."

Harry handed Kodwo the longest, thinnest stake he had. "You want the hammer?" he asked. Kodwo nodded dumbly, looking at the stake.

They passed through a broken fence and headed down a steep incline until they were at the bottom of what appeared to be a vast arena. The quarry cliffs towered above them. Kodwo thought: this must be what it was like on the sea floor in the Atlantic, in the middle of a tempest.

Harry began to scale one side of the quarry. He moved with speed, uncanny in his ability to find a foothold on the sheer surface. Now he was barely visible, but Kodwo thought he had stopped. Suddenly, he could see a flame ignite and watched it fly through the air into the darkness of the cliff face. There was a horrible, piercing shriek and a large dark mass – half ablaze – was falling towards him.

It hit the ground with a hard thump but within seconds started writhing, extinguishing the flames around it. Kodwo could make out a female face but the creature it belonged too was that of an immense, pulsing cockroach, its legs twitching furiously as it tried to gain purchase on the ground. Its large belly quivered in spasms, the young inside squealing and pushing against the belly lining. The creature looked about it and found Kodwo. It launched itself immediately in his direction and instinctively, his heart pumping, he gripped the stake in his right hand and plunged it into the advancing beast. It collapsed but its stomach exploded immediately. Screaming young flailed across the quarry floor. Kodwo blindly beat them back with the hammer, shouting uncontrollably. Then Harry was there, slicing each one like an eel and staking them.

Kodwo was badly shaken and couldn't remember how they had reached the main road again. Two jeeps hurtled by, their headlights blinding him. He grabbed Harry's arm.

"What happened?" he shouted. "Did I just kill a woman?"
"No," shouted Harry in reply. "When vampires take their prey, they can adapt their physiology. What you just encountered may have included a human several generations back but now that creature is a hybrid – insect, human, supernatural. A whole new species." He looked Kodwo in the eye. "A monster," he shouted.

They came to an apartment block and Harry led the way up the stairs, out of the rain to a red door. He rang the bell and Kodwo was shocked to see Suleiman Mansour let them in.

Suleiman laughed and held out his hand in greeting.

"Kodwo! I'd embrace you but you seem to have been swimming!"

Kodwo just shook his head and followed Harry into the apartment. Suleiman beckoned them over to a table that was already heaped with food.

"Help yourself, Kodwo. Harry, I think, is beyond things like eating."

Harry laughed and just then the door to what must have been the kitchen opened, and a small woman appeared, carrying a pot of strong smelling coffee.

Kodwo thought she looked familiar. While she poured the hot, thick liquid he studied her face. She caught his eye and smiled, knowing he was trying to remember. There was something regal about the way she stood there. She radiated an elegant authority that defied the chaos of the present. It was only when she automatically reached to her lips with a handkerchief and dabbed her lips that it came to him.

"Oum Kalthoum...?"

She nodded modestly and made a little bow, before joining Harry at a small table at the far end of the room.

Kodwo looked to Suleiman for help.

"Did I call her too?"

"It appears so. Or at least Harry put together a team for this job," replied Suleiman.

"You're saying there are more of them...?" asked Kodwo.

"One more. In the Negev. He's 'slouching towards Dimona,' you might say."

There was a sudden clatter from across the room. Oum and Harry were spilling dominoes onto their table and shuffling them for a game.

As they began to play they seemed to fall into a trance, moving the dominos automatically while repeatedly nodding their heads and

clucking quietly.

Kodwo and Suleiman settled down with their coffee and Kodwo recounted what had happened at the quarry.

"Harry described the creature as a monster," he explained, "but I still feel as if I killed something human."

Suleiman nodded towards a stack of DVD cases in a bookcase against the wall.

"Recently I've been watching a lot of films. You know I'm working with video now and so I'm watching old movies again in a different light." He went over and sorted through the DVDs, picking out one which he then handed to Kodwo.

"This one – The Pervert's Guide to Cinema by Slavoj Žižek – it's got some beautiful clips. He analyzes the scene in Alien where the baby monster bursts out of the crewman's chest. You remember the scene." Suleiman imitated the creature emerging from his chest with his hands. "Anyway, Žižek says something like "humanity means the aliens are controlling our animal bodies. Our ego is an alien force, distorting, controlling our body." Suleiman mimicked a lisping, heavy East European accent and stared dramatically into Kodwo's eyes, "We ourselves are the aliens controlling our bodies."

As if in response, Harry and Oum stopped clucking and looked over, fully awake again.

"Can we watch television?" asked Harry.

Suleiman nodded and picked up a remote from the table.

They all sat on the sofa and watched the screen warm to life. Suleiman flicked through various soap operas until he found a news bulletin. Helicopter gunships were swooping across a desert landscape, a scared-looking reporter was pointing to a giant tower in the distance and in the background it was possible to hear the shocked gasp of the

cameraman. The tower came into focus. It had enormous teeth and angry, bulbous eyes. Its skin was scaly, dripping with slime, and it stood tall on its massive, muscular haunches.

"It's Godzilla!!" shouted Kodwo.

Harry and Oum cheered and waved their arms in celebration. Suleiman laughed and patted Kodwo comfortingly on the shoulder. Kodwo watched in a daze as the monster raced across a perimeter fence into a vast industrial installation. There it promptly began to demolish everything in its path. Reaching the centre of the building complex, Godzilla batted away the onrushing gunships, ignoring them as they spun off crazily in billows of black smoke. Finally, the monster leaned into a smokestack closing its vast jaws on something out of sight.

"Eating the core," murmured Oum with some satisfaction. Harry grunted happily.

Sated, the monster lifted its head, climbed onto the rubble of the surrounding buildings and roared.

Outside the apartment, there was the rattle of gunfire. Suleiman got up to look.

"Someone celebrating?" asked Harry.

"No," replied Suleiman, peering into the darkness. "They've set up checkpoints on every road. I think they're getting ready to search door to door."

"Resist," murmured Oum.

Suleiman returned to the table and spread out a map. Harry, Oum, and Kodwo gathered round him.

"Bi'lin is where we fight." He jabbed his finger at the map. "There is a legion of vampires buried in the fields there but we also have allies in the same place." Shifting his finger slightly, he pointed again. "Just here, on the edge of the fields there is a congregation of beehives. The insects have

agreed to help us and they will attack while we prepare our weapons."

"Is it sticks again?" asked Kodwo.

"You mean stakes," said Harry. "No. This time we are the weapons."

He grabbed a sheet of drawing paper and began to sketch.

"Oum will create a sonic wave – it will rouse them and they will be profoundly disturbed by its beauty."

Harry hastily drew a series of boxes on the paper.

"Suleiman has devised a series of projections – images of daylight – and they'll be projected around the field while I –," here he paused and drew a circle in the centre of the field, "– I will create a diversion, worthy of Houdini."

"This is going to work...?" asked Kodwo hesitantly.

"It's not real daylight, I know," said Suleiman, "but the image is real and it is made of light, and Harry's skill lies in making you accept the impossible."

"And we don't have time to debate it either," said Harry, folding up the map. "They're going to be here in minutes."

They left the lights on and the food was still sitting on the table.

Grabbing coats they rushed downstairs into the uneasy night.

"We'll split up – Harry and Oum, you have your own ways to get there," said Suleiman.

"Can we do this?" asked Kodwo plaintively.

"Godspeed", murmured Oum as they set out.

Israeli Government Relocated

Associated Press [staff writer]. 26 DEC 2047.

Following the overthrow of Israeli cities by Palestinian forces last week, the Israeli government has been evacuating the country and temporarily relocating in Brooklyn, New York.

Avi Azoulay, spokesman of the Israeli government, declared this morning at an overcrowded press conference at Ben Gurion Airport: *"You shouldn't consider our escape as treason or cowardice, but as a strategic retreat while preparing for the next battle."*

Palestinian Tel Aviv

Reuters [staff writer]. 09 JAN 2048.

The Israeli population seems stunned by its own defeat, according to foreign press correspondents and UN envoys.

Scenes of looting and squatting have been witnessed throughout the country, but only sporadic fire was reported. Tel Aviv's townhall fell yesterday, and the city was immediately renamed Jaffa.

According to a Jerusalem Media & Communication Center poll, 87% of Israel's population is ready to leave the country if Palestinian domination lasts.

North Sea Refugees

European Press Feed [M.Br.]. 23 MAR 2048.

The “Exodus 2048,” a Maltese ferry carrying 4,500 Israeli refugees, is roaming the North Sea again, after British authorities denied docking in Kingston-upon-Hull. According to the UNHCR, the sanitary situation aboard is alarming. Outbreaks of scurvy and tuberculosis have been reported.

An extraordinary meeting of EU's Immigration Ministers is scheduled tomorrow in Istanbul.

"Exodus 2048" Allowed To Dock

Associated Press [staff writer]. 11 APR 2048.

After a heated debate, the Dutch Tweede Kamer (Second Chamber) allowed the "Exodus 2048" to dock in Rotterdam at the Quarantine Pier. Piet Verwoerd, the Dutch Minister of Crime and Immigration, tempered that this emergency measure was temporary and that the refugees would not be allowed to disembark.

Refugees End Hunger Strike

ANP [MvW/eng]. 05 MAY 2048.

The “Exodus 2048” refugees agreed to interrupt their hunger strike yesterday, after Queen Amalia demanded that the government provide the boatpeople with proper accomodation.

The decree, which will determine refugee quotas for each region, and the list of buildings to be requisitioned, will be passed shortly.

Refugee Camp at Van Abbemuseum

Nederlands Persbureau [stff wrtr/eng]. 17 MAY 2048.

The Van Abbemuseum in Eindhoven has been chosen as one of the five buildings requisitioned in Noord-Brabant to accomodate Israeli refugees.

A group of 120 refugees has been staying on museum premises since last Tuesday. They hope to have land granted, and to establish a kibbutz in the Eindhoven area. Nurit Ashkelon, spokesperson of the refugees, declared yesterday after a meeting with Fatima van Rijn, Mayor of Eindhoven:

"Our fate is terrible, but the odds will revive the pioneering spirit of our forerunners. The "Eretz Hoven" kibbutz will constitute the first step towards a future, peaceful, and democratic Israel."

20 Years after the

Exodus 2048 Odyssey

// Miri Stern Interviewed by Lotte Published in Voice of the Buuret,

By the last days of 2048, most Israeli citizens had left their country in one of the most massive transfers of population in the 21st century. The relocation of the Israeli government in Brooklyn, as well as the creation of the New State of Israel (*Israel Hakhadasha*) in Uganda have remained little known. Miri Stern, a scientist and founder of Kibbutz Eretz Hoven, spoke to journalist Lotte Müller about the ordeal of Exodus 2048 and her own experience on board.

Lotte Müller: 20 years after the incidents of December 2047, I would like to recall the chain of events. You were among the active witnesses of the time...

Miri Stern: That's true. Those months seem very close and very far at the same time. In retrospect, it is hard to believe that I had to leave my country forever. We always take countries for granted, hence the shock when one ceases to exist.

Can you tell me under what circumstances you left Israel?

The situation had been very explosive beginning in September with the onset of the Grand Jihad. In November came the takeover of the Sinai and the bombings of Haifa and Tel Aviv. But most Israelis continued as before, oblivious to what was happening. A few weeks later rumors began, that the Arabs were about to take over all of Israel. At one point, they seized all of Jerusalem's neighborhoods, returned to the Green Line, and then proceeded westward. They were getting closer to Tel Aviv, and we had to go, quickly. It was like a steam-roller that couldn't be stopped. We didn't have much time to think about what we should do.

What eventually convinced you to leave?

Fear. The rumors were getting more persistent and we grew really scared. As informed and liberal as we were, there was a level of fear that could not be withstood. When you hear stories of Arabs taking over Jewish houses and entire neighborhoods over and over again, you start believing them; they gain currency.

Müller

Rotterdam (EU), 20.03.2068

You followed a basic instinct for survival.

In hindsight, I know that the whole country was deserted upon a mere rumor. We had the news, but never saw actual fighting. It was ridiculous, yet very powerful. Nothing spreads faster than fear. We were all scared, and one man's fear fed the other's fear. The whole country sensed a danger and was frantically running away. Everyone was thinking that only the fastest would be able to leave... I was no different, I admit. Above all, I wanted to save my children. I didn't think much about the rest. We all thought we'd be back shortly.

When you read the accounts in the press of that time, it is hard to form an opinion, to understand what was really going on.

As in any war, the media become a mere vector of propaganda. They use the situation for other purposes. They don't really report. It has always been the case, but in the last decade, with the help of technology, it had become ever more sophisticated. At the same time, war had become more and more brutal and sophisticated.

So you didn't witness fighting in Tel Aviv?

No, I didn't. I know it sounds crazy today, that we left without fighting, just by hearsay. But that's how it happened. I could hear remote gunshot exchange but it was relatively light, and never too close to the city center – we lived on Allenby, at the corner of Lilienblum.

And bombings?

Aside from the Haifa bombing in September, we took Iranian threats very seriously. They had hundreds of missiles aimed at us and no one was protecting us anymore. Remember that the US had entirely given up any form of support after the Dubai treaty. But the fact is that Iran never launched the missiles and I was never sure, for a couple of years, whether they were bluffing or not.

Do you remember the exact circumstances of your departure?

It was December 15 I think, a Tuesday.

This I remember because I had had a dentist appointment for a long time; it's one of those insignificant facts that stay in your memory for no reason. The Friday before, I thought that I should cancel it. Eventually I decided to go, but the office was closed and the building apparently empty.

The area [the corner of Allenby and Bialik], normally very lively, was even calmer than on Saturdays. It was surreal. That's what scared me. I called my children – David was 13 and Leah 15 at the time – and summoned them home. In school, the teachers were calling parents to come and pick up their children, they didn't want to let them go by themselves, as usual. At this point, there was no longer a sense of normalcy. Everywhere you could see people loading cars. I didn't fully understand what was going on; events were sliding on the surface of my conscience. We packed just a bag each and left – I had always heard from my parents that life was more precious than commodities. We closed the door as if we'd return the day after. That was the last time I was there.

What were your thoughts then?

I can only remember that I was thinking of my dentist appointment and that it was a shame I missed it.

Didn't you think of fighting back instead of leaving?

No one was fighting... Of course, there was a military solution and Israel had a good record in trying to solve political problems by force. But what was failing us was a moral drive. We had basically oppressed Arabs for a century, and there's no way you can negate that. The whole country was oblivious to the facts, but deep down, you knew that what you'd done, or what had been done in your name, was not in line with the moral standards you would have liked in your country. From South Africa to Israel, a regime that has no moral legitimacy can not last forever. We had fought the Arabs for a hundred years, but we knew that one day we'd have to account for the hardships inflicted upon them. So yes, we simply left, we all deserted ...



Can you describe what happened after you left your house, how you managed to get out of the country?

It was a huge mess, and I must have forgotten most details. I had heard that Lod (Lydda) had already fallen, so I thought that trying to reach the airport would be suicidal. I knew that the UN was negotiating a humanitarian corridor, but in Israel we had grown skeptical of UN initiatives. So instead, my children and I attempted to reach the harbor in Jaffa, which was walking distance from the apartment. We were a bit anxious because of the Arab population there, but there was no safe, ideal situation anywhere. Buses were not running and taxis were all packed with people and luggage, so walking was best. On the way to Jaffa, we discovered that many others had the same idea – the harbor was crowded and in total chaos.



How was the situation in the city of Jaffa, outside the harbor?

Very confusing. The news was contradictory. For people with twin-identities, and double to a point of total schizophrenia like in the case of most Israeli Arabs, it must have been a terrible moment – to choose one side at the expense of the other. Some of them were parading and chanting victory, but on our way to the harbor, we also saw many families preparing to leave, as anxious as everyone else.



What happened once you reached the harbor?

It was packed with tens of thousands of people, unbelievable! The Jewish Agency and JNF were there with volunteers, trying to organize. People were assigned numbers and places on ships that were supposed to come. But there were few docks and the harbor was not equipped for docking large ships, which slowed down the whole evacuation process and led to a major chaos. Since nothing was happening, we tried to find an alternative. Leah spoke to people who were in touch with a fisherman. We ended up paying GBL\$ 4,000 per person and embarked on a fishing trawler, bound for Cyprus. The trip was horrendous. I really thought we would die at sea. The weather was bad and the boat loaded way beyond capacity. But we landed the next day, exhausted but alive.

Why Cyprus?

I suppose it was the only destination possible with a small ship. Egypt, Lebanon, Syria were ruled out, and friendly countries were too far. Cyprus had always been special for Israelis – as the closest part of the ‘Free World,’ as they used to say – and then turned into the major hub for Israeli refugees.

Did you then embark on the Exodus 2048 right away?

Not right away, but it didn't take too long. The UNHCR and a variety of NGOs were there, trying to organize chaos, apparently more efficiently than the Jewish Agency and JNF in Jaffa. In Larnaca, the dramatic chaos of Jaffa turned into a refugee machine. It was a huge camp organized like a little army and guarded like a prison. Refugees were pouring in continuously, day and night. I've read that 80% of Israel's population transited in Larnaca within a couple of weeks. Apparently there had been a deal made with Cyprus, that no refugee would exit the harbor area. Most of the refugees quickly embarked on cargo ships, ferries, and requisitioned cruise ships headed towards Libya, where a humanitarian corridor to Uganda had been negotiated.

Did you know at the time that Israel Hakhadasha had been inaugurated in Uganda, after Herzl's plan of 1903?

That was the main discussion topic among refugees and there were very heated debates!

What was your position on that?

You can't just relocate like that, establishing a state is more complex than writing the myth of its creation. And the official government, at the time, had just relocated to Brooklyn, so there was real confusion about authority and legitimacy. I personally believe that the split between Uganda and Brooklyn was the very end of Israel, not the Palestinian takeover. You cannot physically save a country which has already vanished in its essence. And everyone was responsible for that – the Ashkenazim with their class racism, and the Mizrahi themselves, who were happy to be rid of the Ashkenazim. It's the old story, you know...

Despite all that, were you tempted by Uganda?

I was, but I thought that Europe would offer my children a better future. There was nothing in Uganda. The Jewish Agency purchased the land in part with government funds, but everything had to be done, from scratch. I felt I was too old for a new Utopia. I needed safety more than the prospect of a new society in which I didn't really believe. Since my children and I had EU passports as well, there was no visa issue – at least we thought so.

That's why you were allowed to board the Exodus 2048, which was reserved for dual EU-Israeli citizens and visa holders?

I suppose. What we didn't know though, was that EU authorities would consider us only as Israeli citizens and deny us any EU citizens' rights!

On what grounds? That must have been illegal.

It was indeed illegal. But the EU and local governments quickly tailored laws that legalized our treatment.

Was the Exodus 2048 initially bound to a EU city?

Yes, to Bari. But we didn't even approach the harbor. Police speedboats surrounded us and prevented the ship from docking. We were forced to drop anchor a good distance from the shore. Our morale started to decline. The next day, we saw demonstrators chanting "Italians in Italia, Jews in Uganda" on TV. We realized we were pariahs, no one wanted to see us, have us. That evening I had a long argument with Leah. She was very upset at inheriting our mess, and she blamed the entire situation on my generation. We had been incapable of remembering our ideals and had, with the previous generations, produced a great country which had gone badly astray. That was her point, and she was not entirely wrong...





Maybe these arguments simply revealed the level of tension?... How long were you stuck in Bari?

It seemed very long. Two weeks, perhaps.

There were negotiations going on, but no good negotiator who could impose a compromise. Every party was, as ever, protecting its self interests with no understanding or compassion whatsoever.

How was life onboard?

The ship was decent when we embarked in Larnaca; it was originally a cruise ship. But it loaded 4,500 people with capacity for 1,400. Hygiene and living conditions deteriorated quickly. Food was sparse and of deteriorating quality, the water got contaminated, there were not enough toilets... We were in a cabin for 6, with 6 other people in the beginning, and then more and more came. Life in the cabin itself was hellish, but outside it was even worse. People were lying across the corridors everywhere, it was difficult to move to or from the cabin; the smell was horrendous... Leah was very combative and optimistic; she was probably the strongest of us three. David became depressed; he would just lie anywhere and do nothing. That really worried me. Everyone hoped to disembark quickly, because we all knew that the situation would only get worse, but we couldn't do much about it.

So you weren't allowed to disembark in Bari, right?

Right, neither in Bari nor elsewhere. No country was willing to make an effort. European leaders and public opinion thought that we had somehow deserved our fate, that we had planted the seed, the product of which we were now harvesting. We could sense a great deal of Schadenfreude. Then there was a final round of negotiations and France agreed to accept the ship in Marseilles.

How was the news received onboard?

The main thing was to dock, where was secondary. I think the French government did that to lift the first round of negotiations, but had no intention of letting us in. So when we arrived in Marseilles, it was the same old song again. This time we docked, but we were not allowed to disembark. The French government had passed a law while we were en route, preventing any people carrying diseases to enter the country. Only a few people in poor health and with good connections were taken to hospitals, in spite of the new law. As for the dead, they were kept in the ship's freezers.

But everyone knew that the sanitary situation would only get worse...

Absolutely. But that's how people in charge think; they want to get rid of the problem at the expense of a weaker party. It doesn't matter if it gets worse, as long as someone else ends up taking care of it. But to us, it was devastating. Living conditions were deteriorating every day; it was now a matter of survival. In Marseilles, there were already breakouts of scurvy and tuberculosis. The toilets were in such a state that we couldn't use them anymore. And most of us were very depressed.

What happened next?

We were re-routed towards Valletta, Malta. But when we reached Malta, the ship went back right away. Malta was threatening to sue the EU if the ship approached its coast. That's what all EU countries wanted to do, but it was not acceptable to say it bluntly. So we came back to Marseilles, as if we hadn't left.





Is that when the uprising took place?

Yes, it was. Refugees had elected a board to represent them, and the board decided that we should seize the ship, which we did, quite easily. The crew members were upset with the situation and somehow happy to be forced off.

Was it the board who took the decision to head to Kingston-upon-Hull?

The board put the question to the vote and won with an overwhelming majority. There was a rumor onboard, that only the UK could take us, that they had a better record with immigration – which was a hoax! I remember the Exodus leaving Marseilles escorted by hundreds of police speedboats. They left only once we had reached international waters. But in Hull, guess what: the same thing happened again. We were used to it at this point. We were pariahs everywhere, carrying diseases and with little hope. But, at the same time, we were also becoming a source for EU embarrassment, they needed to solve the issue and have us disappear from the headlines. We had been on the Exodus 2048 for almost three months...

Is that why the Istanbul meeting was called?

The Turkish government took the measure of the disaster, both morally and politically, and decided to call an extraordinary meeting of EU's Crime and Immigration Ministers. In her opening speech, Gülsün Dink, Turkey's Prime Minister, said that no one would leave the premises before an agreement was reached. A motion was later put to the vote, forcing the Netherlands to let the ship dock and take care of the refugees.

Why the Netherlands?

Apparently because they had the biggest debt in the EU budget, and other countries were annoyed with their constant vetoes of many issues. In addition, it was close to Hull, and Rotterdam was equipped with quarantine piers and quarters.

So you docked in Rotterdam?

Yes, and in the beginning, the same thing happened. This time, we would be allowed to disembark, but only after a quarantine period. There were obviously very heated debates within Dutch society and Parliament, and a group of opposition representatives managed to freeze the Istanbul process. But we were at our wits end and had to take a ground-breaking initiative to force our entry into the country. That's when most of us went on hunger strike. The general feeling onboard was that we had to pressure the EU with guilt, our only weapon... After three weeks or so, the Queen decided to end the nightmare and treat us like they used to treat refugees in the 20th century. We called off the hunger strike then, and that was the end of almost four months onboard the Exodus 2048. It was an odd impression to walk on firm ground again.

What were your thoughts then? Did you see it as a victory?

We were all too wrecked to think of a victory, it was rather a relief; also because upon disembarking, we were in the care of a medical team. After a week, we started feeling much better, even though I had no idea what would happen to us in a world that had no place for us. Yet the exhausting journey was over, and we were very happy. Hope was possible again.

Lotte Müller is a writer and a journalist. She recently published *Rise and Fall of the Jewish Utopia: A Critical Reader* (New York & Shanghai: MacMillan, 2067).

Miri Stern was born in Tel Aviv, 2007. After studies at the Universities of Haifa and Oxford, UK, she devoted her time to research and teaching, in Israel and overseas. She was the founder of the Department of Particle Physics at Tel Aviv University, and the author of numerous articles. Since the collapse of the State of Israel, Stern has been associated with institutions in both Europe and North America. She was also one of the founders of Kibbutz Eretz Hoven, the first kibbutz on European soil. She lives in Eindhoven and New York.

The interview was conducted in English and published in Dutch translation. The above was excerpted from the original transcript.

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Images from pages 308-315 are taken from the work: Michael Blum, *Exodus 2048*, 2008, mixed media installation, "Be(com)ing Dutch," Van Abbemuseum, Eindhoven

Photos: Peter Cox



