POSTCOLONIALISM AND RELIGIONS

THE LITERARY IMAGINATION IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE

ORIENTALISM, POETRY, AND BIOPOLITICS

Hella Bloom Cohen

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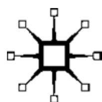

THE LITERARY IMAGINATION IN ISRAEL-PALESTINE
Copyright © Hella Bloom Cohen 2016
Softcover reprint of the hardcover 1st edition 2016 978-1-137-55136-8

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First published 2016 by
PALGRAVE MACMILLAN

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Palgrave Macmillan in the UK is an imprint of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 6XS.

Palgrave Macmillan in the US is a division of Nature America, Inc., One New York Plaza, Suite 4500, New York, NY 10004-1562.

Palgrave Macmillan is the global academic imprint of the above companies and has companies and representatives throughout the world.

ISBN: 978-1-349-71579-4
E-PDF ISBN: 978–1–137–54636–4
DOI: 10.1057/9781137546364

Distribution in the UK, Europe and the rest of the world is by Palgrave Macmillan®, a division of Macmillan Publishers Limited, registered in England, company number 785998, of Houndmills, Basingstoke, Hampshire RG21 6XS.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Cohen, Hella Bloom, 1985–
The literary imagination in Israel-Palestine : orientalism, poetry, and biopolitics / Hella Bloom Cohen
pages cm—(Postcolonialism and religions)
Includes bibliographical references and index.

1. Arab-Israeli conflict–Literature and the conflict 2. Miscegenation in literature. 3. Postcolonialism in literature. 4. Israel–Race relations. 5. Israel–Ethnic relations. 6. West Bank–Race relations. 7. West Bank–Ethnic relations. I. Title.

PJ5012.I87C64 2015
892.4′093585694058—dc23 2015019569

A catalogue record for the book is available from the British Library.

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Acknowledgments

This project would not have commenced without the initial encouragement of my mentor, Masood Ashraf Raja. His radical spirit, commitment to social justice, and meticulous knowledge of critical theory and postcolonial studies are matched only by his deep empathy for the struggling human. He manages to balance rigorous expectations for the scholarly community with an almost-pastoral care for his students. He continues to inspire me in his erudition, materialist commitments, and pedagogies. It is with pleasure that I thank him, as well as the institution that supported my doctoral study in which this book germinated, the University of North Texas.

For her constant guidance and heartfelt support, I thank my advisor and friend, Deborah Needleman Armintor. I also extend my deepest thanks to Nicole D. Smith and Laila Amine for their intellectual inspiration and critical examination of my work. This project would not have come to fruition without them, nor without the generous work-shopping support of Amanda Odgen Kellogg, Lindsay Emory Moore, and Adriane Bezusko. If there is any organizational prowess to the work, it is owing to them. In terms of building my academic repertoire and rhetorical delivery, I owe a great deal to the stimulating seminars and critiques of my writing offered by Laurence S. Lockridge, Jacqueline A. Vanhoutte, Stephanie L. Hawkins, Denise Amy Baxter, Jacqueline Foertsch, and Matthew Heard. These people witnessed me navigate the circuitous route I took to my current field of study. If the reader finds a sense of historicity to my work, it is largely due to my relationship with these scholars.

I am especially indebted to my mother, Marian Frances Wolbers, for the professional and personal cheerleading; and to her, to Catherine Deiley, and to Claudia Strauss, for their editing work on the manuscript. Thanks also to Jill Kleister; to ACLA seminar members Andrew Ryder, Shir Alon, and Maya Kesrouany, from "Rethinking the Arab-West Encounter"; and to the attendees at

UNT's 2013 Critical Voices conference, all of whom contributed feedback at different junctures of the book. For helping me put food on the table while I completed the early manuscript, I appreciate Gary Totten, Emily Wicktor, and the English Department at North Dakota State University. For the emotional sustenance I needed throughout the early and late drafts stages, I thank Jessica D. Ward, Heather Robinson, Darcy Hudelson Lewis, Robin Coffelt, Anastassiya Andrianova, Adam Goldwyn, Diana Bellonby, Matt Duques, Sean Burt, Mathew Gendle, Jennifer Hart, Amy Johnson, Jeffrey Coker, and Steve Braye. For providing the academic enfranchisement I needed to confidently seek out publication, I am grateful to the students, staff, and faculty at Elon University. To all the activists and journalists at The Jewish Voice for Peace, Jews for Justice for Palestinians, and to other advocacy groups like them, my work is motivated by yours, and I am comforted knowing you exist. Additionally, the scholars whose piloting work in the field of postcolonial studies and Israel-Palestine has enabled me to pursue this contested, important, and rebooted arena of knowledge include Anna Bernard, Ella Shohat, Anna Ball, Barbara Harlow, Patrick Williams, Joe Cleary, Timothy Brennan, Joseph Massad, Raz Yosef, Tina Sherwell, and others; they deserve considerable praise.

A final recognition is due to my wonderful and sundry family—the Wolberses, the Blooms, the Denglers, the Sosins, the Cohens, and the Burnses. And there is hardly enough prose in the world to sufficiently thank Michael Patrick Cohen. In a word, thank you, Mikey, for the love and logic.

1

Introduction to Israeli-Palestinian Literature and Postcolonial Studies

An Uneasy Relationship

Rula Jebreal's 2003 novel *Miral* dramatizes the many facets of how desire has come to be structured in the Israeli-Palestinian contact zones—how the personal has begun to strike back at the political, which, in this particular geopolitical milieu, has so uniquely inserted itself into it. Jebreal's narrator recalls a libidinous vista at the checkpoint:

> She got out of the car and approached a soldier who was leaning against a jeep. He was around twenty, with black hair, dark brown eyes, slightly olive skin, and fleshy lips. He could have been an Arab. He smelled strongly of cologne, and he looked her over, head to toe, hesitating here and there along the way, attracted by the charms that were beginning to bloom in her young body. Finally, he lit a cigarette and said, "If you give me a kiss, I'll let you pass." (155)

As Jebreal illustrates, the world in which the personal strikes back at the political is not poised to sustain healthy mixed relations. The desire (the "fleshy lips" beckoning for kiss) and the ethnic and racial affinities (the soldier "could have been an Arab") are perverted by sanctioned exploitation (the leering position of the soldier who holds the keys to Miral's passage). Jebreal also elucidates how personal affinities are problematized by a Western alliance with Israel and its economic privilege when the narrator takes note of the soldier's American cigarette and manicured hands. She paints an inequitably gendered situation for Arab and Israeli women; in this scene, Miral performs agency by rejecting the soldier's advances.

What this novel and other works constellating around this conflict engage is the following conundrum: by creating laws dictating allowable human relationships, Israel has produced desire in excess of itself, managing to provoke intimacy between antagonistic social groups. That these antagonisms have become racialized of late is the crux of this book and compels me to argue for a new understanding of this intimacy in frameworks of critical race and postcolonial studies, specifically through a focus on the rhetoric of miscegenation.

The definitions and categories of race, ethnicity, and religion in Israel-Palestine have reached a point of collapse. Antagonisms between Semitic cousins constitute a longer history not limited to the twentieth century, but modern wartime's land-doling and martial constrictions arising with the Occupation have racialized divisions beyond the usual palpability of outward appearance (as per the American context). The racialized rhetoric of Arab versus Jew now reaching a fever pitch in the public discourse of Israel-Palestine is complicated and multicausal, but several contributing factors include, first, that racial difference historically has been a ready tool for othering the political and religious enemy. As part of the strategy in World War I to partner Jews with the Allied Powers, the British utilized the crisis of anti-Semitic oppression in Russia to promise a national home for the Jews in Palestine, predicated on Britain's ability to dissolve Ottoman control of the region (Kazarian and Weisbord 13). This "promise" became known as the Balfour Declaration of 1917, named after its architect, British foreign minister Arthur James Balfour. However, this conflicted with a similar accord of 1915, the McMahon-Hussein agreement, that the British made with the Arabs in the region to motivate Arab opposition to the Ottomans (13). This colonial double-dealing early in the Zionist timeline laid the seed for a sectarian opposition that would come to be couched in racial terms, as is so often the colonialist picture.

Frantz Fanon's legacy that racism is inherent to colonial domination holds true for the Israeli-Palestinian timeline. Early instances of British orientalism of Jews and Arabs during the Mandate in part established a racial premise for domination in the region, which came to be restaged during the power vacuum when they British left. In his book *One Palestine, Complete: Jews and Arabs under the British Mandate*, Tom Segev illustrates in astonishing breadth and depth how both Jews and Arabs were repeatedly configured in terms of race by the British, pitting these essentialisms against each other,

and consulting commonplaces of behavior in order to mobilize and justify negotiations in the region.[1] To solidify an institutional basis on top of an already internalized psychological hierarchy of whiteness, in the moments leading up to the Mandate's dissolution, the British appointed Ashkenazim to high-ranking positions, the group that largely structures the Knesset to this day. Ironically, then, European Jews passed from an othered race vis-à-vis anti-Semitic Europe to the new class of racial elites both representative of yet above Arabs and Mizrahim/Sephardim.

Despite this history of prestate racializing in the region and the contemporaneous "white" power structure of Israel, the ambiguity of outward distinctions between Jews and Arabs facilitates a preponderance of the "passing" trope, such as illustrated in the *Miral* excerpt. The confoundedness or, sometimes, fear with which authors approach this trope on one register serves to consolidate difference and on another represents its instability; this instability is not nearly as embodied as when the passer turns out to be an actual hybrid, the figure on which I turn my focus in the chapters that follow. Another emulsifier of difference is promoted in the illustrious figure of the Ashkenazi soldier[2] and the general conflation of world Jewry with the European Holocaust survivor, despite Nazism's drastically more diffuse tentacles. The conflation of religion and ethnicity with race is also played out in media representations of Israeli-Palestinian costume differences, where martial force is patterned as green IDF uniforms against the impoverished images of veiled women and urchin children. This imagery moved into unique racial parallelism in summer 2014 when IDF-on-Gazan violence complemented other race wars in the media, where white police were repeatedly shown suppressing black civilian protesters in Ferguson, Missouri, after the shooting of unarmed black teenager Michael Brown. Protests against Operation Protective Edge crossed over into protests against Ferguson's overpowered police force, with social networking activists for Ferguson finding filial connection with those for Gaza. Protesters shared information such as how to treat the aftereffects of pepper spray.

The racial constitution of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is also partially an effect of scholarship. Though comparative critical race scholarship is important to highlighting the human rights atrocities enacted by Israel, it has had the effect of highlighting difference as much as it has shocked the academic community into recognizing Israel-Palestine as a postcolonial space. Comparisons between the plight of Palestinians at the hands of the Israelis and the African

and African American experience of colonialism, apartheid, and segregation, made by scholars such as Rebecca L. Stein and Barbara Harlow, have made it more acceptable to acknowledge the collapsing definitions of race and ethnicity in the Middle East, and to acknowledge regionally distinct discourses of race and human rights as intersecting, to the extent that several African diasporic organizations have taken up Gaza in their critical discourse against apartheid and institutional racism. This is a comparative strategy also employed by liberal Jewish organizations, such as the Jewish Voice for Peace. Despite the increasing normalization of critical race approaches to Israel, the dialogue focuses mainly on segregationist practices and policies of exclusion in a way that only further secures difference and obfuscates any possibility of a statist solution beyond one of partition.

This book offers a sustained examination of the profound, emergent figures of racial and ethnic hybrids in post-1967 Israeli-Palestinian literature and discourse that signal beyond partition to third-state options—chiefly through figuring the Arab and African Jew, the Ashkenazi-Mizrahi/Sephardi, and the interethnic relationship that produces the hybrid. I focus on these figures to see how they testify to a public that is at once fearful and romanticizing of miscegenation, not unlike that experienced in other postcolonial milieus. At the same time, imagined and lived mixed intimacies radicalize the political trajectory for Israel-Palestine by portending a mixed public sphere. I argue that the current trend of supremacist Israeli protectionism can be seen as a reactionary phase in the inevitable process of racial and ethnic mixing already being imagined in the literature.

The literature I examine in this book attests to a desire for human-to-human contact with the enemy, but ultimately finds that contact untenable, however, in such imbalanced networks of power. Taken as a pedagogical strategy, the metaphor of the Arab-Jew and Mizrahi-Ashkenazi romance—hereafter referred to as the "mixed romance"—bears a history of statist upheavals that have violated ethnic neighbors at the same time that it has called for the transformation of civic law as a necessary step toward coexistent living. Perhaps marriage, citizenship, and tenancy reform will not convince Gayatri Spivak that Israel has established a rightful place in Asia; she admits that she has "not been able to think Israel into Asia," finding Israel and Japan as occupying the "two absurdities at [Asia's] two ends" (11). Spivak here invokes Israel's continued alliance with the West (despite its flouting Western democracy within

its territories). However, the increasing symbolic and real-life presence of mixed romances might portend a national future absent of the Occupation.

By focusing on the mixed romance and its statist inscriptions, this study constitutes a postcolonial approach to Israel-Palestine, which immediately situates it in a piquant genealogy. Postcolonial critics writing about Israel-Palestine agree that Edward Said's 1979 work *The Question of Palestine* is a—if not the—foundational discussion on Israeli imperialism. Since its one-year antecedent, *Orientalism*, was to effectively generate the field of postcolonial studies itself, as a sister text *The Question of Palestine* and the arguments therein are indissoluble from postcolonial studies, marking an inaugural moment in its genealogy. The question on everyone's mind then is, how did *Orientalism* become relatively palatable and so widely disseminated across the disciplinary divides while its sister text remains underplayed at best and institutionally taboo at worst? Rebecca L. Stein observes that it is only within the last few years that a climate has opened up allowing American laypeople as well as academics to debate publicly the coloniality of Zionism without injunction or incurring the charge of anti-Semitism (317). Certain world events have enabled more open discussion, ushering in the importance of Said's strikingly prophetic book, which anticipates its own interment. These events include the 1993 Oslo Accords, which brought international legitimacy to the Palestinian cause (318) despite its being seen as a failure in many circles for the weak showing made by the exiled leaders of the PLO; the 2001 World Conference against Racism, which brought anticolonial rhetoric into the sphere of public discourse on Zionism (318); and the mounting civilian deaths accompanying Israel's series of attacks on Beirut, the West Bank, and the Gaza strip between 1967 and 2009, which intensified public scrutiny such that the label "occupation" began being replaced with "war crimes" (318),[3] and the word "apartheid" has even made its rounds. Most recently, Israel's illegal settlement program in the Occupied Territories has provided a vivid basis for comparing Israel's policies to settler colonialism.[4] These events, among others, have made it possible for the academy to return to the Said of 1979.

One postcolonial critic who has mounted a radical critique of Israel throughout the years is Barbara Harlow, the foremother of the genre "resistance literature." Focusing in a large part on Palestinian writing and its relationship to Central American and South African colonialism, her 1987 book bears the title of the

genre. But the radical work Harlow does in that book to theorize the Palestinian's relationship to colonialism is taken to greater lengths in her 2012 article wherein she boldly asserts in the spirit of a final claim to end all equivocations on the matter of the connection between Israel's policies of genocide and exclusion to South African apartheid. She uses as a point of departure a flyer put out by the Palestinian Solidarity Group in South Africa after the 2008–2009 siege of Gaza[5] that compares an image of military brutality from the siege to a reminiscent image from the Soweto uprisings of 1976, when children in Johannesburg demonstrated against apartheid education. Against structuralist readings[6] of Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish (and against Darwish's own occasional swings into structuralist reflections of his work), Harlow constructs a "historical continuity [. . .] in the iconic, if ephemeral, juxtaposition of the image of Hector Pieterson [the limp body of the boy from Soweto] with the photograph of his Palestinian comrade" (14). This allows her to stress Israel's apartheid timeline as chronicled in Darwish's *Memory for Forgetfulness*, published after Israel's previous siege of Bierut in 1982, and its anticipation of Israel's war crimes in 2008–2009.

To Harlow, a comparative approach becomes especially exigent in light of the emergence of independent, international investigations as the only candid and trustworthy sources of war crimes adjudication in Israel. Israel's self-investigations have proven to be evasive and enabling of future violations, covering up information that "universal jurisdiction" (Harlow's term) then excavates. Only by comparative methodologies were these universal organizations, such as the Goldstone Mission, founded, as the expertise of its representatives was multicultural, having worked previously on human rights investigations in Chile, South Africa, and America (22). Given the comparative race issues invoked by Harlow and others who draw upon South African apartheid for a critique of the Occupation, a blunt dialogue of the precise character of Israeli racism still hovers below the surface. In this study, I hope to fill this gap by exploring the dialogue of race and national belonging in Israel-Palestine through the emergent representations of interracial and interethnic mixing in literature and social discourse of Israel-Palestine.

The concept of mixing in this book includes the depiction of interracial and interethnic intimacies, romances, and partnerships in the literature, discourse, and private sphere of Israel-Palestine. The hyphenated terminology that I use to refer to the geopolitical

milieu for these unions is meant to reflect the process of mixing and its implications for statist debates in the region. It differs conceptually from the forward-slash nomenclature (Israel/Palestine), which may be more familiar to the reader, in that it more vividly expresses a notion of *both* rather than *and/or*, but retains the legitimating shared name "Palestine."

My decision to focus on mixing instead of the contained experience of Israel's others within their own cultures or their oppression within the nation-state is based on several cues that signal its relevance. First, Ella Shohat, the dominant voice in critical race studies in relation to Israel, has already piloted important recognition of Sephardim and Mizrahim in Israel, and the Arab and African Jewish experience of marginalization within the Diaspora. Second, Stuart Hall, one of the first theorists to pose the question of postcolonial Palestine other than Said, invokes the questions important to critical race studies in his mentioning of Palestine but then neglects to sustain a conversation about race specific to Israel-Palestine. While he uses Caribbean creolization theory to assert the ambiguity of diaspora in the Middle East, he never analyzes an actual hybrid figure or mixed relationship in the area. In his hugely influential 1986 essay "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," he criticizes how *diaspora* as a term has been mobilized in the Middle East:

> I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of "ethnicity." We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora—and the complicity of the West with it. The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference. (235)

Hall uses the heterogeneous experiences that mark the Caribbean as an example of identity living with and through difference: the Caribbean is constituted by "precisely the mixes of colour, pigmentation, physiognomic type; the 'blends' of tastes that is Caribbean cuisine; the aesthetics of the 'cross-overs,' of 'cut-and-mix,' to borrow Dick Hebdige's telling phrase, which is the heart and soul of

black music" (236). Hall does not extend this embodied depiction of hybridity to Israel-Palestine, a fissure in critical race theory that is only partially filled by David C. Jacobson's aesthetic analysis of the interracial romance in Israeli women's fiction and Raz Yosef's criticism on the interracial queer romance in Israeli cinema, neither of which consider the role of interracial procreation in the nation-state.[7]

The question of what the hybrid means to Israel—its incarnation in demographic identities rather than merely cultural ones—has been left unanswered. This study focuses on the hybrid question using the contested philosophies of twentieth-century anthropologist-cum-creative nonfiction writer Gilberto Freyre, the infamous Brazilian miscegenation theorist and commentator on colonialism, to spur discussion and push the limits of what is allowable dialogue about interracial and interethnic mixing in literal and figurative Israel-Palestine. Freyre mythologizes Portugal's ancient, mixed-race heritage of Romans, barbarians, and Moors as producing their proclivity toward democracy in the colonies via miscegenation with the natives. Salient components of Freyre's multipronged rhetorical deployment of the hybrid figure frame each chapter, as I use each to introduce different renderings of mixed intimacy in terms of its relevance to nation-building (or nation-dismantling). The second chapter outlines Freyre's central tenets and develops his methodological relevance to this study in terms of the new questions he poses for issues in biopolitics, public sphere theory, and the relationship between eros and the nation. The middle chapters show Palestinian and Israeli literature doing the work of Freyrean theory, while the final delineates the ways in which women writers depart from Freyre's embodied poetics.

As an introduction to the still-nascent arena of Israeli-Palestinian postcoloniality, though, here it is important to situate my work in the field. My work joins a small but growing body of criticism challenging the field of postcolonial studies to include Israel-Palestine within its theoretical purview, as the field has tended to restrict its attention to commonwealth nations and jewels in the crown. This book not just offers textual interventions, but it works to change the Eurocentric way Israeli-Palestinian literature is currently categorized. Featuring Anglophone and translated Jewish and Arab fiction and poetry that employ the thematic of the interracial and interethnic union, my additional use of public discourse about the mixed romance on the blogosphere and in judicial policy, as well as my use of anthropological accounts of Arab-Jewish relationships in the labor sector (dominantly, textile), makes my work thematic,

interdisciplinary, and intertextual. I trace miscegenation as a source of unease and desire across generically varied texts because, in order to invoke both the private and public, one must consider discourse circulating in both spheres.

Situating my work also includes making the audience aware of the problem the field poses and my tenuous position within it in terms of questions of authenticity, language, and experience. Questions of scholarly authenticity have rutted the road to classifying Israeli-Palestinian literature under postcolonial studies. Outlining some of the dominant contestations within the academy is a voice from the United Kingdom, Anna Bernard. Though not explicitly engaged with critical race theory, Bernard's scholarship has paved the way for my discussion by providing a language of diplomacy to use against institutional objections while still persisting in the inclusion of Israeli-Palestinian texts on postcolonial reading lists. In calling attention to the institutional absence of Israel-Palestine from postcolonial studies despite its proliferating presence in the field's critical literature, Bernard implies that there exists an academic preconception of the genre that it belongs under the heading of area studies. As ironic as it may be, when structuring their postcolonial studies programs, departments tend to serve canonical sites of inquiry, such as the Caribbean, South Asia, and Africa ("Palestine and Postcolonial Studies" 2). Though the Middle East is by definition postcolonial, and Israel has occasionally petitioned to join the commonwealth since the dissolution of the British Mandate, its literatures are deemed more appropriate for the aesthetic or historicist approaches in line with the Comparative Literature tradition.

The seeming unsuitability of Israeli literature to postcolonial studies—which as a profession has been criticized by New Critical traditionalists for stretching its reach too thin and thus lacking rigor—signals that critical authenticity is being called into question in a way that it is not for postcolonial Caribbeanists, South-Asianists, Africanists, or any other "ists," for that matter. Moreover, the "Palestinian" part of the hyphenated term is not at issue, for it has traveled with postcolonial studies since the beginning. Notwithstanding pressures to stay away from Israel issuing from people outside of the field, postcolonial scholars themselves have been reluctant to consider Israel postcolonial. Recall Spivak quoted earlier. The difference can be explained in part by Israel's alliance with the West. However, this has not stopped critics from considering other areas postcolonial whose public spheres are dominated by Western ideals (take Ireland, for example). The difference, I posit,

is the position of political precariousness in which people critical of Israel find themselves as well as the discussion's general topical and polarizing nature, especially given that commonplace defense rhetoric so instinctively collapses support of Israel with solidarity against the past and any future Holocaust. Adding to the sensitivity of this discursive space is the subtext that the Judeo-Christian West endows Israel with the charge to protect the Ur of the West's prevailing mythologies. Area studies and/or comparative literature, then, provide safe housing for a geographically and discursively "sacred" region. This is not to say that scholars in these fields are not doing radical work, but that the field headings themselves do not immediately announce their politics.

Issues regarding scholars' authenticity and institutional classification also arise out of the language politics unique to Israel-Palestine. Karen Alkalay-Gut calls attention to questions of ethos that crop up while working with translated and, to an even greater extent, Anglophone Israeli texts. Writing in Hebrew is seen as vital to strengthening Israel's national culture (195), due to the struggle writers have undergone to revive, consolidate, and nationalize the language after the Holocaust. Hebrew writing is so highly protected and privileged that Anglophone Israeli works tend to be exported—the average Israeli reader is not exposed to these texts, and these works are seldom candidates at arts and culture festivals or featured in the telecommunications publicity of Israel (195). Anglophone Israeli writers have become vexed at the lack of reception and have turned to alternative forms of communication to reach local audiences, including poetry accompanied by music or painting, multimedia, performance and word art, and crafts (195).

Anglophone postcolonialists have access to these forms and the rejected English-language works, but access to works with more domestic purchase is partially barred. Though many postcolonialists are multilingual, especially in colloquial forms, they do not typically have the mastery of a language that one gains from a lifetime of close textual study. While Arabic learning is increasingly accessible, the availability of either modern or biblical Hebrew language courses is limited in Western secondary and postsecondary education, as are the critical literatures on Israel generally, so by the time an early-career scholar begins pursuing studies of Israeli literature, it is quite late in the game to seek sovereignty from translations. Since a reliance on only Anglophone Israeli texts would seriously limit the scholar's field of vision in terms of the Israeli Jew's experience

of the Palestinian and the Occupation, he or she is forced to rely on translations. While an increased acceptance of Israeli-Palestinian literature into the postcolonial canon will result in a more available and hence more rigorous study of its native tongue, in the interim a conundrum arises from academic bias toward the postcolonialist's dependence on translations.

This book responds to the complications of translation in four key ways. I work with translated canonical Israeli fiction such as A. B. Yehoshua's, sensitive to the limitations of my readings, but aware that the reward of exposing these texts to Anglophone postcolonial critical debate and eroding their somewhat protected/localized status in the academy is greater than the risk of slippages in close readings. Second, I place these works in conversation with not just Anglophone Israeli literature but also with Anglophone and translated Palestinian pieces written under similar geopolitical circumstances, with obviously differing perspectives. This act is not to conflate them or diminish the importance of their respective national integrities vis-à-vis their original tongues but to allow for certain questions to emerge which would not otherwise be possible. Sometimes we risk violating authenticity[8] in the process of dissemination. However, because knowledge is power and those who have come into possession of it have not always mobilized it ethically I trust that the reader recognizes my intent to wield it for democratizing purposes and to bring into view blind spots in the field.

Third, I aim to search for arguments through other available means outside of formal writing. In my material culture chapter (5), which looks at the poetics of intimacy in literature about fabric and textile artifacts, I heed Alkalay-Gut's cue that important interventions can be found by expanding one's notion of what constitutes a text. If Israeli translation politics produce textual disappearances, one must work to refabricate them. Finally, I approach the generically varied texts—poetry, fiction, anthropological discourse, material cultural artifacts—symptomatically rather than formally. The size of the study and the expertise of the author (trained as a theoretician rather than a comparativist) preclude anatomizing the original form of each piece and the cultural poetics therein in any comprehensive way. For instance, though Mahmoud Darwish writes in forms that stake their history in the ancient ghazal, the nuances of his commentary on Arab and Persian textual history is not addressed. While A. B. Yehoshua's linguistic nuances—from guttural Hebrew to European cadences and back—are not treated

here, the ethnic commonplaces he works with to paint his Israel are preserved.

Translation remedies aside, unfortunately I also recognize another translation problem that stunts the reception of this work's argument and exposes the romance of an emancipatory book such as this. While the US public sphere is liberalizing toward a post- (or presently-) colonial understanding of Israel-Palestine and it may be demonstrating burgeoning support for legal reform abroad, the very constituents whose voting powers dictate public and legal reception to the mixed relationship in Israel-Palestine have witnessed an entirely different—if not absent—civil-rights timeline. For this reason it is imperative to avoid the temptation to perceive postcolonial texts as already read in Israel-Palestine. Ella Shohat verifies that the lack of translated postcolonial criticism in Israel has coincided with the absence of a history of civil rights movements informing and morphing with the discipline. Moreover, those texts that were translated into Hebrew were published at different times, nonchronologically, and sometimes years after their reception in the West had run its course. Shohat writes:

> Postcolonial theory consequently was introduced to the Hebrew reader within an intellectual and political vacuum, not only in relation to anti-colonial history and writings. In Israel, the anti-colonial antecedents of postcolonial writings—e.g., texts by DuBois, C.L.R. James, Cabral, Césaire, Fanon, Senghor, Retamar, and Rodinson—have never been translated into Hebrew. Albert Memmi's books on Jewish-related questions, meanwhile, were translated in the 1960s and 1970s, but not his classic anticolonialist texts. (66)

As Shohat's examples reveal, the translation slippages go both ways. There is a reason translation politics represents its own rich field of debate in postcolonial studies.

What I intend my thematic methodology to do is to show traces of intimacy, hope, and dialectic even at the risk of misreading. Here I channel Derrida whose airy disassembling of the close reading makes postcolonial arguments possible. In *Of Grammatology* he suggests that the reader already dwells in multiple languages, both native and not native, and that there can be no clean or static retrieval of the past or origins. Despite its political dilemmas and artistic losses, (mis)reading Israeli-Palestinian writers in English generates uncertainty toward the text's cultural objects in a way that would have one ask not what these objects are, in some

essentialist notion of beingness, but what they do to human-to-human performance. For example, there are sure to be endless linguistic and possibly biblical registers of the sexy gun of Darwish's Jewish lover, Rita; or the Arabic music that haunts the miscegenated Jewish madwoman in Yehoshua; or the wetted sheets that link Occupier with Occupied in Orly Castel-Bloom. These are registers that are out of reach for me at this time. However, it is my hope to reproduce these objects in a way that shows my grappling with the complications that the mixed relationship[9] poses to Zionism and partition negotiations—to display authors working through questions of binational and statist solutions such that they provide witness to a questioning and desiring private sphere bubbling up to the surface.

It is important to articulate another disclaimer as a postcolonial scholar of a sensitive domain: by reflecting on my cultural experience, my position of privilege, and the degree to which my perspective is one of an outsider, I intend to negotiate objections to my categorizing Israeli literature as postcolonial. There are innumerable scholarly resources on the *state of being postcolonial* in Palestinian experience, but an understanding of the Israeli or the Israeli writer as postcolonial might strike some as offbeat or even as offensive. Popular topics on Palestinian postcoloniality are themes of exile and memory, with Darwish figuring prominently in these discussions. Often, writing about these literatures will be catalogued under the "postcolonial" for the simple fact that it comes out of or engages the Palestinian Diaspora, which has been accepted in the academy as a subaltern group. (Still, aesthetic/close-reading approaches constitute much of this material, which has become beneficial in validating the literature as good literature—its worth transcendent of geopolitical import.) However, Israel as the oppressor and, further, Israelis as subjects of colonialism become present only as a white elephant. Israeli literature enjoys its own unique field of Jewish studies that privileges its own theory of Jewish struggle, emerging as somehow disparate from the Palestinian narrative, blocking questions of what the former group has done with that struggle. My attempt to bring the white elephant into view—indeed, to make it speak—meets with an elephantine problem: the fear of criticizing a people whose suffering validates their existence and in turn de-validates the critical gaze.

The reader should know that I come to the field as a white, secular American "half-Jew," as the colloquialism goes, whose position as a Western-educated poststructuralist with a diasporically and religiously eclectic upbringing makes my own perspective

toward Israel extremely privileged but also complex. I am the miscegenated Diaspora, in other words. As a result of my experience and because my critique looks at other hybrid figures like me—and yet not like me—who are emerging in the literature and in common discourse in Israel-Palestine, in an interpretive deployment that is both profoundly liberalizing and deeply threatening to Zionism (and an increasingly rightist, Ashkenazi-dominated state), I am prepared to be received in contradictory ways. Some will challenge my authenticity, and some will burden me with it. In other words, I might not be Jewish enough to sympathize with Zionism, or not Jewish enough to launch a truly radical critique of it. One accusation might be that I am too close to the subject matter, shattering the illusion of disinterested scholarship.

The objection for which I am most prepared will be that I embody the self-hating Jew, outed by Rebecca L. Stein as "that highly problematic label" reserved for Jewish critics (317), or that I join the ranks of those British intellectuals whom Efraim Sicher has dubbed as "anti-Semitic." Sicher uses the same strategies of Nazi analogy to deconstruct British postcolonial rhetoric, likening critics' word choices to those used in key Nazi texts (9), which he then begrudges being used by liberals in his analysis of critical rhetoric of the Gaza siege (12). Sicher's is an all-too-common analogy, the rhetorical immaturity of which is illustrated by its circulation in right-wing attacks running the gamut from prolife targets to Obama. His is an analogy I duly excise from my critique aside from its inherent association with weltanschauung, the concept of an ethnically and ideologically pure state that Freyre positions as the antithesis to racial democracy and which I use as a framework for understanding the rightist movement toward homogeneity in the Israeli public sphere. Hopefully, the dialectical reasoning born with the comparative approach should help to transcend objections to my (discursive) authenticity insofar as it ensures an occasional panoramic interpretive view, tempering the seemingly personal nature of the geopolitically local.

Being able to view the Arab-Jewish or Israeli-Palestinian fictional relationship as relevant to the nation-state actually depends upon Bernard's comparative classification of Israeli-Palestinian literature as "partition literature." Though on paper partition did not come to fruition because the Arab states rejected the UN's 1947 plan, Bernard speculates that the idea of partition remains more central to Israel-Palestine than its manifestations in India or

Ireland ("Forms," 29, note 2) as the aftershocks of the land distribution of 1947 still so belabor its people and actual partition remains a plausible strategy for peace in the two-state solution (12). She references Salah D. Hassan's argument that the "partition" of Palestine into the Jewish state must be considered as a precondition of Occupation (29, note 2).[10] Hence there exists a strong basis for categorizing Israeli-Palestinian literature as partition literature, and this in turn precludes a geopolitically specific methodology:

> The basis for comparative study then is not only the common structural features that twentieth-century partitions have shared, such as the use of partition as an imperial exit strategy, but also, and more importantly, the desire to construct a prescriptive framework for resolving ethnic conflict (or otherwise set the terms of national independence, as in the Cold War partitions) that can be adapted to different contexts, whether or not partition is seen as an acceptable means of resolution. (12)

A sole framing of Israeli-Palestinian literature with twentieth-century partitions has risks, which my examination attempts to bypass. Israeli-Palestinian literature, I argue, traverses philosophical paradigms of the nation, but the genre "partition literature" risks insinuating that 1947 created the Palestinians. This would strip them of the very indigenous history their liberation movement attempts to protect. For this reason it is also important to see them in terms of nonpartition global frameworks, such as the Brazilian case and that of South African apartheid. Freyre's synthetic democracy stimulates questions that the partition framework cannot, such as how the unstable racial body or the mixed relationship gestures to a single-state solution.

While I take a serious interest in how the mixed relationship entertains the single-state concept, I am careful to avoid celebrating unfettered hybridity. As Bernard cautions, "Hegemonic postcolonial studies—defined above all by its curricular form—still tends to privilege notions of cultural 'difference,' hybridity, migration, and transnationalism over political antagonism and contest, and it still tends to problematize national identities at the expense of national liberation movements" ("Palestine," 3). My focus on the hybrid and hybridizing phenomena produced by the mixed relationship does not end at a complication of the nation-state at the expense of liberation movements, but rather it offers the mixed relationship up to the critic as a ready symbol toward mobilizing legal reform. In other words, I am not interested in the mixed relationship as a

celebratory shiny object distracting readers from material oppressions in "the only democracy in the Middle East" (Shohat, rehearsing an ironic catch-all for Israel, 56).

A reading of racial and ethnic complexity as a point of arrival would not be radical, nor efficacious, in that it ultimately would prove Timothy Brennan's point that "complexity, among other things, offers the critic an opportunity to declare politically dissident ideas in the form of an ironic dissimulation—which is economic to the degree that it is a form of job protection in a regime of risk" (403). Contrarily, I do locate places where the literature represents the stable nation and borders as violating entities. If at times a cosmopolitan aesthetic arises as an expected solution to the violence of partition strategies, I am careful to avoid moving this work in the direction to which Pheng Cheah notes postcolonial studies has tended, pushing nationalism "out of favor" (20). I read Arab-Jewish hybridity throughout these chapters, not to sidetrack readers from necessary national issues unique to Israel-Palestine such as legalizing mixed marriages, advocating tenant and travel rights for Palestinians,[11] and pressuring the Knesset for immigration and labor reform for Israeli Mizrahim and Sephardim, as well as African émigrés,[12] but, rather, as a narrative strategy that allows these liberties to be imagined, desired, and given purchase in Israeli discourse.

The following chapters examine, in the radical spirit of Freyre, themes of interracial intimacy in, among other works, Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's "Rita" series; A. B. Yehoshua's Israeli Hebrew novel *A Late Divorce*; selected works by anthologized Israeli and Palestinian poets; and Israeli, mixed language writer Orly Castel-Bloom's novel *Textile*. Freyre's directness challenges me as a critic, in engaging with biopolitical themes in the literature, to avoid euphemizing or further privatizing sites of resistance. In other words, it feels tempting to read the love between Darwish and his real-life and poetic lover, Rita, as an end in itself, as somehow proof that human desire—eros—can overcome institutionalized racism (chapter 3); indeed, a tidy reading of Yehoshua's fiction might center a critique of the mixed marriage on its transformation of Jewish home life (chapter 4); it is similarly tempting to celebrate the burgeoning interracial networks in the Israeli textile industry in a way that points to the freedoms that unregulated capital can produce (chapter 5). After all, should not the Jewish mistress be honored with her increasingly underscored responsibility to determine the future of Israel, specifically by her response to Israel's sexual

politics and her choice of a mate? This is the rhetorical question posed by a preoccupied investment in the hybrid without any prospect of real-life, sanctioned mixed marriages. Though my readings emphasize political germination in these various private spheres, I work to carefully avoid relegating intimacy and its implications to the home, the commercial, or to the solitary practice of reading.

I reject, for instance, critics' attempts to compartmentalize and depoliticize Darwish's love poetry. I identify the yet-unexamined biopolitical registers of Mahmoud Darwish's "Rita" poems, and I read them for their public resonances rather than for their private aesthetics. In another example of public disavowal, Israeli author A. B. Yehoshua's novel *A Late Divorce* diverts concentration away from public reform by representing the home as a site of political tension, a place for hammering out state ideologies discomfited with Arab-Jew and Ashkenazic-"Oriental" Jew intermarriage. Freyre's concept that private industry and anthropological engagements with objects bring about networks of intimacy between antagonistic groups help illuminate racially democratizing processes in textile partnerships in Israel-Palestine, an industry with an exploitative history that Orly Castel-Bloom subjects to scrutiny in her 2006 novel *Textile*.

After I amplify the methodologies of Freyre in terms of their relationship to biopolitics, eros, and Israel-Palestine in chapter 2, chapter 3 studies the interethnic union in Mahmoud Darwish's love poetry through the lens of Freyre and the biopolitical theories of Roberto Esposito that Freyre anticipates in key ways. Critical response to Darwish's love poems has largely deprived them of their political import, and I urge critics to respond to Darwish's biopolitics and his focus on the role of desire in contesting oppressive state sanctions against interethnic marriage. These themes are prevalent throughout even his most depoliticized works. The philosophy of biopolitics—specifically that of Esposito as well as intimations of the biopolitical in Freyre's work—provides useful theoretical frameworks through which to understand Israel's demographic war. Biopolitical theory's systematic analysis of the state's interest in the orchestration of life provides a language for talking about Israeli discomfort with miscegenation. It also informs my criticism of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the government-promoted fertility boom among Orthodox settlers in Occupied Territories,[13] and restrictive tenant laws against Palestinians married to Israeli citizens, among other cultural and legal tyrannies over Palestinian (and, I submit, Jewish) life. Reading

Darwish in the reflection of Freyre and Esposito inspires a return to his first poetic muse and real-life girlfriend, the Jewish woman Rita, as a creative progenitor.

The Jewish mistress and her racial makeup is rhetorically significant for Jewish couplings as well (see chapter 4). Racial and ethnic discrimination and miscegenation among Jews (Ashkenazi and Sephardic) in Israeli author A. B. Yehoshua's works elucidate internal miscegenation (or Jew-Jew romance) as a forgotten site of tension working in tandem with taboos against Jew-Arab relations. Even so, they are often overshadowed by Jew-Arab relations, which are the more obvious casualties of the ongoing Middle-East conflict. I explore the vexed relationship between the Ashkenazi protagonist and his raving, half-caste Sephardic wife in *A Late Divorce* (1984) to show how Sephardic heritage, marked as the dark and repressed in this novel, threatens the Zionist project because it calls attention to racial and cultural heterogeneity within Jewish life. Their marriage serves as a reminder that majority constituencies within Israel and the Occupied Territories share with Arabs a common heritage. I explore how the novel's commentary on ethnic conflict within Israeli Jewish communities can be read to contest Freyre's concept of weltanschauung (the racially pure state) while at the same time or as it presents the limitations of racial democracy. Its tragic ending renders tropes of interracial desire idealistic without internal ideological reform with the Israeli Jewish community.

Chapter 5 pursues Freyre's theory that private industries and circulating objects produce networks of intimacy between antagonistic groups. I take up two registers of the word "private" that converge—its connotations of intimacy and industry. I offer a material cultural reading of mixed intimacies in the textile poetics of Israel-Palestine and in Israeli writer Orly Castel-Bloom's novel *Textile*. Ultimately these discourses attest to fabric as a useful metaphor for figuring networks of intimacy while respecting the need for cultural and sexual boundaries. That Freyre's celebration of racial synthesis moves away from a dependence on the female body to an interest in equitable labor sectors mirrors a similar movement in the Israeli-Palestinian textile sphere, for which I construct a literary and discursive playlist.

This book offers the fields of postcolonial literature a new conversation about race/ethnicity, liberty, and sexuality in this area of the world, and how these concepts signify across the private and public spheres. I revive and repurpose Gilberto Freyre to this end, and supplement his theories where necessary with biopolitics

and psychoanalysis. A strong body of criticism exists, which invokes biopolitical theory in its approach to Israel, but solely sociologists and political scientists traverse this terrain. *Post Zionism, A Reader*, a key collection on the liberal poetics of Israel-Palestine, includes a lengthy section on sexuality, but nothing on interethnic reproduction; in fact, there is no entry on marriage at all. Raz Yosef at least sets the stage: his discussion of queer interracial masculinities in Israel concludes with a gesture to "challenge the tendency within dominant critical discourses to treat race, sexuality, and nationalism separately" (305). The following chapters show how Israeli-Palestinian literatures that imagine mixed intimacy either intervene in or, by our asking the right questions of them, can be made to intervene in the dominant discourses that compartmentalize race, ethnicity, and sexuality in a way that has yet been unsuccessful in theorizing the role of the hybrid in a statist future for Israel-Palestine.

2

Reading Freyre in the Holy Land

Since the dissolution of the British Mandate and the subsequent formation of a Jewish state, Palestinian and Israeli writers have faced slander, exile, jail, and even bodily danger for their liberal poetics. Just a few canonical names that comprise the flowering body of Occupation-era peace literature are Israeli national poet Yehuda Amichai, famous Israeli novelist Amos Oz, Palestinian national poet Mahmoud Darwish, and Arab Christian novelist Anton Shammas. Since the 1980s, scholars have examined the way these writers, through sensitive and compelling prose and poetry, have taken considerable political risks to intervene into Israeli politics and militaristic nationalism. Literary critics have not, however, sustained an analysis of a crucial theme persisting in these works that constitutes a central part of their liberal poetics: the interethnic romance and intimacy between Arabs and Jews.

The mixed romance is not at first glance a risky narrative or poetic move. It provides an appealingly embodied index to wartime human relations; in fact, as a metaphor, the mixed romance passes under the critical radar as a reductively simple trope—as merely a dramatic plot device that helps to render narratives of the Occupation all the more tragic. I find it deceptively so. While the mixed relationship may be tacitly interesting within a war of such close quarters and, further, one of such a weighted distribution of power, the biopolitical implications of these fictional unions await exposition. Here I take biopolitics to carry its Foucauldian relevance to sociologists and political theorists. For Foucault, biopolitics refers to the large-scale governmental control over human life, an amplified and systematized version of biopower, the latter being the technological management of individual bodies. Biopolitics is the sociological consideration of

issues that have concerned the scientific community since at least the industrial age. Biosystems theorists, in Foucault's words, have been concerned with "relations between the human race, or human beings insofar as they are a species, insofar as they are living beings, and their environment, the milieu in which they live. This includes the direct effects of the geographical, climatic, or hydrographic environment" ("Society Must be Defended" 245). The transition from biopower to biopolitics involves, in Foucault's words, the "technology of power over 'the' (*sic*) population as such, over men insofar as they are living beings. It is continuous, scientific, and it is the power to make live. Sovereignty took life and let live. And now we have the emergence of a power that I would call the power of regularization, and it, in contrast, consists in making live and letting die" (247). My use of the stem "political" is meant to bear the philosophical genealogy of biopower theorists, such as Roberto Esposito, who have come to rely on the terminology of biosystems to explain state processes over human life as well as human life's own tendency to act politically en masse (and perhaps transcendent of the state). This genealogy is fleshed out at length in this as well as in the next chapter.

While the mixed romance invokes biopolitical issues important to Israeli geopolitics, the radical interpretive questions offered by biopolitics need to be answered with greater clarity within an explicitly ethnic/racial demographic framework. The work of twentieth-century Brazilian miscegenation theorist Gilberto Freyre provides a comparative basis for understanding the mixed relationship in the colonial milieu that has biopolitical relevance both globally and locally. This chapter introduces the methodology of Freyre in order to establish epistemological and rhetorical similarities between his concept of racial democracy and burgeoning discussions of ethnic privilege in Israel-Palestine.

The Freyrean method poses strikingly apt questions to the literal, nation-building potential of mixed unions and their value for Israeli-Palestinian writers. Freyre's nearly 80-year-old publication, *Casa-Grande & Senzala* ("The Masters and the Slaves," or literally, "The Big House and the Slaves"), is infamous to some and obscure to many. It is a multigeneric treatise—or amplified myth, really—on the exceptional nation-building process by way of miscegenation between "masters" and "slaves" in the Brazilian colonial period. Brazil's incomparable racial democracy, which many Brazilians still hail, is predicated upon Freyre's

theory of lusotropicalism, an anthropological narrative of the Portuguese colonizers in Brazil. Freyre asserts that Portugal's ancient, mixed-race heritage of Romans, barbarians, and Moors produced their proclivity toward democracy in the colonies via miscegenation with the natives. His controversial work contemplates the role of desire between opposing social groups in order to claim for Brazil a history worthy of celebrating when at the time, as a peripheral and "backward" country in the European gaze (Madureira 23), it was in need of image control. Freyre's is a foundational text—the bible of Brazil's national imaginary—that has generated volumes of critical engagement and scholarly application. However, that body of dialogue is almost exclusively limited to its relevance for slavery comparatists (Needell 52) and to Latin American and lusotropical studies. I cast *Casa-Grande* in a new light and apply it across contemporary, exigent miscegenation discourses in the Middle East.

I find in Freyre the same desire to reconstitute the public sphere through the trope of miscegenation as one finds in Israeli-Palestinian literature about Arab-Jewish intimacy and interethnic intimacy between Jews. When the speaker in Mahmoud Darwish's collection *State of Seige*, for example, chastises an Israeli soldier for aborting the possible future birth of an Arab-Jewish child by killing a Palestinian during a raid, he trades in the same acculturation imaginary as Freyre does to pose a racially unstable, yet more democratic future for Israel. This aborted hybrid child, according to the speaker, was to enrich the cultural texture of the nation by expanding its comparative education beyond the local preoccupations of diasporic privilege: he "would grow up healthy, enter school / with one of your daughters, / study the history of ancient Asia" (trans. Akash and Moore 6–8). In a similar example, toward the survival of the Brazilian nation, Freyre invests in the colonizer's "intercourse with the Indian or the Negro woman" (18) and, in pointing out the hypocrisy of nations posturing as democratic, he claims, "[we Portuguese] do not possess the cult of uniformity and horror of individual, family, and regional differences which are the accompaniments of the equalitarian spirit throughout so large a part of English-speaking America" (xiv–xv). Under fire in Darwish are Israel's racially hegemonic policies, executed in spite of Israel's definition of itself as a democratic state. Freyre opens up the unexamined biopolitical registers of Darwish and others, given a renewed respect for him as a literary and expressive figure (certainly not a scientific

one, as my outline of his contested reception suggests) with a biopolitical schema that is staged similarly in Israeli-Palestinian poetics of intimacy.

Casa-Grande & Senzala: An Expanded Critical History

Freyre's "synthetic principle" is the belief that, despite the heinous conditions arising out of a persistent feudal economy, Brazil is approaching expansive democratization. It is the principle that biological multiculturalism produces social equality. The process is distinct from a Western, modern, or capitalistic notion of democracy. His democracy is expressly racial rather than financial. Brazil's persistent feudal system produces such a space, which he describes as:

> a democratization of interhuman relationships, of interpersonal relations, of relations between groups and between regions. The fact of the matter is that miscegenation and the interpenetration of cultures . . . together with the possibilities and opportunities for rising in the social scale . . . from an early period, have tended to mollify the interclass and interethnic antagonisms developed under an aristocratic economy. (xiv–xv)

Freyre imagines a democratization by sexual selection (30), where progress happens not just by coexistence but by copulation. According to Freyre, the crucial distinction between Brazil's and other mercantile colonial outposts is that miscegenation was, more than any other locale, tolerated and in many cases encouraged in Brazil, and that for this reason alone Brazil is a formidable national model of emerging egalitarianism.

Freyre narrativizes Brazil as having been built according to a principle of literal synthesis, where an existing proclivity toward miscegenation in colonial and native subjects softened racial prejudices. It is easy to forget how radically Freyre challenged mid-century notions of "unhygienic matings" (30), a discursive package for the mixed romance that is being rearticulated in the Israeli commonplace that Arab-Jewish relationships are unnatural and corporeally risky.[1] The synthetic principle is Freyre's attempt to think past capitalistic normative programs of the state, which are based on the same Western models that demean the hybrid and the mulatto. The economic structures of early capitalism are, for Freyre, intrinsically

linked to Western racism. This association comes to be important in Chapter 5, in terms of the interventions of Orly Castel-Bloom, who has been critical of Israel's increasingly oppressive relationship with Western (specifically American) global finance.

Generally two poles represent critical responses to Freyre: on the one side, he holds for people little-'t' truths in the midst of his parables or otherwise downright inaccuracies, and on the other, he simply delivers "anti-racist racism," as Jean-Paul Sartre argues in *Black Orpheus* (59). For former Brazilian president Fernando Henrique Cardoso, he holds literary merit. In Cardoso's foreword to the 2003 Portuguese edition of *Casa-Grande*, he turns Freyrean criticism back on the critic. Cardoso writes:

> If Freyre's work survives, [and if] its interpretive truth-claims not only continuously reproduce themselves [. . .] but continue to be troubling to so many of us, all the more necessary to explore the deeper reasons for resisting so insistently any move to grant it a real acceptance and to praise it for its positive aspects. (Larsen 2, Larsen's translation)

Cardoso suggests there is some kind of mirror Freyre holds up into which his readers would benefit to peer. According to Cardoso, the Freyrean mythology itself carries a "creative energy" that permits "us to grasp the essential within the truth-claims it advances on the interpretive level" (Larsen 2). Cardoso suggests a kind of New Critical reading of Freyre. Though I reject any reading that locates transcendent power in discourse, Freyre's literary merit has breathed life into my readings of the mixed romance in Israel-Palestine.

Since Freyre's controversial facets have enabled me to launch a direct line of questioning regarding what the mixed relationship can produce, I espouse a tempered stance toward his provocative writing, such as that of Jeffrey D. Needell. Needell unpacks Freyre psychoanalytically, against the backdrop of his cosmopolitan-outsider biography. Needell argues that, as a Racife-born, international student in the ivy league academe during prewar upheavals and circulating racist rhetorics of nationalism, Freyre sought to resolve his own biethnic heritage. According to Needell, Freyre also sought to understand his own sexual proclivities and to justify the nation that cradled him in his formative years. Additionally, Needell claims, Freyre's antiliberalism, or "attachment to a patriarchal planter mythology and espousal

of political authoritarianism was a reaction against the dramatic, 'modern' changes threatening the constructed world of his childhood" (51). While Needell argues that Freyre collapses into "positive" racist tropes, he also identifies Freyre's impulse to "recreate" his home society "from the outside, the view of the travelers' accounts" of Brazil (66). I submit that the old commonplaces formed by the outsider's look haunt the revised mythologies of Freyre, who acts by way of these mythologies as the object-turned-subject.

Despite widespread critical renunciations (and a mild threat of extinction), scattered recent interest in Freyre confirms his literariness. Larson identifies Freyre's centrality to the "*literary*-critical predicament: how to square what are without doubt the still vividly contemporary and writerly resonances of [*Casa-Grande*], especially on the level of narrative and style, with its blatant mythologies as a work of sociology and historical interpretation" (1). Placed in conversation with Israeli-Palestinian miscegenation literatures[2] that are not as bold in figuring interethnic reproduction, I use Freyre in both a comparatist and postcolonial investigative gesture, globalizing him according to his relevance to larger questions of nationalism and postcoloniality beyond the Americas. For instance, he draws out of the conservative generic and stylistic confines Israeli writers' responses to the theocratic management of sexual rights, as the ethnic anxieties underwriting diasporic statehood invoked in the literature repress imagined and lived intimacies.

A complication arises out of utilizing Freyre: recent accusations that he was an anti-Semite undermine his suitability to Israeli-Palestinian debates. Neil Larsen argues that in the process of trying to work his way outside of the capitalistic imperative for modernity, Freyre relies on contemporaneous logic blaming the Jews for being the embodiment of capital; "Like money," he explains, "the Jews are physically present—are *there*—and yet at the same time not *there*, because—imagined as rootless cosmopolitans—they, like money in this as well, can be anywhere" (11; emphases in the original). Drawing from Postone's theory of anti-Semitism, among others, Larsen explicates the Holocaust rationale as having followed from the Jews-as-money stereotype: "Thus, the physical elimination of the real bodies of the Jews is preceded, on the deepest ideological level, by their elimination as abstract bodies through their phantasmagorical identification with the abstract, body-less matter of money" (12). In other words, the Holocaust was partially an

anticapitalist initiative in need of a scapegoat, and Larsen argues that Freyre falls prey to this false logic by couching his characters in financial terms.

Though Freyre's biographical experience with or concerns toward Jews is conjectural, I can confirm no indication of anti-Semitism in *Casa-Grande* beyond the popular depiction of them as good with money and propagating. In fact, the same dialectic that leads him discursively to link the Jews to unfettered capital (replicating the familiar rhetoric of 1930s academe) also determines the tenets in his myth that valorize the Jews for their contributions to his colonial fable and thus absorb them into the figure of the Brazilian hybrid. These tensions are played out as follows: in one frame, he must deny life and legitimacy to the natives as well as other Brazilian immigrants and settlers in order to promote the colonial agenda of spread and conquer, while in another frame, he animates them where life has been denied by public opinion of Brazil as backward. In a similar aporia, he denies culture to the Jews in order to promote the reign of the hybrid, using the familiar logical fallacies to do so. While he allegorizes them as adaptive and financially savvy, he does so with the purpose of granting them a role in the revisionary timeline of Brazil. In fact, he allegorizes each ethnic group according to their unique mythological role in that timeline.

The recent focus on Freyre's "egregious anti-Semitism," first identified by Needell (74) and then reexamined by Larsen, misses the Jewish settler's valorized role in his theory. Though not spared in his cast of caricatures and essentialist reductions, Freyre is extremely clear that they are the progenitors of the Brazilian colonizers; he depicts the Semite as adaptable, frugal, and a tempering agent for military excess (32–35). He is not interested in them as a religious community, but as one important piece in the pastiche of the Brazilian's racial constitution that makes the Brazilian great. Interestingly, the sensualized Arab is just as central a sign in this pastiche. Part of the hybrid's timeline includes the Jew and Arab mating, to which Freyre seems to command, be fruitful and multiply, heterogeneously:

> Miscibility rather than mobility was the process by which the Portuguese made up for their deficiency in human mass or volume in the large-scale colonization of extensive areas. For this they had been prepared by the intimate terms of social and sexual intercourse on which they had lived with the colored races that had invaded

> their peninsula or were close neighbors to it, one of which, of the Mohammedan faith. (11)

Central to Freyre's championing the Arab-Jew union on the Brazilian's timeline is his refusal to see the Jews or the Arabs as diasporas.[3] A diaspora forms solidarity according to cross-referencing sensitivities among religious, cultural, and ethnic attributes. According to Freyre, the powerful Brazilians in the colonial period discriminated habitation and entry based on religious exclusion rather than race; he even softens the Inquisition by claiming that it had religious rather than racial motivations (40). Freyre's inability (or unwillingness) to conceptualize a diaspora, an elision that was crucial to his idealization of the hybrid, brings to the fore the much more complicated—and complicating—situation that interethnic intimacy poses for Israeli-Palestine.

Freyre's miscalculation of Catholic tyranny in this period generates the question, what happens when the religion is the race and vice versa? Moreover, how does that destabilize the interethnic ideal? One answer is that as long as the ethnic nation state, like Israel, continues to institutionalize Jewishness and appropriate Jewish desire along a narrow essentialist definition of racial/religious legitimacy, the hybrid figure becomes increasingly contested. Especially given that Israel stands as a beacon for the global Diaspora, the hybrid proves to be more controversial than perhaps even Freyre could have accounted for. Alternatively, as Chapter 4 elaborates, the hybrid *is* everywhere and in everyone, texturing the Jewish community especially. Existing miscegenation debates regarding Jew-Jew unions underscore burgeoning pressures on constructions of the normative Jewish family. Disparaging attitudes toward intermarriage between Ashkenazi and Sephardic/Oriental Jews provide an additional layer of taboo to Arab-Jew unions. In Israel, Sephardic, Oriental, and Arab Jews are still viewed by the dominant Ashkenazim as second-class citizens, and intermarriage is discouraged. Research carried out during the initial building stages of the state of Israel showed that only 1.5 percent of Ashkenazis chose a non-Ashkenazi spouse, whereas every sixth Sephardi married outside the group (Patai 98–100). Today, intermarriage is on the rise, up to 28 percent in the 1990s, a 14 percent jump from the 1950s (Okun and Khait-Marelly 7–8). Still, economic and social disparities persist. The implications of internal miscegenation have proven to be important to the question of legitimacy in an

Ashkenazi-dominated Zionist vision for Israel, and the literature and discourse that deploys intercultural mixing proposes a site of contestation.

Israeli Family Law: The Material Conditions of the Interethnic Affair

Given that interethnic intimacy in Israeli-Palestinian literature so often stops short of conjugal relations, a biopolitical understanding of Freyre puts pressure on emergent work dealing with Arab-Jewish relations not only to address the hopeful nature of imagined intercultural relationships (as they have done), but also to probe how and why Arab-Jewish intimacy is fictionally safe yet materially improbable. To begin to understand the disconnect between fact and fiction, one must look at Israel's antimiscegenation laws and prohibitions against civil marriages within its territories. Mobilized against oppressive sexual and racial politics, Israeli-Palestinian miscegenation literature has renewed an immediate relevance for larger global marriage reform movements. With a reenergized application of Freyre's rhetorical strategies to those of Israeli-Palestinian writers, combined with the materialist and activist principles of the postcolonial tradition, Israeli-Palestinian sexual poetics become deaestheticized against the backdrop of oppressive civil law.

Since Israeli law only permits Jews to marry Jews and because civil marriages do not make for fully fledged Israeli citizens (Kahn 73), the *secular*, *liberal*, *democratic* nation-state thus operates on a fundamental exclusionary principle causing an array of political problems. Before 1947, the British Mandate in Palestine followed the Palestine Order and Council of 1922, which left personal status and family laws (e.g., inheritance, adoption, alimony, succession, marriage, and divorce) to the discretion of the religious courts; Jews, Muslims, and Christians married according to their respective customs (72). Post-1948, the Knesset passed the Rabbinical Courts Jurisdiction Law, which delivered all personal status jurisdictions to the civil courts except marriage and divorce. The latter came under the exclusive authority of the rabbinical courts, which remains in effect today (72–73). Dilemmas arise for Jews wanting to intermarry, immigrants seeking to get married within Israel's territories, and even Jews wanting to marry converts to Judaism whose legitimacy is called into question by strict Israeli conversion laws (73). There is little-to-no flexibility in these laws, even for the privileged. In *To Jerusalem and Back*, Saul Bellow tells a funny

anecdote that provides insight into marriage tension in 1978 Israel still relevant today:

> Justice Haim Cohn, when he fell in love with a woman who had been divorced and wanted to marry her, had to apply to rabbinical authorities for permission. This was denied because a Cohen, one of the hereditary high priests, cannot marry a woman who has been divorced. Then, since a high priest must be physically unblemished, Justice Cohn proposed to mutilate himself in a symbolic fashion—he offered to have one joint of his middle finger surgically removed. But he was told that even if he cut off an arm he would remain a Cohen still. Justice Cohn, who represented Israel in the U.N. Human Rights Commission and went to America often, therefore married the lady in a Civil Ceremony in New York . . . So Justice Cohn told me. He is a big man and he looks taciturn, but you find that he has actually told you a great deal within a short time. (51)

As Justice Cohn's story demonstrates, divorce can delegitimate the Jewishness of one party in a marriage, complicating unions. Bellow credits Cohn for having told him "a great deal within a short time" about Israel with this marriage anecdote, suggesting that marriage issues in Israel speak volumes about its larger ethical practices. Marriage law would seem to be a litmus test for Jewish life and Jewish attitudes toward those deemed as outsiders. Despite his choice of an outsider for a wife, Justice Cohn was at least lucky enough to have the resources to leave Israel for a civil ceremony, but his mobility is the exception. Add the racial tensions produced by the Occupation to the already difficult situation posed by intermarriage in Israel, and one is left with the Israeli-Palestinian romance as a nearly impossible phenomenon. Yet, the theme of interethnic intimacy persists in the literature and popular culture of Israel. An array of interfaith love narratives written by laypeople, autobiographical and otherwise, are archived on high-profile Internet sites like InterfaithFamily.com ("Jewish-Muslim Relationships"), as well as entertained on the blogosphere (see chapter 3). The Arab-Jew affair is also a popular plot point in contemporary Israeli-Palestinian cinema.[4]

A closer look at the power dynamic of these unions yields a familiar observation: the marriage discourse is concentrated on the Jewish woman. An age-old dependence on her as the Jewish progenitor is at risk of becoming repurposed so that she would control a Zionist or post-Zionist future for Israel, dependent on whether

she produces a racially/diasporically stable or unstable national citizen. One reason Justice Cohn's marriage was such an issue is not so much because as a Cohen he has to be physically unblemished but because he has to *produce* an unblemished Cohen, which he cannot do if the matrilineal line is disrupted by the divorcee's delegitimated status. If Cohn had been the detractor, the marriage would have been thought to be reproductively stable. Rabbinical discourse generally has posited that interfaith families are less likely to raise their children Jewish, often citing the biblical edict against intermarriage in Deuteronomy 7:3–4. Moreover, the analogy that intermarriage will constitute the second holocaust has become commonplace among Orthodox and Conservative circles. The apologetics for this remain centered, however, on the woman's detraction in choosing a non-Jewish spouse, when the logic should lead Jews to be more concerned about the Jewish man's decision. This inconsistency points to an explicitly racial concern over the hybrid child's constitution.

A contradiction lies within matrilineal succession, which dictates that a Jewish woman produces Jewish children no matter who she marries. This logic holds in the Cohn story in that the wife's defilement jeopardizes her ability to produce stable Jewish children. It does not hold in the current Israeli climate that projects such concern toward the Jewish woman's choice of a mate. Marriage politics are tenuous in Israel, but the legitimating process for the Jewish child in Israel is actually quite simple. As long as a child is born of a woman considered Halakhically Jewish, and the child is not a mamzer—meaning, not conceived in an extramarital affair or in an incestuous union—he/she is considered Jewish, no matter his/her patrilineage (Kahn, *Reproducing Jews*, 73). Numerous feminists have pointed out that this generates a Zionist preoccupation with the Jewish womb. For the writer imagining the interethnic Jewish child or a union that would make possible the interethnic Jewish child as a source for peace or racial democracy, this myth generates similarly a burdensome reliance on the Jewish mistress. The need to essentialize in order to de-essentialize is a rhetorical ensnarement. I suggest we read the interethnic trope with this criticism in mind, but more so, that we view it as one stage toward change. If taken as a sign that we not abandon the public sphere—that is, secular marriage and habitation reform—in favor of private affections, miscegenation actually reinvests in the political, the one stage where one can negotiate without essentializing. Legalizing civil marriage

in Israel is one major step toward providing a foundation for a racially democratic single-state future or an honestly egalitarian binational solution.

Comparatively, discourses of *sharaf*/honor and patrilineal ascendency within Palestinian culture also point to the nationalist exigency of women's conjugal choice. Palestinian women's unprecedented involvement in the national movement, emerging after Oslo and flowering in the 1980s, granted them a kind of political agency; at the same time, their role to sustain group honor through the preservation of the insular family unit conscripted them into the home (Abdullah 55). Neither matrilineage nor patrilineage seems to enable exit from women's corporeal roles in Israel-Palestine. While sharaf is incarnated in some contexts as egalitarian, in that men's partnering outside of the group is seen at least as *culturally* shameful to the subject, as well as shaming to the family (Lang 49), women's violation of sharaf is doubly so, in that it registers as both a sociocultural attack on Palestinian men as well as national treason. Interestingly, no matter whether real-life intermarriages become more prevalent, the Israeli lore that Palestinians seek intermarriage as a means to gaining access to or changing the ethnic character of the Israeli state continues to go against the sharaf reality. It is this mythology that is more stimulating for theorizing change than the reality because it indicates a correlation between tightening cultural boundaries and decorative imaginaries. While the potential to expand a comparative analysis between sharaf and Israeli marriage law is full, presently my intention is to examine Israeli-Palestinian miscegenation principally within Israeli/Jewish culture; my interest lies with Israeli antimiscegenation laws as the key obstacles to realizing the alternative national trajectories (single and/or third-state solutions) being imagined in the literatures through the interracial trope. Materially, as Israel is the dominant institution controlling life and livelihood both within and without the Green Line, it is not as exigent, from a legal/material standpoint, that the antimiscegenation strain is mirrored in sharaf.

The introduction of miscegenation into the Palestinian and Israeli literary discourse challenges existing marriage laws in the Middle East, which, in protesting the ban on civil marriages, open up spaces for liberalizing marriage generally. Queer unions are not excluded in this debate. It is worth noting that Freyre's observations of bisexualism in native Brazil became part of his celebration of the country's sexual democracy (*Casa-Grande*

123). However, since here I am largely concerned with how miscegenation produces an unstable racial body, I am inevitably focusing on procreation and thus leaving discourse on queer examples of intercultural coupling for future work. In some sense, I am in deference to the queer theoretical domain that deserves deeper expertise and more attention than the scope of this analysis can do. Israeli film scholar Raz Yosef pilots the critical literature on the rhetoric of interethnic homosexuality in Israel, and his work remains the definitive bibliography for these interpretive approaches. That said, though I stress the relationship between procreation and the state, it is worth considering how, through imagining the liberalization of traditional Jewish and Arab marriages, the writers whose work I examine further destabilize the conservative family ethics that perpetuate heteronormative constraints.

The Freyrean Hybrid and Third Space in Israel-Palestine

Freyre raises an alternative vision for the state through the miscegenated child. As intimated in the mixed relationship in Israeli-Palestinian literature, this child embodies a third vision for a statist future that is not dependent upon a Western, Anglo-centric public sphere for its political trajectory. Critics have addressed the xenophobic strain in Israeli politics by linking the early state to its Western foundation. While some skeptics of Zionism during prestatehood looked upon Europe as a dubious model given its anti-Semitic past, the most influential statesmen turned to it for legitimacy. Demonstrating the desire to be aligned with the West was David Ben-Gurion's stated desire to include the country in the Commonwealth of Nations once a Jewish homeland was established (Brenner, *Inextricably Bonded*, 52). Compellingly, Rachel Feldhay Brenner marks out how post-1947 Hebrew literature has followed the canonical aesthetics of the West, mimicking its universalist, enlightenment themes and consequently breaching connections with the Diaspora, as well as its forbearing/mutually constituting Arab traditions (84). Alternatively, these miscegenation themes, though often cautiously presented and almost never brought to fruition, redeem for Hebrew literature at least a desire to entertain an experimental third space even if packaged in the norms of detached, existential content and Western, novelistic forms.

I have no controlled theoretical definition of "third space" in mind here but would let it invoke for the reader all manner of "third" sites and subjects, as long as the reader understands the simultaneously ethnic and biopolitical process by which they emerge in Israel-Palestine. The mixed relationship, vis-à-vis Freyre and Israeli-Palestinian liberal poetics, is conceptually generative whether the spaces it produces are the national narrative oppositions of Bhabha, the antiphallocentric binaries offered by feminists, or the spatial/temporal heterotopologies of Foucault,[5] all three of which postmodern theorist Edward W. Soja finds to be operative in the process of reconceiving urban space in an ahistorical world. Soja, frustrated with and celebratory of the unruliness with which the concept "third space" is expressed in Foucault's writing, argues,

> Foucault's heterotopologies are frustratingly incomplete, inconsistent, incoherent. They seem narrowly focused on peculiar microgeographies, nearsighted and near-sited, deviant and deviously apolitical. Yet they are also the marvelous incunabula of another fruitful journey into Thirdspace, into the spaces that difference makes, into the geohistories of otherness. Are they similar or are they different from the Thirdspace of Lefebvre, bell hooks or Homi Bhabha? The answer, to both questions, is yes. And it is this intentional ambiguity that keeps Thirdspace open and inclusive rather than confined and securely bounded by authoritative protocols. (162)

For Soja, Foucault's great gift is the same thing that vexes interpreters of his work. It invokes several lines of thought at once, as indicated by Soja's listing of theorists whose work engage it, making it hard to attribute it to any one school. The third space is also both material and imagined, but its material incarnation resists the conceptual grasp once it tries to define it. In other words, third space is possible in utopian thought as well as in specific geopolitical examples; however, once the examples are given, they instantly announce the ways in which they resist categorization as any definable space at all. In the same way, Freyre's fictional, racially democratic Brazil became people's perception of it even though critics to this day persistently attempt to demonstrate the ways in which Brazil's founding was in part inherently racist. Israel, too, stands as an impossible amalgam of democracy and apartheid; so, too, might we find instances of a third space, the location of which emerges conceptually in the mixed relationship in its literature.

As an heuristic, the third space becomes a way to read the possibilities produced by the mistakenly swapped children in *Le fils de l'autre*, for instance. This 2012 film directed by Lorraine Lévy turns on the dramatic irony evoked by the dual stories of Palestinian and Israeli boys who are swapped at birth. Though their experiences unfold differently, they each grow up to be loved by their politically and ethnically antagonistic families. In this film, antagonism produces desire (for intimacy with one's past as well as with one's others who ostensibly threaten that same past), which produces imagination, which in turn challenges binaristic statist policies that instigate the "us-versus-them" mentalities facilitating violence. The film revels in the heterotopologies of cosmopolitan Tel Aviv and produces tension in the binaristic space of the home of an IDF officer. Even the home of the Palestinian family enclosed within the checkpoint feels freer than Ashkenazi-dominated Israeli spaces. A final scene depicts the Palestinian boy (reared by the Jewish family) in contemplation on a rooftop; therein, the film stages transcendence from the spatial distributions in Israel-Palestine that have made people so terribly unhappy.

The Israeli film scene offers an exceptionally rich arena for passing, mixed intimacy, and/or miscegenation motifs. Often cited in the critical literature is *My Michael* (Dan Wolman, 1975), based on Amos Oz's novel of the same title, featuring the tantalizing mental space of a bored Israeli housewife, her orientalist fantasies of Arabs and Mizrahim arising out of her dissatisfaction with her George Tesman–like husband. One reviewer said the film stopped short of carrying the gravity of the Israeli's longing for intimacy with Arabs (61).

Sabra (Alexander Ford, 1933) is about the early Zionist pioneers and their clashes with their "irrational" Arab neighbors over land and water. It features a crucial scene where an Arab woman tends to the wounds of a Jewish shepherd, wounds he sustained during an Arab attack. The intimacy of this moment is contrived by an underlying championing of the chivalric Ashkenazi over the exotic, untamed Arab. Judd Ne'eman contends that this early Israeli filmic precedent justifies the Zionist project through a moralizing premise, ignoring the "dual awareness [that] should have made the Jewish settler more sympathetic to the predicament of the land's indigenous inhabitants than Europeans had been in other colonized lands" (144). Indeed, it ignores a history wherein "Zionist settlers still preserved in their minds the consciousness of a people persecuted and oppressed in the Christian world. I would call this

mauvaise foi of the Zionist in Palestine a displaced consciousness of the oppressed. [. . .] Both the historical pro-Arab sentiment and the displaced consciousness of the oppressed stood in utter contrast to the new reality emerging in Palestine, where Jews had effectively become oppressors" (144).

Hide and Seek (Wolman, 1980) explores the intrigue of a same-sex relationship between a boy Uri's teacher, Balaban, and a young Arab man during the British Mandate. The film is charged with converging themes of criminal and sexual contravention, cueing the confusing years of the waning British occupation, a relatively popular premise in historical fiction, much of which is also mirrored in Jonathan Wilson's 2003 novel, *A Palestine Affair*. Ella Shohat says the film "give[s] expression to the Sabra children protagonists' estrangement from the European Jews and to their hard time comprehending the survivors' nightmare" (*Israeli Cinema* 186). *Drifting* (Amos Guttman, 1983), on the other hand, is a kind of postmodern character piece of an Israeli struggling filmmaker, Robi, who is also struggling with his sexuality in an Israel hostile to non-European Jews and Arabs. Nir Cohen has pointed out that director Amos Guttman's characters strike back at their sexual oppression at the hands of normative Ashkenazi patriarchy by not just performing transgressive sexual acts, but seeking out intimacy with Arabs and even consenting to being dominated by Arabs (82). Raz Yosef has argued that even these sexually groundbreaking films are ensnared by essentialist views of the Arab and the Oriental Jew.

Two opposing extremists, one a conservative Israeli man and the other a Palestinian woman from a radical family, fall in love in *On a Narrow Bridge* (Nissim Dayan, 1985). Leila, the female beloved, compromises her family's sharaf by her love for Benny, her male counterpart. Benny's love is an affront to house and home, too. Moreover, their relationship has public and occupational consequences, getting them fired from their positions—Leila's intellectual/career pursuits in the library, and Benny's post in the military. Leila's family takes the softer road to punishing her breach of sharaf: exile in Jordan with her brother over death in Palestine. Though their relationship is ultimately doomed (necessarily, of course, before one would be faced with the abyss of what to do with the non-Jew-maybe-Jew hybrid child), Leila has, according to Loshitzky, "reshaped the ethnic boundaries of [Benny's] identity" (138) and opened up the question of how passing and liminality might function in Israel-Palestine. Taking up an autobiographical

approach to the film, Loshitzky argues that the ending's "only hope is the meeting point on the narrow bridge between Oriental Jews and Oriental Palestinians. [. . .] This film can thus be seen as a self-reflexive attempt by Dayan to expand the boundaries of his own identity through his quasi-alter ego Benny Taggar" (138).

The Lover (Michal Bat-Adam, 1986) is adapted from Yehoshua's novel about tripartite illicit love affairs that fracture the traditional Israeli family unit. Israeli automotive garage-owner Adam takes pity on a cash-poor Argentinian visitor, Gabriel, who is temporarily living in Israel to collect the estate of his late grandmother. Adam repairs Gabriel's grandmother's car in exchange for Gabriel's giving Spanish lessons to Adam's bookish wife, Asya, a teacher studying for her doctorate. Asya and Gabriel have an affair, and Adam eventually choreographs her lover's enlistment in the 1973 war. When Gabriel goes missing, Adam is tormented both by the mystery of his loss and by Asya's disquiet. He searches for Gabriel as though he were his own lover. In the meantime, Adam and Asya's daughter, Daffi, experiences her spring awakening with an Arab helper in Adam's garage. When their dalliance is exposed, Adam beats him and dumps him off in his village. His mental stability in question, Adam engages in the pedophilic seduction of Daffi's friend Tali. Loshitzky argues that the Arab-Jewish affair "is represented as the most transgressive and is also the only affair that ends in the actual punishment of the violator, despite the fact that it is Daffi who takes the initiative in their relationship" (138). While this might be true for the novel's cinematic variant, the amount of available receptions to the novel's depictions of these affairs are diverse, with one possible reading of the pedophilic event as a pathological displacement for the protagonist's own repressed understanding of sex and community. Either way, the private sphere becomes a site where the problems of ethnic nationalisms play out.

Nadia (Amnon Rubinstein, 1986) is based on a young adult short fiction by Galila Ron-Feder. It follows a Palestinian girl, Nadia, and her integration into Israeli society. The film's heroine enrolls in an Israeli boarding school to facilitate her career ambitions, unable to be met in the impoverished circumstances of her village. While at school, she is courted by an Israeli Jewish student named Ronen. As is the convention, the film avoids literalizing, and certainly not consummating, an authentic romantic relationship between its Palestinian and Jewish characters. Yosefa Loshitzky (see citation earlier) writes, "Part of the difficulty experienced by Nadia in her attempt to integrate into Israeli Jewish youth culture

is presented through her response to the attempts of Ronen, the most desired boy in the school, to court her in typical Israeli fashion. [. . .] Nadia's [negative] response not only expresses ideological resistance to her potential loss of identity through the melting pot of Israeli youth culture but also functions as a metatextual commentary on the forbidden love films that proceeded *Nadia*." Loshitzky goes on to suggest that the film's departure from that tragic trope is in its attempt to show a Palestinian both assimilating and maintaining her identity (140). The film, then, resists the miscegenation ensnarement by favoring filial/community connections over eros.

Eli Cohen's *Ricochets* (1986) is a pseudo-documentary war film chronicling the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, produced by the film wing of the IDF. A montage of real footage couched in Zionist apologetics, the film carries with it some of the higher order logic of Zionist morality affirmed by earlier settler films like *Sabra*. According to Ella Shohat's review,

> An important motif in the nationalist-heroic films, perpetuated by *Ricochets*, is the humanism of the Israeli soldier and his moral superiority, a presentation which displaces central political issues. The film foregrounds the human aspects of war; hysterical collapse, weeping, and hatred, as well as the ability to laugh, love, and show softness even in the presence of death: Efi conducts a platonic exchange of loving glances with a young Shiite woman (he leaves her chocolates while patrolling and she responds with cherries); Bambino becomes attached to a little boy to whom he repeatedly hands sweets; Rauf the Druse hopes to marry a Lebanese Druse he loves; Gadi becomes intimate with an Israeli soldier girl; and Georgy suffers battle fatigue. (42)

A critical audience finds the focus on pathos a red herring, flashing a humanist logic in the place of the confused ethical premise of invading Lebanon to begin with. The self-other intimacy managed in the midst of the violence provides this distraction. I would add that the loving glances between soldier and Shiite is an abstracted expression of the desire to be outside of politics; because the fruition of the Arab-Jew romance has shown to be impossible, as a trope, the mirrored love between Gadi and the female IDF soldier performs as its displacement.

In *Lookout* (Dina Zvi-Riklis, 1990), an IDF soldier becomes entranced by the private spectacle at the other end of his binoculars. Watching day in and day out the goings on of a Palestinian refugee

family in the occupied territories, what unsettles the audience is the blurred line between interest in the other and scopophilia. "His remote position" is, in Nurith Gurtz and Yael Munk's words, "iconographically by the point-of-view shots of the Palestinian family, and the Israeli radio sound track he listens to as he stands at his lookout post become a metaphor for the limited Israeli gaze in general and the cinematic Israeli gaze in particular, both of which fail to communicate an authentic image of Palestinian Arabs" (162–163). Again, the violation of private space, in this case a voyeuristic violation, becomes a catalyst for critiquing the nation space.

Finally, though not exhaustively, *Day after Day* (Amos Gitai, 1998) takes place in the arguably hybrid city of Haifa, a place in Israel with a substantial Arab population. *New York Times* reviewer A. O. Scott notes that the triangulated love conflict in the film is actually "incidental" to the miscegenation story in the background that produces the protagonist's neuroses: "so consumed is Moshe with his hypochondria, compulsive eating [. . .] and a vague but acute sense of existential instability. [. . .] this condition appears to arise from Moshe's family background: his mother (Hanna Maron) is a Jew, and his father (Yussef Abu Warda) is a Muslim Arab" (Scott, "Day after Day," nytimes.com). The film is unusual in its depiction of an actual hybrid figure—matrilineally Jewish but embodying the "other" Semite, too—but it is hardly a heartwarming precedent. Whether the neurotic body of Moshe, also known as the Arabic form of the name "Mussa," is read along essentialist lines as a physical representation of confused ethnic/racial heritage, or more poststructurally, as a psychoanalytic case study in the subject's own internalization of maligned cultural ideologies, the figure is hardly a utopian vision for a citizen of the third-space nation. In spite of that, the film exemplifies an experimentation with miscegenated desire and its relationship to a future Israel-Palestine. The space for imagination has been carved.

The Arab-Jewish intimacies in these films, and especially the swapped relationships in *Le fils de l'autre*, mirror the heterotopologies of Haifa, Tel Aviv (and the rooftop), but what is less stated in these films are the literal production of third space that would be made possible had the relationships—like that between Joseph, the Palestinian-born boy, and his Jewish girlfriend—remained serious. It is this relationship that poses much more pressing questions, such as, are partition statist debates still possible with mixed marriages? Can a validation of mixed desire coexist with binational borders? It suffices to say that the job of the critic

becomes one of teasing out whether literary miscegenation can eventually lead to a changing public sphere. A functioning third space—whatever that looks like[6]—relies on the transformation of both the private and the public. More specifically, it relies on an ultimate transcendence from the bedroom, the home, and even mixed partnerships in the private business sphere, to the legal legitimacy of the mixed relationship, and this includes mixed marriages. Indeed, I am suggesting that the mixed romantic trope is best used for its ability to render itself obsolete, such as it happened in the Brazilian case, wherein Freyre's construction of the hybrid led to a national revision that appeared already read. Drawing connections between Freyre's miscegenation literature and the fictionalized mixed affair in Israeli-Palestinian literature, I argue that imagined Arab-Jewish intimacy and Jew-Jew miscegenation signals a desire to undermine the public sphere by entertaining the production of third space within the private. Most importantly, however, the house has to be turned inside out for the trope to come to its full fruition of meaning. This is true from a materialist as well as a feminist perspective. A feminist perspective causes me to caution that the increasing emphasis on private affections between enemies represents disenchantment with the public domain, which could lead to a dangerous disavowal of the legal sphere as a site for initiating civic change.

Making the Third Space Public

A salient component of Freyre's philosophy was that the mixed relationship became a catalyst for the civic structure of Brazil. Contrarily, the trope of the mixed romance seems to have endured countless Israeli wars, shrinking Palestinian land, fluctuating Palestinian legitimacy, and growing antagonisms in an Israeli state toward mixed unions. Thus, the trope is at risk of bearing witness to political disillusionment. My concept of public disavowal is indebted to Robin Truth Goodman's use of Habermasian public sphere theory to argue that feminism needs to attend to a theory of the public. She contends that feminism's preoccupation with redefining the private sphere contributes to the disappearing public resulting from expanding global privatization. This is an increasingly dangerous prospect that only further relegates women to confined, low-paid labor, hides women from public attention, and precludes their already scant representation in public positions.[7] I contend here that endowing the private

with liberal motivations underpinning the interethnic romance without involving a discussion of public policy risks conflating literature/desire with change itself.

Israeli-Palestinian writers' reliance on the private sphere—specifically, on the bedroom, the home, and commercial spaces safe from military regulation—represents a resurgence of domestic values that can only further disempower Israeli-Palestinian women, especially the Jewish woman, if her activism is relegated to her reproductive potential. In *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, Habermas theorizes that, in modernity, the exclusive private sphere (e.g., the nongovernmental collective of peoples) comes to create and then inform the public sphere by way of laypeople coming together to discuss social issues in communal spaces (27), but these demarcations start to dissolve with rising mass consumer culture. Goodman expands the Habermasian purview, arguing that within Habermas is a prefiguring and a language for talking about neoliberalism's exploitation of the private sphere—specifically women's work.[8] Without a noncommercial space in which to negotiate social issues, the private labor sphere then becomes instrumentalized but marketed back to the public as the aesthetic, "free" space (2). In his later work, Habermas would reenvision a role for the public sphere transcendent of commercial instrumentalization, arguing that "the more modern legal systems actually redeem their claim to legitimacy in the currency of effective civil rights, the more the criteria for equal treatment come to depend on ever more inclusive processes of public communication" (*Between Facts and Norms*, 76). However, this civic idealism cannot account for private liberal citizens' disillusionment with the political sphere as a forum for social efficacy and desire-fulfillment, especially as these "legal systems" undergo increasing militarization.

An amplification of Freyre's biopolitics within a feminist's cautioning framework opens up Israeli literature to radical critique, thus carving out a third space in which to converse politically about a protected field. As I laid out in the introduction, the critical history of Palestinian and Israeli literature is dominated by comparativists and area studies scholars, who, by convention, work within a tradition not expressly concerned with the place of literary and cultural artifacts in networks of power. Israeli literature could use much more interpretive development in the way of hegemony theory, but a structuralist reception of it persists. A respected Hebrew scholar's review of my recent work included an indictment of my use of theory to explain a canonical Hebrew work rather than the

author's own canon, which illustrates an enduring emphasis on the close reading and the author-oriented approach. As a field, Hebrew literature remains isolated from Palestinian scholarship as somehow transcendent of instrumentalization, and the two literatures are rarely placed in conversation. In this way, scholars not only aestheticize one literary tradition (Israeli) over a more "political" one (Palestinian), but they also deaestheticize the latter. Further, this scholarly bifurcation contributes to the Middle East's already painful, material bifurcations.

This analysis also constitutes a third space wherein a world-literature-feminist appropriation of Freyre can exist alongside a feminist critique of him. Freyre's sociotheoretical model deals so candidly with the process of acculturation in the colonial space that it would be perplexing that he has not been taken up in conversation with other areas of concern to world literature critics if his emphasis on private (masculine) desire did not present such a problem to feminist thought. Some have pointed out Freyre's absence from theory, such as Marcus Wood, who writes of *Casa-Grande*, "It is fair to say that his major work has not easily been understood by, or assimilated within, Anglo-American diaspora studies, where he remains an ambiguous presence" (128). (Especially in need of his radical biopolitical discourse are those areas in which miscegenation is still taboo, even beyond Anglo-American diasporas, such as Israel-Palestine.) There are more than a few reasons for his ambiguous presence: for a start, Freyre has been scorned for his romanticization of the master-slave relationship and for saddling the female body with reproductive duty toward the nation, as critiqued by Angela Gilliam (226–227). Moreover, he has been criticized for developing a theory dependent upon the sexual availability of native and slave women (Madureira 23). His vacillating "between intuition and research, between literary and scientific readings of history" (Morse 48) makes problematic his application to social questions, especially as his caricaturist and essentialist illustrations of Brazilian life—though celebratory—belie his premise of scholarly rigor. Freyre's attenuation from critical theory is in part due to these powerful feminist and postcolonial critiques. However, it is exactly his problem as ambiguously both intuitive and observing that proves generative to my critique.

My third space is constituted by a simultaneous reengagement with Freyre and only a partial mapping of his methodology—one that heeds the problem of public abandonment. My interpretation uses Freyre while suggesting we learn from his faults. This involves

the persistent admission that while mythologies of interethnic reproduction can be generative in reaching, paradoxically, deracialized democracies, they can also lead to a preoccupation with normative sexualities and an investment in the woman's body as national progenitor. Against such hegemonies, I partially contest the emerging gestures toward privatizing peace as staged through the figure of the Jewish mistress in Israeli fiction. I call into question the Israeli woman's path toward social efficacy vis-à-vis her Freyrean role of cultural mixer. If her worth in the peace movement is limited to sexual politics, she will only carry this emphasis on her body into the new democracy. Not only does this shrink the scope of her social efficacy, but it renders her value tenuous if discourses of patrilineal Jewishness gain legitimacy amid a Jewish state struggling to survive.

Fanon and the Politics of Mixing

My reading practice entails dehistoricizing Freyre within the sole Brazilian context and situating his relevance to mixed intimacies in Israel-Palestine, chiefly by comparing him to poststructuralist thinkers who have theorized a mixed public sphere vis-à-vis desire. For the gesture of revisiting someone like Freyre to be integrated beyond Western poststructuralist genealogies to more explicitly postcolonial/materialist thinkers on desire and hybridity, one must consider his consequence to the work of Frantz Fanon, and, within the Fanonian tradition, also Jessica McClintock, Robert Youngs, and Joseph Massad.

In his 1952 treatise *Black Skin, White Masks*, Fanon writes that "the black soul" is a construction by white people in its assumption of a natural solidarity of all black people. He calls this construction "Negritude" and asserts that this type of thinking, as it has been internalized by black people, inhibits change and the native's ability to adapt to European culture; but he concedes that it can help free the native intellectual from dependence on metropolitan culture. The French "metropole," specifically, is to be viewed with suspicion because it perpetuates the dominant ideology in the colonies identifying black skin with impurity. The Antilleans despise themselves, Fanon writes: colonial black women identify with whiteness by neurotically avoiding black men and trying to get close to white men ("lactification"); Antilleans experience a pathological hypersensitivity, an anxiety and self-contempt about revealing blackness in the presence of whites and of revealing one's "natural" inferiority

("affective erethism"); finally, black children try to mask this neuroses by coming to think of themselves as white. That colonialism produces these neuroses means they are not a priori, and it follows that they can be reversed. One of the means of reversal is through resistance combined with assimilation (particularly linguistic), but Fanon ultimately views miscegenation as vexed until racial power relations are mediated and righted through linguistic empowerment, psychotherapy, and revolution.

For Fanon, psychological decolonization is possible through avoiding intimate relationships marked by an imbalance in power, for they preclude authentic love. The black woman's relationship with a white man will be always marked by the impossibility of authentic love as long as the feeling of inferiority and overcompensation ("weltanschauung") remains. The black woman wants to suppress her blackness, and the mulatto wants to avoid slipping back. The black man seeks a white woman to legitimate his whiteness. These psychopathologies immobilize the colonized subject and must be willfully reversed through awareness and therapy—awareness of the inextricably racist nature of colonization and the black man's condition of having always to "encounter himself" (or "double consciousness" in the writing of W. E. B. DuBois), and the therapeutic necessity of violent opposition. While both Freyre and Fanon are interested in the mulatto as an embodied means toward theorizing racial democratization, the former views mixed intimacy as regressive without an a priori condition of mental decolonization.

In his major work *Desiring Arabs*, Massad argues that the sexual pathologies, fetishization, and aggressive sexualities associated with Arab culture—whether embraced mimicries or misread representations—are outcomes of the Arab world's reaction to the West's construction of the Oriental and its concurrent essentialization and colonial domination of Arabs. As in Fanon's Antillean case, Massad argues that, before colonial intervention and the Janus-faced moral superiority and patriarchal subjugation that the West brought to the Arab world, sexual proclivities were viewed as just that, and not consolidated into ready-made identities susceptible to either essentialist mobilization by practitioners or to persecution by traditionalists. In Massad's estimation, the crisis of sexuality within Arab culture was created by the colonialist West, actually exacerbating sexual intolerance as it attempted to liberate it through a presumptive mapping of its gay and human rights initiatives onto the proverbial Orient. Massad adds another gradation

to the postcolonial critique of desire as constructed by Western eyes, that is, as they did to the slaves, Western spectators fetishized Arabs while blaming them for their perceived hypersexuality, further securing the logic of their inferiority (read femininity). Consequently, a kind of reactionary, aggressive heterosexuality arose in Arab culture out of the internalization of this feminization by colonial actors.

Freyre's celebratory revision, though problematically invested in hetero-utopias, serves as a destabilizing tension against these two materialist critiques of colonial sexuality that deploy constructivist models of sexual desire, with colonial incursion preceding desire. Sexual representation, in Fanon's and Massad's models, is determined by a battle of aggressive patriarchies and mimicked through the mirroring effect of colonial representation. For this derivation of Baudrillard's simulacrum, I find these critiques more aligned with Western postmodernist ideology than the more proximately Western Freyre. Freyre utilizes the same colonial-epoch-driven approach to sexual dynamics, but his narrative ascribes to a nonlinear model of colonial time that celebrates miscegenation rather than qualifying it as inescapably pathological. For Freyre, racial mixing precedes and produces democratic thought and liberation, while for Fanon and Massad, democratic thought must precede intimacy for it to have any chance of escaping a Freudian, patriarchal power trap. As important materialist thinker Jessica McClintock asserts, disrupting the linear impulse in postcolonial thought is important for questioning its dubious "post" prefix ("The Angel of Progress" 97). McClintock urges for a "renewed will to intervene in the unacceptable," a "proliferation of historically nuanced theories and strategies" so postcolonialists do not find themselves, like Benjamin's angel of progress, staring back at history rather than forward (97). My placing Freyre into tension with Massad and Fanon aims to do just that by recognizing the spaces that conflict-generated desires open up for a more redemptive future. Moreover, I contend that questions of intermarriage in Israel-Palestine rematerialize race in its challenge to the state. While the focus on hybridity may continue to reify the mythology of race that Robert J. C. Youngs challenged in his 1995 work *Colonial Desire*, in which he traces scientific discourse as an enduring falsifier of racial difference, to ignore its manifestation in this geopolitical and discursive milieu would be to ignore its political potential to transcend itself through marshaling for its legalization.

The Postracial Myth

One might be tempted to discount Freyre for being obsolete in what some would idealize as a postracial political climate. Like Fanon's early work, which investigates the process of racial repression, Freyre may seem dated in light of our postmodernist understanding of race—or, rather, the absence of race. But this materially distant understanding is to ignore existing institutionalized essentialisms and also to ignore contemporary literary resistance to it, which utilizes racially transnaturing tropes similar to those made to work by Freyre and Fanon. Freyre reiterates the arguments of his anthropological predecessors when he writes that "individuals of varying origin brought together under the same conditions of physical environment tend to a certain uniform development with regard to stature and even, perhaps, bodily structure and shape of the head" (*Casa-Grande* xxxi), a strictly physical phenomena that anthropologists now agree continues to be used to mobilize myths about a group's behavioral characteristics (Smedley).

When applied to Israel, this premise that shared biochemical proximities leads to *physical* homogeneity among differing sects of people projects a problem for any long-term project of exclusionary difference based on behavioral traits or moral norms. Even if Israelis adapt to more subtle nuances in physique, and/or continue to restrict interbreeding in its legal management and in its public image, differences will become less visible. With this visual tool removed, agents of exclusion will be forced to create new ways of establishing self and other, which would hopefully come under the scrutiny of the international community.

Jews have maintained and advocated for a unifying ethnic category despite obvious differences in their ethnic constitution and dispersed migrations. They have also persistently combated ethnic and racial essentialisms that put them in a position for persecution, while at the same time the rabbinate has developed a means for defining Jewish biology through identity-labeling birth laws and pronatilist campaigns. These contradictory phenomena both highlight and defy our understanding of (the lack of) race implied in postmodernist thought. It proves that race is a constructed category, but also that it holds immense material sway in certain areas of the world and certain historical situations. The category has managed to defy early anthropologists' point that "a race does not migrate from one continent to another; for that it would be necessary to

transport along with it the physical environment" (Freyre referencing Spengler, xxxi). The Freyre of 1986, who writes the preface to the reissue of *Casa-Grande*, obscures a crucial point made by the Freyre of 1933, who wrote the original edition. In the preface he writes,

> After something like a century of patriarchal life and agrarian activity in the tropics, the Brazilians are practically another race, expressing themselves in another type of dwelling . . . the energy of the blood-stream that leaves identical traces down the centuries must necessarily be increased by the [quoting Spengler] "mysterious cosmic force that binds together in a single rhythm those who dwell in close proximity to one another." This force in the formation of Brazilian life was exerted from above downward, emanating from the Big Houses that were the center of patriarchal and religious cohesion, the points of support for the organized society of the nation. (xxxiii)

The trickle-down effect of racial and cultural heterogeneity that Freyre emphasizes in this preface is somewhat of a revision of his entire work, which, especially in his chapters "The Native in the Formation of the Brazilian Family" and "The Negro Slave in the Sexual and Family Life of the Brazilian," originally idealized the racial constitution of the Brazilian from the bottom up. What this contradiction—or collapse into aristocratic complacency—should teach readers of Israeli-Palestinian miscegenation literature is that any attempt to essentialize or valorize occupied over occupier, or vice versa, in the racial constitution of the imagined child, is an exercise in dominance. This exercise has the effect of eliminating or homogenizing one diaspora over the other.

This study shows institutionalized racism is alive and well in Israel, both in the public imaginary, as in the Internet and call center hotlines, and in the laws that undergird citizens' and noncitizens' approach to each other. The question then becomes: what is the relationship between the material scarceness of the interethnic unions and the growing interest in them by way of narrative and poetry? In the same way that Freyre attempted to rewrite Brazilian history based on half-truths, using the private sphere to combat the public perception of Brazil as backward, in which the occasion was especially ripe, a growing international disquiet with Israel's policies of exclusion—combined with marriage revolution—may yield a public more responsive to these unions.

Freyrean Bodies versus Israeli-Palestinian Bodies

Fictional Jewish-Arab romance in Israeli-Palestinian literature reflects the need for a myth to begin to alter radically the Israeli reproductive political conversation, much like that going on in Europe about half-caste Brazilians during Freyre's time. Reading Freyre in the Holy Land highlights the absence of the mixed relationship as a possibility. In fact, absence is a dominant theme marking so much of fictional Arab-Jewish intimacy. The subject typically longs for the enemy-lover he/she cannot reach, as in Mahmoud Darwish's "Rita's Winter"; he or she mourns the lover, as Palestinian heroine Maryam mourns for her imprisoned Jewish husband in Miriam Cooke's novel *Hayati, My Life*; the subject might fear his/her own anxiety toward the lover, as is the case with the female protagonist in "A Room on the Roof"; or the lover dies at the moment a connection is realized, as in Rutu Modan's graphic short piece *Jamilti*. The tragically impossible love theme invokes conservative definitions of Jewishness pushing against human desire.

Since Jews are sensitive to any practice that would limit Jewish births, as they recall in the cultural memory past policies of antinatalism enacted for anti-Semitic purposes (Kahn 3), these experiences of romantic deferment constitute, at least in part, a reaction to the frustrations inherent in the Diasporic duty of procreation. Maintaining and growing the Diaspora is predicated not only on single-faith unions, but on single-race unions as well. As of now, Israeli political discourse focuses on reproducing Jews while staying within racial bounds even among Jew-Jew unions; the latter claim I develop in chapter 4. Israeli pronatalism dominates even the most liberal Jewish communities across the Diaspora, and its centrality to Zionism goes without saying. Susan Martha Kahn estimates "an overwhelming desire to create Jewish babies" has shot through a usually traditional-leaning rabbinate such that they have unreservedly encouraged reproductive technology (3). As one of the chief matters of state, the rabbinate has taken infertile women into its charge. "The barren woman," Kahn notes, "is an archetype of suffering in the Israeli/Jewish imagination. From the childlessness of the matriarchs in the Book of Genesis, about which every Israeli schoolchild learns from the age of six, to the later biblical image of Hannah weeping over her inability to have children,

Israelis learn that barrenness is a tragic fate for a woman" (3). The man feels a similar burden to be fruitful and multiply as a foundation of his Jewish duty (3). One would think that a growing Diaspora—booming, in fact, in the Orthodox settlements in Israel and the Occupied Territories—and the establishment of a Jewish state would have tempered the single-race imperative, but it has only been exacerbated by Israeli militarism. Israeli bio-interventionism and an increasingly hostile international climate has created a taboo for the mixed romance and turned it into fodder for miscegenation literature.

Freyre's fascination with and celebration of the Jewish strain in Portuguese heredity—particularly the Jews' contribution to the Brazilians' hybridity—is one facet of his theory that poses compelling questions for contemporary Jewish-Israeli writers similarly fascinated with miscegenation. In *Casa-Grande*, Freyre praises the Semitic heritage of the Portuguese: "Hereditarily predisposed to a life in the tropics by a long tropical habitat, it was the Semitic element, mobile and adaptable as no other, that was to confer upon the Portuguese colonizer of Brazil some of the chief physical and psychic conditions for success and for resistance" (10). Freyre essentializes racial Jewishness as one crucial element, among others, in the Brazilians' ethnic constitution, but for him it is this constitution's solvency with Muslim heritage that ensures its survival. As a dialectic, Freyre's myth about national strength and Brazilian exceptionalism, while its own type of essentialism, calls into question the ability of the Jewish settlement programs and antimiscegenation strain in Jewish law to safeguard the Jewish state. Its mythology appears much more poised to abide human desire, migration changes, a critical international public, and the general persistence of difference.

A word of caution is in order: intimacy can be mobilized as a means to erase identity rather than preserve its disparate parts. For example, in the conclusion of A. B. Yehoshua's *A Late Divorce*, through the process of subject-object absorption, the Ashkenazic protagonist appropriates his raving, half-caste wife. In the final stage before his ambiguous death, he dresses in her clothes and runs into a fellow patient and friend of hers, who, confused by the protagonist's identity, threatens him with a pitchfork. His death is assumed by the foreshadowing offered earlier in the novel. Rather than live to deal with his wife's uncategorical nature, he attempts to erase her by transforming into

her, instead of preserving their disparate dignities. In another example, the constant tension between Rita's presence and the speaker's absence in Darwish defers any promise of fulfillment for the Palestinian lover. The fluid, unresolved nature of the affair seems to suggest that, if brought to fruition, it would negate his identity. Finally, the sheer prevalence of Arab-Jew romance in Jewish writing over Palestinian writing indicates a fear that marriage will lead to the oppressed's erasure by the oppressor. In the poetry collection *The Palestinian Wedding*, A. M. Elmessiri identifies a general lack of interest in the Israelis in the Palestinian poetic oeuvre (11). It is far less threatening for the oppressor to imagine a romance between the oppressed and him-/herself than vice versa; the power dynamics at play favor the oppressor who is not at as much risk of absorption by such a relationship.

Freyre's construction of Brazil involves the mutually constituting relationship between master and slave, but his Brazilian story follows a hierarchy favoring the colonizer over the colonized. In his opening pages to *Casa-Grande*, he writes of "the union of the Portuguese male with the Indian woman, who was thus incorporated into the economic and social culture of the invader" (3). The female's incorporated status is where she remains throughout the work. However, sometimes she returns as the repressed: "every Brazilian, even the light-skinned fair-haired one, carries about with him on his soul, when not on soul and body alike . . . the shadow, or at least the birthmark, of the aborigine or the Negro" (278). Palestinian novelist Rula Jebreal depicts vividly the native and/or subjugated woman who is taken for granted as available to the occupier. In her novel *Miral* (published in 2003 and later translated and adapted for a major motion picture in 2010), a young Palestinian woman named Nadia runs away from home, only to get caught up working the nightclub culture in Israel, run by Jewish men. Through a series of events that disempower her, she becomes available to Israeli men for sexual gratification, and in their consumption of her, she also becomes confirmation of their own cultural domination. She gains the favor of non-Arab lovers and admirers—at one point, a Moroccan Jew named Yossi who asked for her hand in marriage, her Jewish male customers in the nightclub, and a Christian named Beni from Nazareth who ends up leaving her. Her sexual relationship with a Jewish boyfriend and her

employment under Jewish men dictate her financial and legal stability outside of the refugee camps. Jebreal points out the inequitably gendered conditions of the mixed romance in Israel, which limits it as a strategy for social change, but also points to its rhetorical usefulness for imagining a more democratic Israel.

Miscegenation rhetoric can quite easily be wielded to render the native into a buttress for the dominant culture, or to carve up the native into markings and parts. The strategy of figuring miscegenation to imagine ethnic ambiguity can actually end up reinforcing ethnic monoliths. Freyre is at his best when he, like the authors whose works comprise my study, entertains cultural ambiguity as cause for rejoicing rather than anxiety. In this way, he prefigures Homi Bhabha's concept of the nation as an ambivalent discursive field, productive in its capabilities to be imagined and written according to temporal flux ("Narrating the Nation" 306). Intimacy themes in Palestinian and Israeli poetry take up cultural ambivalence in a way that integrates this telos in Freyre and Bhabha. Rather than try to restructure human relations according to irretrievable myths of land ownership, poets like Yehuda Amichai and Hanan Ashrawi, through imagining partition and statist solutions in terms of more fluid borders as opposed to checkpoints and barbed wire, open up a third space for national belonging in ways that are ambivalent and encouraging. They offer a poetics of hope that could be read as quite threatening. Freyre also uses ambivalence in a climate in which it is threatening. He writes of English critic and historian Audrey Bell, for example, who was confounded by the Portuguese for their being "vague" and "imprecise" (Casa-Grande 8); for liberal Israeli-Palestinian writers, these worriers are Zionists. Arab heterogeneities in the Jewish constitution threaten a single vision for the Jewish state, and they also severely complicate Occupation and partition solutions.

Any analysis of the generative nature of the mixed relationship motif must be careful to avoid negating identity, and this includes mobilizing it to counter migration and habitation narratives that have become so important to both a Palestinian and an Israeli sense of selfhood. This brings me to another disclaimer/use value for Freyre. If one returns to Freyre's praise of the biopolitical imperative of the early Semitic settlers in Brazil in light of Golda Meir's famous denial of Palestinian existence in Israel, his commendation is chilling:

> Mobility was one of the secrets of the Portuguese victory. Without it, it is not to be explained how a country that was practically

> uninhabited, with a population that was numerically insignificant as a result of all the epidemics, famines, and especially wars that had afflicted the peninsula in the Middle Ages, should have succeeded in virilely besprinkling with what was left of its blood and culture populations so diverse and at so great a distance from one another . . . The scarcity of man-power was made up for by the Portuguese through mobility and miscibility, by dominating enormous spaces and, wherever they might settle . . . taking wives and begetting offspring with a procreative fervor that was due as much to violent instincts on the part of the individual as it was to a calculated policy stimulated by the State for obvious economic and political reasons. (10–11)

In familiar master rhetoric, Freyre must deny the population of Brazil in order to valorize the Portuguese's skill of propagating it. On such a gesture, Said's remarks ring true:

> The depressing continuity of historical attitude of blindness and denial is all too clear. Just as the early generations of Zionist settlers came to Palestine as if to an empty, or a negligibly populated, that was theirs for the colonizing, so too do their successors fail to see in the Palestinian people anything more than a bunch of "aliens" that must be gotten rid of or otherwise rendered inconsequential. (*The Question of Palestine*, 242)

When linked to a "historical attitude of blindness" to the natives, the settler imperative to be fruitful and multiply underscores an inherent flaw in both Freyre's and Israel's positive biopolitics. The biblical mandate that has become a means toward an apologetics for Israeli settlement programs hinges a positive biopolitics on a negative biopolitics—a eugenics, in other words—the latter of which the world hoped to do away with after the defeat of Nazism.

Eros and the State: Freyre, Esposito, and Marcuse

Integral to Freyre's miscegenation model is an unresolved tension between positive and negative biopolitics. Briefly, negative biopolitics refers to the state's interest in the negation of human life, or, in other words, in the legal management of death, such as eugenics. Negative biopolitics concerns itself with arbitrating

legitimate and delegitimated life, that is, defining the limits of a person's and/or citizen's personhood. "Folded tightly within it," in Roberto Esposito's words, is its positive periphery, or the orchestration of birth, personhood, and legitimacy. In *Terms of the Political Community*, Esposito builds on Foucault's assertion that dominant systems that engage in positive biopolitics have at their discretion negative biopolitics; this is called thenatopolitics, which is death at the service of life. He writes, "As soon as power takes up life itself as an object of calculation and an instrument for its own ends, it becomes possible, at least in certain conditions for power to decide to sacrifice one part of the population to benefit another" (84). In *Bios*, Esposito argues, for instance, that in addition to lethal programs aimed toward quality control, Nazism used pronatalist campaigns to increase the German population (144). Further, he suggests that the dynamic is much more complex than even that: "in the biopolitical regime, sovereign law isn't so much the capacity to put to death as it is to nullify life in advance" (145). Let us not forget, as Esposito points out, the connection of birth to the nation in principle as well as etymology (145). He theorizes beyond the phenomena of acute state declarations over life, positing that life can be preordained to be immune to attack—immunitas—and that, likewise, life can be preventatively voided. He challenges biopolitical philosophy to take up these new meanings, where life has the capacity to keep other life from developing, even in excess of conscious intent (12).

Reproductive imperatives—even ones that encourage heterogeneity—invoke positive biopolitics that can quite easily be substituted for negative biopolitics. Freyre's promotion of the hybrid, Zionism's edict to be fruitful and to multiply (within racial bounds), Darwish's chastisement of the imagined abortion of the Arab-Jewish child—all subscribe to positive biopolitics that places the hope of freedom from oppressors in reproduction. One wonders whether, subtextually, they do not also wish for the death of their oppressors through these births. Further, do they not also wish for the death of racial tension itself, paradoxical as it may sound? Freyre, in response to international revulsion toward the mulatto and mestizo, and Darwish, in response to Zionist discomfort with Arab presence, both encourage interethnic reproduction, but they use it in a way that would bring about its eventual inertia—or, in other words, to deracialize the state through a racializing process. The incredible pathetic

power that the production of human life holds in the national imaginary can easily veil its instrumentality. Esposito observes, "From the politicization of the biological, which began in late modernity [heralded by Darwinism which stratified life according to valuation], we now have a similarly intense biologization of the political that makes the preservation of life through reproduction the only project that enjoys universal legitimacy" (147, my brackets). In resisting devaluation of the hybrid, who had come to stand for Brazil in the racist international imaginary, Freyre promotes the reproduction of the hybrid, turning its nation-degrading status into nation-building potential. The strategy of making bodies, then, is recast as a racially multiplicative and heterogeneous trope, but it is only reappropriated from other uses of it for a single-race telos, especially as it ignores another potential goal of miscegenation, which is to level the playing field by reproducing a homogeneity of brownness. I am wary of its motivations as a trope, while I still support outlets for human desire.

The advent of marriage reform in Israel is pressing, which would seem to indicate that basic human desires to be with each other, notwithstanding racial/diasporic/religious affiliations, are driving the secular movement. Since interethnic marriage in Israel would also necessitate new precedents regarding tenant rights to the non-Jew partner, it would also force a reconceptualization of Israeli-ness, and possibly Jewishness, too. The production of new existential discourses within the Diaspora is nothing new to Judaism. As mentioned before, debates about patrilineal legitimacy crops up periodically within the rabbinate. Freyre emphasizes not the mark of a Jew nor an Arab, but a uniting of contrasts (8), making for better assimilation. Thus, a model of the two-state or single, fairly represented state—or, perhaps a third state not already imagined—starts in the sexual liberation of its people.

Sexually liberating rhetorics as a strategy for thinking the state has a surprising pedigree in highbrow theory, even that which is not so materially inclined as Freyre and Esposito. Writing in 1955, Marcuse challenges Freud's famous contention that civil society maintains its organization through the repression of baser instincts. Marcuse argues that eros is liberating and progressive. His study enhances my discussion of fictional interethnic romance as expressive of a redemptive desire for intimacy in the taboo space intersecting enemy camps. Casting Orpheus and Narcissus as "culture-heroes" in place of the archetypical

father of Western progress and toil, Prometheus, Marcuse tries to reconfigure deities of pleasure and art as the new "symbols of another reality principle" (146)—one that does not rely on the Freudian death instinct. With the championing of the non-utilitarian principle, that is, aesthetics, Eros wins over Thanatos. Marcuse's Orpheus-Narcissus revival parallels his act of unchaining the Oedipus myth from the depths of its imprisonment in the repressive psyche. Marcuse posits that although repression exists as a process, it must be liberated from its journey into the unconscious.

Marcuse later appends his theory in his preface to the 1961 edition of *Eros and Civilization* to say that politics must intervene into networks of interhuman relationships in order to upend the long-standing, internalized, individual performance of repression. The social must undergo "the subversion of the traditional culture, intellectual as well as material, including the liberation of instinctual needs and satisfactions which have hitherto remained tabooed or repressed" (viii). Something happens in six years that causes Marcuse to rethink his reliance on the private confines of the therapist's couch, such that he repositions the stages of liberation:

> In the contemporary period, psychological categories become political categories to the degree to which the private, individual psyche becomes the more or less willing receptacle of socially desirable and socially necessary aspirations, feelings, drives, and satisfactions. The individual, and with him the rights and liberties of the individual, is something that has still to be created, and that can be created only through the development of qualitatively different societal relations and institutions. A non-repressive society in which working time (i.e., toil) is reduced to the minimum and free time is freed from all leisure activities and passivities imposed upon it in the interest of domination, such an existence, if it is possible at all, can only be the result of qualitative social change. (viii)

If Marcuse's revised premise holds, the need for a noninstrumentalized society as a precondition for intimacy might be said to explain why authors have such a hard time imagining the fruition of enemy unions. If the one adjudicating branch of the Super Ego that has the concrete (military) power to restrict human life once her Ego gets out of control is not poised to transform, basic human desires (those of the Id) to be with

one another will remain in the realm of the taboo. It stands to reason, then, that even “transgressive” literature is conformist without public, social change.

I advance an interpretive practice of miscegenation literature marked by a constant attention to its literary merit and its role in political strategy. Marcuse reminds readers that one can practice nonrepressiveness within the framework of the established society:

> From the gimmicks of dress and undress to the wilder paraphernalia of the hot or cool life. But in the established society, this sort of protest turns into a vehicle of stabilization and even conformity, because it not only leaves the roots of the evil untouched, but also testifies to the personal liberties that are practicable within the framework of general oppression. (ix)

Transgressions like the imagined Arab-Jew affair can become an “instrument of social cohesion” (x) if read as signs of progress in themselves. It suffices to submit them to deep critique regarding their biopolitical import and sensitive place in both the Diasporic imagination and within the current conditions of oppression. Thus, it is not enough for authors/readers to desire or to forgive the enemy. The lack of a theory of social change precludes these unions’ transformative power. Surprisingly, Marcuse actually arrives at a rather conservative conclusion. Without taboo, sexual deviance would have nothing off of which to feed (184–185). This might be extended to counterargue the tempting slippery slope concern of the Zionists: what will happen to the Jewish line if Israel sanctions interdiasporic marriages? According to Marcuse’s logic, nothing as radical as a Zionist nightmare might depict. In fact, people would likely still feel obligation to the Diaspora, especially because it will continue to offer for its seekers freedoms, protections, and solidarities, but the cloud of institutionalized racism will have been lifted. Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin assert, “Jewish racism, like the racism of other peoples, is a facultative and dispensable aspect of the cultural system, not one that is necessary for its preservation or essential to its nature” (330). For Israel to maintain that the exclusionary principle is essential to its survival is to affirm that Judaism, a priori, determines a racist system. It is no longer tenable to claim that the racist system necessitates the exclusionary principle.

Conclusion: A Freyrean Agenda

I usher in a new bluntness with which to pose hard questions toward Israeli-Palestinian miscegenation literature, a useful term for exploring this book's theme, but which by no means is intended to categorize reductively the works that comprise my study. Such questions include: what material limitations frustrate the pursuit of intercultural intimacy in Israel, especially among Jews, and why so often is it ultimately unsustainable? How does the interethnic union operate as a strategy for critique, and what and whom does interethnic sex in Israel threaten? Most importantly, what is happening to the public sphere as a result of the preoccupation with private networks of human relationships, and how are women being staged in the center? Even the positive biopolitics theorized by Roberto Esposito, the psychoanalytic explorations of the positive relationship between eros and culture by Herbert Marcuse, and the human rights discourse of leading Middle-Eastern voices like Edward Said—all of whom inform my reading of the hybrid and third space—do not so bluntly consider the productive implications of interethnic sex as Freyre does. "There might be a constant state of warfare," Freyre writes in *Casa-Grande*, but this "does not by any means exclude miscegenation or sexual attraction between the two races, much less intercourse between the two cultures" (5). Freyre builds on the sexual dynamics of contact and colonization boldly to assert, "The milieu in which Brazilian life began was one of sexual intoxication" (85). The candor with which he wields his miscegenation theme, combined with my rhetorical action of grouping together Palestinian texts with Israeli texts, motivates me to ask of Israeli literature uncomfortable questions about its biopolitics—questions difficult to pose in an aesthetic critique.

In developing a more sustained and radical critique of the mixed romance in Israeli fiction and pairing it with its Palestinian counterparts, my arguments add to and transform critical understanding of works already underscored by critics for their /interethnic romantic content. These include, for instance, Amos Oz's short story "Nomad and Viper" and Savyon Liebrecht's short story "A Room on the Roof." Oz and Liebrecht place immense emphasis on the body of the Jewish mistress—that is, the one being seduced by the Arab—in negotiating Jewish identity. Both the stories and their reception stop short of a Freyrean conversation about what comes after the miscegenated romance. The Jewish woman has become a strategy toward imagining a Jewish male destiny (as she does for a

Brazilian male destiny in Freyre), but this strategy is rarely imagined through to the point where she would produce racial democracy. Figured as a playing field on which Arabs and Jews negotiate power and identity, she risks being reified as a private subject in that she becomes a means toward political catharsis rather than political change. On the Palestinian side, a miscegenated child is no less problematic. Darwish may in fact be the only Palestinian writer to carry the relationship through to procreation.[9] Rula Jebreal's novel *Miral*, for instance, presents several characters that fall in love with the enemy (a Jew, in Nadia's case), but they remain strategically nonprocreative, as the novel avoids both the prospect of their love lasting and any hint at the production of children. Nadia does end up bearing a child, but it is with a Christian man from Nazareth, the city known as the Arab capital of Israel. He ultimately abandons her, nonetheless, their relationship seems the most poised for fruition than the other mixed romances. Jebreal points to a pattern in miscegenation literature that privileges the Arab-Jew affair over any potential consequences. On the other hand, Jebreal's female characters offer a more publicly resonant vision for the interethnic relationship. In their ability to resist privatization in their relationships with Jewish men, *Miral*'s politically active Arab women represent an investment in change as a top-down process—that is, as a public-to-private interchange. *Miral* blazes a trail for new fiction developing in the direction of a Freyrean emphasis on the interethnic relationship as a mirror for the state with a Marcusean empowerment of the social.

As per the Marcusean emphasis on eros for civic change, I do not read fictional or material intimacies as signs of progress, but as strategies toward progress. As illustrated by his critical reception, Freyre, too, has been misread according to the former methodology. While I attend to Freyre's negative reception, duly warranted, I would contend that much of the blame on Freyre comes from one interpretation of him as an observer rather than a strategist. In other words, my realization that the interethnic couplings in Freyre are not signs of Brazil's progress but, rather, that they are expressive strategies for constructing a new Brazil, has opened up my readings of the Arab-Jew affair. Israeli-Palestinian literature, thus, reinvigorates Freyre as a figure who poses rich interpretive problems for both Israeli biopolitics and miscegenation literature, which has emerged in response to the former.

The Freyrean romance allows the very genre of miscegenation literature to be discursively realized. As a third space category

added to "partition literature" and "resistance literature," "miscegenation literature" cross-references these genres while admitting a more holistic understanding of Israeli-Palestinian literature and human relations as mutually constituting entities. The corporeal association with the category's nomenclature is intended to be provocative, to incorporate the bodily, hybridizing results of the mixed relationship in all private domains—not just the romantic, but the platonic and the industrial. Because bodies have to be dealt with by the state, in this way the Freyrean romance also explodes the private/public divide. The erosion of this divide leads to my following reading of Darwish's early, critically deemed "aesthetic" love poetry as having a distinct correlation with his later political poetry.

3

"The Synthetic Principle"

Darwish's "Rita"

Palestinian poet Mahmoud Darwish's first love was a Jewish girl (Jaggi). Appearing in several of his poems under the name "Rita" throughout the 1960s and 1970s, and one final time under this pseudonym in 1992, this figure of the beloved signifies the liminal space where two opposing national subjects, an Arab male speaker and a Jewish woman, embark on an affair characterized by absence—an absence left by their inability to reach each other and in the beloved's power to negate or disorient the speaker's identity. In the 1992 poem, "Shita' Rita," or "Rita's Winter" (also known as "Shita Rita al-tawil," or "Rita's Long Winter"), Darwish writes,

> There is no land for two bodies in one, no exile for exile
> in these small rooms, and exit is entry:
> We sing between two chasms in vain . . . we should depart
> and clarify the path
> yet I can't and you can't . . . she used to say and not say.
> (137–149; trans. Joudah)

Rita and the speaker embody the political tensions at play with two unique but interdependent cultures living together under highly contested circumstances, subject to land rights that have historically privileged Rita's people over the speaker's. The speaker addresses her as a lover and a "stranger"; she is soon to become "distant like a greeting between strangers at harbor" (55). Both intimate and foreign, Rita allows Darwish to manifest the duality of the Israeli-Palestinian condition in the beloved; that is, she mirrors the phenomenological problem presented by Zionism and Palestinian extremism, which, in mobilizing a monolithic claim to

the Promised Land, preclude the presence or legitimacy of alternative national myths. Darwish's rapturous narration of their affair and the Rita poems' tendency to revel in the destabilizing presence of the lovers entertain the possibility of an ethnic democracy, where romantic desire challenges an oppressive Jewish state.

Darwish, the de facto poet laureate of Palestine until his death in 2008, is one of several high-profile authors to use the interracial/interethnic[1] romance to reimagine a political trajectory for Israel-Palestine, but, as I show, also emerging in Israel and the Arab world is a thriving blog and Internet culture that engages the Israeli-Palestinian romantic union. Gilberto Freyre's *Casa-Grande & Senzala* provides a comparative framework with which to explore the Arab-Jew romance in Darwish's works and the commonplace discourse of Israel-Palestine. Freyre's romantic anthropological treatise on miscegenation in Brazil is useful in thinking about the rhetoric of eros in Darwish's Palestine, which has been outside the purview of Edward Said and other major theorists of the area. Said and others have focused on themes of exile and longing for a homeland in Darwish's work rather than explicitly question the materiality of Rita and the motif of the Arab-Jewish love affair.[2] Freyre's act of retrieving and rewriting Brazil's national mythos based on its intimate history, and this history's biopolitical repercussions, opens up questions of how the Arab-Jew romance functions biopolitically in Darwish's works. Using Freyre to think with Darwish, I trace the poetics of the Arab-Jew romance in Darwish's poems and later its reiteration in legal and public discourse. I argue that, even though her name drops out of his post-1992 poems, the language that Darwish associates with Rita—specifically the words "stranger" and "winter"—reappears time and time again, even in the poems that critics have deemed political rather than romantic. Her trace in both the love poems and the more "political" poems challenges reductive readings pitting the love poetry against the political works in two ways: the romantic starts to become the political in the later works, and the act of rereading the early Rita, therefore, makes a purely aesthetic interpretation of her irretrievable. This chapter intervenes in the critical tendency to bifurcate Darwish's love poetry from his political oeuvre, drawing a relationship between the earliest intimations of the biopolitical in Rita and the later, more obvious biopolitics of *State of Siege*.[3]

Throughout this chapter, I refer to biopolitical theory and Darwish's employment of it in the broad, postmodern sense as

the national, legal, and theocratic orchestration over life and bodily relations. But I also invoke its more specific incarnation in Darwish using Roberto Esposito's contributions to the theory. In terms of its relevance to Darwish's work, it forms a secondary addition to the larger Freyrean framework, which, as argued, privileges the mixed union for its political and national efficacy. To this end, I must distinguish between Esposito's and the other unique contributions to the field of biopolitics of Foucault, Agamben, and Hardt and Negri. Moreover, any analysis that probes the relationships among romance, birth, and power, combined with their imaginative, affective relevance, must account for Deleuze and Guattari's conception of desire and the state. Therefore, what follows is a theoretical genealogy that contributes to a better understanding of the slippages between private and public that occur when I avail the poetic coupling of its procedural resonance. It is necessary to take a moment to deploy these theorists before embarking on a comparison between Freyre's and Darwish's philosophies of eros and the mixed social sphere.

Esposito is motivated by premises first posed by Foucault, Agamben, and Hardt and Negri. Timothy Campbell, Esposito's translator in *Bios* (originally published in 2004), provides in the introduction a brilliantly succinct, though not reductive, summary of these theorists as present in Esposito's thought. I reproduce Campbell's lines of connection with my own occasional reference to the original works. Esposito works out of the contrast between Agamben's focused account of biopolitics' destructive force in his 1998 work *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life* and Hardt and Negri's analysis of the productive power of biopolitical phenomena in *Empire*, published in 2001 (xx). For Agamben, the figure of what he calls the *homo sacer* arises out of Greco-Roman distinction between *zoe* and *bios*, the former denoting life as an organism or just a basic, animated creature (animals, men, gods) and the latter denoting the state of civil—aka "proper"—living (xxi). The homo sacer is the name given to that being which is excluded from bios, a decision that is determined by the *state of exception* (xxii). Loosely, then, the state of exception is the process by which the power of the sovereign is predicated on determining these life hierarchies (xxii). That this dynamic forms the larger schema of biopolitics[4] renders the field necessarily negative. Hardt and Negri, on the other hand, locate a will to live in the "multitude," which,

as a productive force, renders the biopolitical process an affirmative one. Focusing on the productive features of bios, they find that power locates itself in bios, but also, then, new subjectivities emerge within it (xxiii). In other words, the multitude can override power (xxvi–xxvii). Esposito criticizes both of these approaches for failing to theorize the immunity conundrum (xx), that is, the development within biopolitical systems toward immunizing life against attack. It forms a conundrum in its double act of killing life in the process of sustaining it, and vice versa. Esposito's, too, is an affirmative biopolitics, but one that differs from Hardt and Negri in its inclusion of the immunitas principle (xx).

All three responses, Campbell points out, counter a paramount couple of texts by Foucault: *Society Must be Defended*, based on a series of lectures from 1975 to 1976, and the fifth chapter of *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, published in 1976 (xx). In these works, Foucault's theory of biopolitics is indistinct from his notion of biopower—the mechanisms governing life (xx). Foucault classifies these mechanisms according to two distinct cultural moments; in the eighteenth century, bio-operations were concerned with disciplining transgressive bodies while the world begins to see this transformed in the nineteenth century into attempts to normalize collective bodies (xxi). The Nazi program was the twentieth century's foremost realization of the shift. Nazis, according to Foucault, wanted to eliminate arbitrariness in the course of life and death (xxi). Agamben, here, differs from Foucault; where the latter locates a breach from discipline to bioregulation, the former traces an unbroken bio-regulatory manipulation in ancient to modern states of exceptions (xxii).

Esposito intervenes in this debate by, first and foremost, identifying a Foucauldian contradiction. If Nazism was such a unique event in its realization of regulatory biopolitics, but Foucault admits that it shares similarities with other modern regimes, it cannot quite be exceptional (xxiv). Or, at least, it cannot be understood as exceptional without an understanding of its immunopolitics. Esposito argues that, though Nazism underwent expression characterized by negative biopolitics—thenatopolitics, or death politics—its intent to fortify the German body against death formed its essential constitution and telos (xxv). It had to identify the Jews et al., as a threat to the Aryan desire to live. Thus, it formed a biocracy, illustrated vividly by its reliance on the medical sphere to mobilize itself (xxv).

Esposito's redeployment of Foucault with the changed emphasis on immunitas also helps him debunk Hardt and Negri, being that the multitude is not disparate from the immunitary ideal. An investment in the productive capabilities of the masses is problematic in that it cannot account for political programs that orchestrate mass killings (xxvi). It is in this final culmination of Esposito's intervention in the genealogy that brings me to his relevance to Darwish. Though Hardt and Negri's logic would have it that since procreation leads to multitudes, and the multitudes, in turn, secure immunitas, Darwish reminds his readers that Palestinian births are not immune to the state's overriding power over the multitudes. An early Darwish writes in "Bitaqit Hawia" (Record, I am an Arab),

> I have eight children
> and the ninth
> is coming in midsummer
> Will you be angry?
> (5–8)

Darwish's poetic declaration of Palestinian legitimacy both ascribes pronatalism to the Palestinian cause and calls attention to its vulnerability to Israeli antagonism. This is illustrated by the pause between the seventh and eighth line and the half instigating, half worrisome tone of "Will you be angry?" But Darwish is no fatalist. The argument I develop in this chapter is that Darwish—as well as Freyre—imagines the conditions wherein procreation and the multitudes can actually produce immunity. They locate these conditions in the interethnic affair. The unstable racial child in Israel—as in Brazil—can produce immunity if killing it threatens the life of the sovereign. Israel, having a stated mission to protect the Jews, must protect its others if those others cause it to redefine its own prescribed boundaries of Jewishness. Similarly, for Freyre, Brazil stands up against Nazism and other programs that follow the logic of weltanschauung, because it cannot clearly demarcate its racial others.

It stands to reason, subsequently, that desire is necessary to political efficacy for Darwish and Freyre. The affective character of the interethnic affair in the poetics of both authors (Freyre's prosaic worth having been established in the previous chapter) must now be facilitated by the groundwork laid by Deleuze and Guattari. Their initial investigation into the structure of desire

plays out in their revision of Freud in the first part of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, called *Anti-Oedipus* and published in 1972, but desire's political organization achieves full expression in the second part, *A Thousand Plateaus* (1980). They contend, therein, that, contra Freud, desire takes not the structure of the repressed, but rather, it takes on a generative, positive structure and creates endless possibilities—seeking its repetition and deferment rather than death. Desire actually produces political options rather than stymies those options, as one's belief in the necessary performance of repression would have it. "Drives and part-objects," they write, "are neither stages on a genetic axis nor positions in a deep structure; they are political options for problems, they are entryways and exits, impasses the child lives out politically, in other words, with all the force of his or her desire" (13). Darwish will come correspondingly to rely on this metaphor of constant entry and exit in his investment in the libidinal, affective mode of life and its political movement—a movement constantly away from monolithic claims on Palestinian life and identity, as well as constantly toward unstable notions of the body within an oppressive legal system. The Arab-Jewish affair in Darwish intimates a challenge from within that oppressive system, and also then inflects the earlier, more aesthetic love poetry with this political telos.

When revisited as an affective strategy toward imagining the nation, Freyre's concept of the "synthetic principle" offers a more radical framework for interpreting "miscegenation" literature and the poetics of the Arab-Jew romance. I use the term "miscegenation" despite its offensive essentialism for two reasons: to avoid retroactively censuring Freyre and to call attention to the corporeal nature of intimacy, which discomfits advocates of Israeli Occupation and which some critics have been emboldened to call apartheid. I do not wish to euphemize or idealize the possibility of compromise—I wish to literalize it, as Freyre did. Freyre's "synthetic principle" is the belief that, despite the heinous conditions arising out of feudalism, Brazil's untempered production of life outside the boundaries of racial repression propels it toward democratization, over any other colonial outpost. As reviewed in the previous chapter, Freyre, in founding the theory of lusotropicalism, locates in interethnic desire the productive capacity toward Brazil's civil and progressive superiority to Europe. The hybrid Brazilian—the mestizo, mulatto, and so on—coupled with the Brazilian's pride in being hybrid made possible by the

Freyrean revision, can be read through the lens of Esposito. In the poetic imaginary, the production of Brazilian bodies, like that of Arab-Jewish bodies, imparts a strategy toward immunizing an ethnic multitude—precisely through the destabilization of said ethnicity.

Mixed coupling functions as political metonymy in both *Casa-Grande* and Darwish's works; though they disagree in genre, they share reliance on the romantic sphere in order to reimagine the colonial situation through tangled webs of myth and reality. Freyre was ultimately scorned for misrepresenting class relations and for romanticizing the master/slave relationship in that he saddles the female (particularly, the female slave) body with reproductive duty toward the nation (Madureira 23). Freyre's intervention is less suspicious when read along with Darwish as representational expression rather than science. My book does not ignore the inherent exoticization of native women and heteronormativity in Freyre's philosophy of lusotropicalism. I focus on the tenets in his philosophy that resonate with Darwish's work in that they both imagine miscegenation as a productive precondition of democracy, but I ultimately find the representation of the Jewish mistress to be like that of the native female in Freyre: saddled with the responsibility toward reproducing peace from her body. To be fair, Darwish's emphasis on representational miscegenation rather than anthropological observation constitutes a departure from Freyre; yet, in narrativizing private lives in an attempt to restructure the public sphere—wherein, desire places itself counter to "representative" government—Darwish relies on the womb to restructure Jewish patriarchy.

Dividing Darwish: A Critical History

Darwish's love poetry, and the mistress who functions centrally within it, traditionally have been deprived of their political import. Critics have been more interested in the facets of his poems that explicitly lyricize experiences of exile and violence. A colleague and friend of Darwish, Palestinian novelist and scholar Anton Shammas, responded negatively to the publication of Darwish's 1998 collection of love poems, *A Bed for the Stranger*. Shammas lamented that Darwish seemed to be "sending out a depressingly defiant message: 'To hell with Palestine—now I'm on my own!'" (Akash 19). Another critic reiterated the

lack of political certainty in the love poems in his review of *The Butterfly's Burden*, a collection of three books, including *A Bed for the Stranger* and two later collections, *A State of Siege* (2002) and *Don't Apologize for What You've Done* (2003). He writes, "Though the love poems hovered just out of my grasp, *A State of Siege* insinuated itself right in my gut" (Metres). The reviewer goes further to say that the love poems that open the anthology are "still-growing fruit" that "turn, by the end, into the rare and complex sweetness" of the "political" poems (Metres); meaning, the 1998 love poems are somehow underdeveloped. The reviewer temporarily grants the love poems, including the earlier Rita cycle, political import, but he subjects them to interpretive reduction, claiming that "the beloved is no longer a cipher for the lost land of Palestine [as she was in the Rita poems]; rather, it [the beloved] is a map to the private geography of human relation" (Metres; my brackets). Effacing the political problem posed by the Arab-Jew romance and Darwish's commentary therein, critics have wanted to either disembody Rita in order to make political claims on Darwish's love poems, or enclose the love poems into solely the private sphere.

This elision is part of a larger project of removing the Jew from Palestinian poetics. In *A Palestinian Wedding*, Elmessiri points out: "One of the fascinating aspects of Palestinian resistance poetry is its relative lack of interest in the Israelis, the Jews or the Zionists. It seems that the Palestinian knows that his tragedy has been caused not so much by Zionist presence as by Arab absence" (11). While this is true of the overall collection of Palestinian works, it should not be taken as a rule. Neither should Darwish be taken as an exception, especially considering he is not just another poet. He is, as is commonly ascribed to him, exile's poet. He is, too, Palestine's National Poet, and in this nomenclature he bears the burden of representing Palestinian poetry in the larger public reception, fairly or not. Moreover, the Jewish child stands as a very important tool for Palestinian poetic critique: "Eytan in the steel trap," by Fadwa Tuqan (Elmessiri 95) is a lament for the Jewish child. One reads hope for the future of Israel-Palestine in these poetic children. Darwish's aborted, miscegenated child in *State of Siege* is just one step further than Eytan on the imaginative chain toward peace and toward unsettling Zionism.[5]

Said, too, misses an opportunity to contemplate Darwish's biopolitics. He writes of Darwish's political significance in *The Question*

of Palestine, but he comments only on the first three lines wherein Darwish famous command to "Record! / I am an Arab" resides. His citation of the opening lines includes Darwish's striking words on bearing children: "I have eight children / and the ninth / is coming in midsummer / Will you be angry?" (5–8; Said 156). On these lines, Said comments:

> If there is anything written by a Palestinian that can be called a national poem, it would have to be Mahmoud Darwish's short work "*Bitaqit Hawia*" ("Identity Card"). The curious power of this little poem is that at the time it appeared in the late sixties, it did not *represent* so much as *embody* the Palestinian, whose political identity in the world had been pretty much reduced to a name on an identity card. The entire poem is governed by the imperative *Sajil!—Record!*—which is repeated periodically, as if to an Israeli police clerk who can only be addressed in the impoverished framework provided by an identity card, but who must be reminded that the card's language doesn't do full justice to the reality it supposedly contains. The ironic is crucial to Darwish's poem. (155)

Said's elegant analysis of the poem as both a powerful and a desperate piece assuages extremists' reactions to it, who read it as fundamentally threatening. However, he focuses on the conceit of the identity card itself to build his interpretation, whereas the latter lines are most compelling to my argument. Said uses the diction embodiment—the identity card literally embodies the Palestinian in all the dehumanizing registers of that reality. But the notion of embodiment is carried further in the next lines, which juxtapose the speaker's progeny with the dehumanizing imagery of the card. The reference to children is not just important to the pathetic appeal of the poem but to the biopolitical problem Palestinian birth creates for the Jewish state.

Patrick Williams's analysis of Darwish's "Late Style" as characterized by nonreconciliation is a compelling step toward reclaiming the political in Darwish's love poetry, but it does not go far enough. Williams's critique is drawn from Said's posthumously published *On Late Style*, which argues against the conventional perception that a muted resignation brands the late oeuvre of writers (24). Current critical opinion periodizes Darwish's lateness from 1998 on, most frequently positioning in this category *A Bed for the Stranger* (1998), *Mural* (2000), *Don't apologise for what you've done* (2003), and *Comme des*

fleurs d'amandier, ou plus loin (2007); this is complicated by Said's having pushed this periodization back to the 1990s (25). For Williams, the Late Style paradigm is fractured by the dynamic tension between aesthetics and politics in these works, asserting "the idea of the necessary nonabdication of art reflects Darwish's position, even in the face of strongly competing claims: 'In the 50s we Arabs believed poetry could be a weapon, that a poem had to be clear, direct. Poetry must care about the social, but it also has to care about itself, about aesthetics.' The particular tension between the political and the aesthetic marks Darwish's Late period work, both poetic and other" (26; quoting Darwish in *Jaggi*).

If there were a spectrum of this tension, in terms of the Rita conceit, the dial would be drawn more magnetically to the side of politics, especially from the standpoint of reception in the current biopolitical phase of Israeli-Palestinian history. When Darwish says, "If I weren't a Palestinian poet? I would have liked to be a love poet, I think," Williams reads his confession as a marker of the ambiguity arising out of the duty to art versus protest. I read it, however, as a confirmation of the impossibility of "pure" love, certainly within the confined destiny of being a bard in the conflict zones, where love is automatically instrumentalized for the state.

Against categorizations that preclude a linkage between romantic love/desire and the state, the reading I offer considers Darwish's "more political" oeuvre as a continuation of the biopolitical themes already operative in his love poetry. Anna Bernard and Ziad Elmarsafy assert the need to liberate Darwish's poetry from restrictive aesthetic or political expectations, calling for a language that can talk about both Darwish's resistance literature (a genre coined and rendered critically prominent by Barbara Harlow) and his love poems (11). Bernard and Elmarsafy do not, however, explicitly address a schema in Darwish's collective works, which, if identified, might help critics develop such a language. One schema is his restaging of the mutually dependent phenomena of eros and politics. Darwish explores how eros engages with, resists, or is managed by politics. Since the Israeli state's interest is not solely in bodily relations, but in how these relations threaten to produce life or acquire space, Rita's relationship to the speaker is just as political as the interethnic marriage in the later love poetry of *The Stranger's Bed* (1998) and the military commentary of *State of Siege* (2002).

Critics agree that Darwish wrote his last Rita poem in 1992. However, in 1998, the love poems of *The Stranger's Bed* recall the original Arab-Jew romance compelled into absence and unproductiveness by state ideology to which readers bear witness in the "Rita" poems. These poems carry with them the rhetoric of the lover as "stranger," such as in "The Stranger Stumbles upon Himself in the Stranger." In "Wedding Song," the speaker writes, "We were two strangers in two faraway lands a while ago" (35–37) and "my beloved stranger, since my ardent desire / is my only credit" (39–40). Aside from the designation "stranger," these lines are reminiscent of the early poem "Rita's Winter" in their repetition of the image "faraway lands."

The reappearing word "winter" also connects the beloved from "Rita's Winter" to the later love poems. For instance, in "Maybe, Because Winter is Late," from *Stranger's Bed*, stanza seven laments the impossibility of marriage between the speaker and the beloved: "Without purpose, the sky placed us / on earth as two harmonious intimates with two different names" (31–32). In "A Cloud from Sodom," Darwish opens each stanza with "after your night, night of the last winter," which harks back to the setting of "Rita's Winter." When the speaker both celebrates and laments love's "unknown" and the inability for lovers to return to each other, he or she (the gender of the speaker shifts periodically in the *Stranger's Bed* collection) also ends on a note of anticipation. The final stanza offers the least ambiguous politicization of romance: "A real country, not a metaphor, your arms / around me . . . over there by the holy book / or right here" (44–46). If one interprets the spatial language of "over there" to mean "beyond the partition walls or security checkpoints," the "holy book" invokes the Tanakh—or the Torah and Jewish prophetic books. If the holy book is read as the Q'uran in Jerusalem, then the lovers' love would seem to defy its sublimation via Israeli dominance. No matter how the spatial reference shifts, the holy book is an authorized witness to the romance, which I have read as intercultural due to Rita's trace within the poem.

Lovers, Enemies, and Strangers

In tracing the "stranger" reappearing in the poems, I locate a less binary response to Darwish's genres through the language of biopolitics by asserting that Darwish's political poetics has always been inflected with concern for the beloved and the vexed

question of their relationship's sustainability. The various contexts of the poetic address "stranger" in Darwish's work assigns complicated roles for the addressees, who include Rita, the general beloved, the poetic self, the enemy/Israeli, and perhaps all of them in one. "Strangers" discursively links the early Rita to the later unnamed beloved and eventually to the occupier in the military poems toward the end of Darwish's life. The relationship between strangers who are brought together in war and confronted with desire for each other does not materialize in the early love poems. Darwish seems painfully aware of the unsustainability of the interethnic affair in his Rita era. Rita represents the intimacy made possible by the contact zones, but Darwish's aching reflections show that the intimacy between political strangers is always on the verge of violence. In "Rita's Winter," he writes, "two dreams on the pillow, they intersect and escape so one / draws out a dagger and another bids farewell to what the flute decrees" (41–42; trans. Joudah). Later, in a similar invocation of the beloved's uneasy relationship to violence, he offers the evocative image of Rita's handgun—a symbol of Israeli militarism—on the draft of the poem next to Rita's discarded stockings. In part, the image recalls the age-old and universal intertwining of sex and violence, rendered unique by the special political circumstances in which Darwish is embroiled.

The intertwining of sex (stockings), violence (gun), and peace (poem) functions on a dual level: the promise of violence incites eros while concurrently deterring it. Darwish offers violence and love mutually as catalysts and sources of deterrence, mirrored in the poem by the destabilizing dynamic between the lovers/strangers. The speaker's relationship to Rita is energized by his inability to access the object and on the tension created by her destabilizing presence, as both identities are endowed with incompatible national, religious, and—though often elided by apologists for Israel—racial mythologies. The affair is seized by this incompatibility and lack of access, illustrated by the final noun "departure," a notion of absence, and its predicate "reached me," an act of presence, in the line "and she went barefoot to the unknown, and departure reached me" (149). Thus, the interethnic affair meets a state of stasis in "Rita's Winter." The romantic state of stasis models a political stasis, where peace tenuously is possible through the erotic excess of the contact zones.

The vexed interracial/intercultural love affair like that of the Rita poems reemerges in the "political" collection, *State of*

Siege. Like Rita, the Jewish characters in these poems share the ambiguous designation "stranger." The beloved and freedom are both strangers to the speaker. The beloved actually signifies freedom. The speaker has to get "used to" them both, though it appears that they do not need to get used to him ("Stranger, / I am not your stranger," 91), perhaps because they have enjoyed the privilege of power and cannot empathize with his alienation. However, the elation for freedom and the beloved is shaken by the speaker's inability to resolve the problem of what happens after the union—"Where will we live after the wedding?" (91), he worries. Oppressiveness still stalks the couple, confounding the problem of habitation, making freedom and the beloved strangers yet.

Darwish also uses the word "stranger" to address the occupier. In "As He Walks Away," from the autobiographical 1995 collection *Why Have You Left the Horse Alone?*, Darwish's speaker talks to an Israeli visitor, or the "enemy who drinks tea in our hovel" (trans. Akash 51). The italics represent the speaker talking under his breath as the occupier walks away:

> *Can you tell your daughter*
> *[…]*
> *she has an absent friend*
> *who wishes to visit her, to enter her mirror*
> *and see his secret.* [*sic*]
>
> (53)

This poem recalls Rita through the figure of the Israeli daughter who has an "absent" friend—a friend who, when glimpsing the beloved, would behold a "secret" that he possesses. The secret yields several readings; with Rita as a possible reference, the secret is their unlawful love affair, or its embarrassment to racist, extremist ideologies. It could also indicate a lack of essence that an identity meets when it confronts its designated "other," and that this absence of essence reveals the general instability of the subject and object binary. The fact that the speaker would appear in the mirror to the friend indicates that the realization would be mutual. Ironically, then, the subject in the mirror universalizes the experience of lacking essence. The culturally different friend or beloved, then, is both intimate and estranging.

The love poems become resistance poems when readers understand the historical and legal subtexts: Arab-Jewish marriages are

strictly prohibited in Israel and the Occupied Territories. There exists a phenomenological conundrum in the lovers' destabilizing identities—meaning, the existence of one precludes the existence of the other. In turn, this precludes a material relationship, rendering them strangers to each other. In fact, in order to even be lovers, they have to embody as strangers. These poems' resolution in absence or shaky resolve reminds the reader of the material impossibility of these unions. The Israeli government anxiously manages the theocratic and diasporic "purity" of its territories, restricting both interracial/intercultural marriages and gay marriages, as well as refusing to grant tenant rights to Palestinians married to Israelis. Biopolitically, the poetic relationship that meets its breach precludes a new narrative that involves the production of a culturally and racially unstable child. Strikingly, the nonprocreative interethnic affair in Darwish shifts to a concretely procreative rendering when he imagines Israeli soldiers aborting an interethnic child in *State of Siege*. This extended poem constitutes Darwish's evolved attitude toward the beloved, which must be understood within the context of the increasing political stakes of the mixed union. Exposition of the abortion poem follows a brief account of the legal conditions concerning intermarriage and fertility in Israel.

The Legal Terrain versus the Political Imaginary

Arab-Jewish and interreligious marriage is prohibited in Israel by both legal and cultural codes. Since July 2004, the Knesset bars West Bank and Gaza Strip Palestinians married to Palestinians who live in Israel from obtaining residency or citizenship in Israel, a provision that does not extend to any other national or religious subject (Dadoo). As of May 2012, the Israeli Knesset rejected a bill that represented the long-standing efforts to legalize civil marriages in Israel, which would allow marriages otherwise prohibited by Jewish law (DiLeonardo); the bill would have extended only to individuals unregistered with any church, meaning interfaith couples who wished to officially retain their faith community could not marry. Further, Israel does recognize civil marriages performed abroad (Dadoo), which, in effect, maintains the state's theocratic purity by carefully policing the image of marriage formalized within its territories. This antimiscegenation strain in Israeli marriage law, together with Occupation, precludes

racial democratization under the banner of religious and national freedom for Jews. Further, the Israeli administration and international supporters of Israel insist Israel is a democracy rather than a theocracy or military state.

The introduction of miscegenation into the Palestinian and Israeli literary discourse challenges existing marriage laws in Israel. It also challenges long-standing cultural fears in Israel and international Jewish communities concerning demographics. In 1943, the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, residing in the West Bank, advocated pronatalism in order to prevent another Holocaust (Fargues, "Protracted National Conflict and Fertility Change," 455). He urged Jews to "be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth," and dreamed of a world that grew from eleven million to tens of millions of Jews (455). A. H. Fraenkel, a mathematics professor at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, tried to eradicate Israeli abortions, linking the practice to Hitler (455). Abortion is still a thorny issue in Israel. To this day, Ultra-Orthodox Jewish women settlers of the West Bank are giving birth at twice the rate of Israeli and Palestinian women, such that, in eight years, Jews will comprise 40 percent of the West Bank (Wise and Zimmerman). In protesting the ban on civil marriages, miscegenation literature opens up spaces for liberalizing marriage generally and critiques latent racism in Israeli demographic fears.

I have argued that Darwish's miscegenation poetry resists Zionism and Israel's legal tyrannies over bodily relations and tenant rights. Similarly, Freyre rejects Nazism by championing miscegenation (xiv). By encouraging interethnic reproduction, they both use positive biopolitics to combat its opposite: a negative biopolitics, which, in the case of Israel, emerges as a discourse about Palestinian bodies or a community of lives deemed unworthy of sovereignty or intimacy with Jewish bodies. In Darwish's political imaginary, constituencies "don't care if this land is high or low, holy or whore, / or about the artful details of its attributes. / Let the crotch of heaven / be its geography! (trans. Akash 141). Issuing from this "crotch of heaven" would ostensibly be a secular terrain produced by the sexual domain. Positive biopolitics, according to Roberto Esposito, qualifies as political discourse that assigns value to the defense of life and fertility. In moving away from the ideological and legal attempts to negate life (eugenics, ethnic purification programs, etc.) that defined the first half of the century, contemporary political methodologies have evolved "from

the politicization of the biological, which began in late modernity," heralded by Darwinism, which fitted life into categories of strength and weakness, to "a similarly intense biologization of the political that makes the preservation of life through reproduction the only project that enjoys universal legitimacy" (147). Esposito extends the pioneering theories of biopolitics of Michel Foucault, Antonio Negri, Georgio Agamben, and others, but his particular intervention is that a theory of the state's management of death is always underwritten by its interest in managing life and vice versa. While biopolitics has tended to focus radically on either motivation, Esposito notes that "if immunitas [a body's legal immunity] is not even thinkable outside of the common munus [a soldier or the law] that also negates it, perhaps biopolitics, which until now has been folded tightly into it, can also turn its negative sign into a different, positive sense" (12).

With negative biopolitics just on the other side of the positive biopolitical coin, there is certainly something at risk in Darwish's national imaginary. Esposito cautions that pronatalism threatens to delegitimize or negate life. "In the biopolitical regime," he writes, "sovereign law isn't so much the capacity to put to death as it is to nullify life in advance" (145). Lest one forget, he points out, the connection of birth to the nation in principle as well as etymology (145), and that, in addition to lethal programs aimed toward quality control, Nazism used pronatalist campaigns to increase the German population (144). Israel's ongoing settlements and fertility programs sanctioned in Arab lands respond to threats of a shrinking Diaspora, and these programs are meant to combat Palestinian birth rates (Portugese 186), which, too, have risen to effect demographic resistance. Darwish's emphasis on the Arab-Jew romance intervenes rhetorically in this trajectory because it uses biopolitical imagery to think past the importance of ethnic reproduction. If actualized, the interethnic family would problematize the ethnic national agenda in a way that would expose positive biopolitics and its proclivities toward racial hegemony and perhaps render it obsolete.

Darwish's Biopolitics and the Importance of the Jewish Mistress

Darwish responds to Israel's management of reproductive rights using the state's own family-building rhetoric against it. In a compelling example, he uses the Jewish mistress to deracialize

Jewishness. Against the backdrop of the siege of Ramallah in 2002, addressing "another killer," the speaker counts an aborted fetus among the civilian casualties, asserting that—if granted full term—it might have had the power to end the occupation, become erudite, marry an Israeli woman, and produce a matrilineally Jewish child (2–10). The poem refracts the interethnic marriage across several politically symbolic registers. First, it asserts that interethnic procreation has the power to diversify Jewish education. The "killer" who assumedly aborts a Palestinian life 30 days before its birth also aborts a future union between "one of your [Israel's] daughters" and the infant; this union might have fractured the monolithic Jewish mythos structuring Israeli education by placing an unstable racial and religious body in the classroom. This child's presence would create the need for the study of alternative histories. Israel has shown the international community that it has a long-standing problem with narrative/historical censorship in its schools.[6] In March 2000, the *New York Times* reported that Israeli prime minister Ehud Barak said that Israel was not ready for Darwish to be included in the curriculum (Akash 13). The speaker imagines further that the union would produce "a baby girl / . . . Jewish by birth," gesturing toward the Jewish convention of matrilineal succession and Israeli preoccupation with fertility. Darwish pictures Israel violating its own law of positive biopolitics by killing one of its own through terminating the future Arab-Jew romance between a Palestinian man and a Jewish woman. The poem's prophecy undermines Israeli fear that the Arab-Jew romance will lead to the attenuation of the state via Palestinian residency, thus heralding the extermination of the Jews. Darwish offers a positive biopolitical strategy alternative to Israel's by using Judaism's own claim that matrilineal succession determines Jewishness. Darwish seems to be joking: "What are you worried about, as long as the child is Jewish?"

Darwish's poetic engagement with biopolitics confronts the legal restrictions against Arab-Jewish marriages as well as what emerges out of these restrictions, such as interethnic taboos and national preoccupations with the Jewish mistress and her behavior. He also intimates that within the discourse of Israeli nationalism, a woman is always more than a gendered subject—she represents the survival of the Jewish nation, a deep myth system that gets perpetuated in militarized images of the female IDF soldier and the Jewish mother. A deep-seated anxiety about Jewish women dating Arab

men (never the other way around) exists in Israel, to the extent that some Jewish men have formed vigilante groups to try and take back "their women" (Frankel); in Akbara in April 2013, four cars were burned next to a wall spray-painted with the words "Don't touch our girls" (Zeiger). This type of gendered and racial anxiety is, of course, not limited to Israel. Analogous tendencies to scorn mixed marriages between white women and brown men exist in the United States, illustrating not just a fundamental problem with the way Western patriarchy fetishizes the white female body, but a compelling connection between Israel and Western essentialisms. The earlier excerpt from *State of Siege* turns on its head the racist colonial trope of natives stealing white women and exposes the explicitly racial (under the guise of religious) element in marriage restrictions. Though Darwish does reproduce the construction of the Jewish mistress as a national progenitor, he does so with the effect of radically restaging her so as to call attention to her existence as a sign—one that is overdetermined and not self-represented.

Still, the abortion prophecy integral to Darwish's response to the Siege of Ramallah indicates how available women's bodies are for political didactics in the Middle East. As I have argued, eros appears just as palpably in the "political" poems as it does in the sonnets and love poems. In *State of Siege*, Darwish pushes back the chaos of war with the image of the mistress: "The fog here is a thick white darkness / dispelled from time to time by / orange flashes and an / alluring woman" (ll. 5–8, 47). Like Rita's gun on the poem's draft, here the romantic figure amid the gunfire temporarily abates, or cleanses, the haze of the warpath. Darwish's speaker confesses later, "After I wrote twenty lines about love / it seemed to me / the siege had been beaten back / by at least twenty meters" (full poem, 105). He also uses romantic love to challenge the false predicament on which the logic of war depends: "'*It's either him or me!*' / That's the way a war starts. But / it ends with an embarrassing confrontation: / 'I am eternally *her*.' / That's the way love starts. But / it ends with an embarrassing adieu: 'Her *and* me'" (full poem, 117). In other words, war can only operate under the false binary of subject and object, whereas love understands that this binary does not exist. That is, one cannot destroy or consume the other because once the presence of the beloved's identity comes into being, it immediately announces its absence, and vice versa for the lover, thus destabilizing any monolithic notion of a self to

enact consumption. This is a source of embarrassment to the Israeli state because its current track toward militaristic Zionism tries to endow its subjects with monolithic identities. However, if making love to a Jewish woman is what will restructure the oppressive, militaristic trajectory orchestrated by Israeli men, then women are further relegated to the private and corporeal—in the process of celebrating their ability to engender peace.

In some ways, the very idea of a public/private split is a privileged one. To Aida Hurtado, for whom the personal is the political, the public/private split is a white feminist's binaristic construction arising out of her inexperience with governmental intervention:

> The public/private distinction is relevant only for the white middle and upper classes since historically the American state has intervened constantly in the private lives and domestic arrangements of the working class. Women of Color have not had the benefit of the economic conditions that underlie the public/private distinction. Instead the political consciousness of women of Color stems from an awareness that the public is personally political. Welfare programs and policies have discouraged family life, sterilization programs have restricted reproduction rights, government has drafted and armed disproportionate numbers of people of Color to fight its wars overseas, and locally, police forces and the criminal justice system arrest and incarcerate disproportionate numbers of people of Color. There is no such thing as a private sphere for people of Color except that which they manage to create and protect in an otherwise hostile environment. (849)

Though the Jewish woman is excluded in Hurtado's definition of women of color, as she points out in a proviso (note 4, 834), she emphasizes that Jewish women "merit a separate analysis, perhaps within the context of the discussion of the heterogeneity among white feminists" (834). I would argue that, outside of the American context from which Hurtado speaks, the Israeli Jewish woman shares with women of color a similarly burdensome experience of government intervention and surveillance, as Israel's Jew-only, state fertility programs and call centers devoted to saving Jewish women from Arab men have demonstrated. Israeli Jewish women, as well as Arab men[7] who threaten a heterogeneous public sphere in Israel either through a threatened procreative relationship with Jewish women, their friendships and/or intimacies with Jewish men, or their entrance into networks

of private industries in Israel, have been deprived of the luxury of the so-called public/private split. In other words, for Israel's others, the personal is the political. Therefore, within my critique that the dim underbelly of the miscegenation theme is the further relegation of the Jewish mistress to the private sphere, I allow the very existence of such a sphere to be called into question and I would clarify that I refer more to visibility, representation, and the possibility for a larger spectrum of identities for the Jewish woman and Arab peoples in the Israeli public perception than to some mythological protected space.

Despite the problematic reliance on the Jewish female body, Darwish reminds us of certain human rights violations that bear scrutiny: specifically, Zionism, partition, and subsequently Occupation have literally disallowed the presence of the interethnic couple. It is important to note this as a subtext to the interethnic trope in Darwish. While his crude figuring of heaven as a "crotch" in *Siege*, and in it the invocation of The Promised Land, satirizes a biopolitical rendering of geography, Darwish actually concludes his collection with a final utterance that figures a direct equation of peace as romantic love:

> Peace, elegy for a youth hit squarely in the heart
> not by bullets or a bomb, but by a woman's beauty-mark.
> (83)

He moves from the satiric sexual landscape evoked by "crotch of heaven" to the sentimental landscape, wherein hetero bodies collide on the battlefield of pleasure and a wheat leaf promises to propagate the bread of life. In Darwish's biopolitical imaginary, the war will be won not through achieving a hegemonic demographic by way of the fertile conservative family, but through reproducing, quite literally, unstable racial bodies. Darwish upsets the vision of Israel's demographic and settlement war through his own demographic program for peace.

Pop Culture Artifacts and the Jewish Mistress

The biopolitical imaginary at work in Gilberto Freyre's and Darwish's narratives of intimate histories and daily artifacts reilluminates the important role that romance plays in the twenty-first-century warzone. Freyre found, in his readings of daily artifacts

(diaries, foodstuffs, material culture, etc.) private citizens defying the logic of hegemony by desiring mixed families. He discovered, "in the study of their intimate history, all that political and military history has to offer in the way of striking events holds little meaning in comparison with a mode of life that is almost routine; but it is in that routine that the character of a people is most readily to be discerned" (xliii). In "a life beginning," from *A River Dies of Thirst* (the English translation published posthumously in 2009), Darwish, too, attests to the importance of the intimate and mundane:

> I linger over my coffee to preserve an acquired sense of companionship with my surroundings, for a stranger has no alternative but to construct some kind of intimacy with some random place, and I have chosen this corner of the bread shop to form a daily routine, as if I have an appointment with hardworking memories that rely on themselves to grow and evolve. (Trans. Cobham 139)

Without the privilege of political legitimacy in his own space, Darwish works within the confines of private life, finding beauty there. This is not unlike his finding love with a Jewish woman in the privacy of his bedroom and kitchen—both spaces vividly connotative of the private—from the military/political outside.

Freyre and Darwish direct attention to the fragments of life. Partha Chatterjee is helpful in illuminating Freyre's and Darwish's fragmented project as a type of resistance. Chatterjee, in *The Nation and Its Fragments* (1993), responding to Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* (1983)—a discipline-changing work that demystified the nation as an a priori set of sociological conditions to say that the nation had been imagined into existence—asks, "Whose imagined community?" Chatterjee points out that Anderson's argument hinges on the statement that all non-Western nationalisms had to choose which modular form of nation they wanted from a Western set. Intervening into this Anglo-centric deconstruction of the nation, Chatterjee asks, "If nationalisms in the rest of the world have to choose their imagined communities from certain modular forms already made available to them by Europe and America, what do they have left to imagine?" In this project, he sets out to address this problem in an attempt to claim freedom of imagination for the nation—India, specifically.

Chatterjee argues that historical theory is revisionist in that it tries to conceal the colonial violence. Critics such as David Washbrook, for example, trace Indian capitalism alongside Western capitalism in order to justify the latter, but still insist on an essentialized notion of "difference" to make this claim. In reclaiming a more multifarious and agential history of India, Chatterjee explores how nationalism responds to colonial intervention, noting that there are important limitations to the Foucauldian notion of disciplinary power. An example of this is the Black Hole of Calcutta: part of an eighteenth-century heritage of unofficial rule in India by the East India Trading Company, the black hole refers to a makeshift dungeon patrolled by British forces enforcing native trade agreements through the East India Company. In an event of June 1756, an insurgent uprising launched an attack on the English Factory at Fort William, and it marked a brief role reversal of power relations in British financial rule over India (Britain had not yet ratified official territorial rule). Chatterjee provides further evidence of resistance and non-Western models of national imaginaries, tracing the fragmentation of colonial rule through history. He provides a history for the women, outcasts, and peasants of India to show a pattern wherein marginalized groups became part of a spiritual sphere that was roiling into "nation."

Chatterjee argues that these marginalized spheres provide the foundation for Indian nationalism today, a nationalism that is part Western and part resistance, where public nationalism is expressly Western while the private sphere is being defined as different from and in opposition to the West. The conundrum of "rational planning" versus "irrational politics" (or between growth and equity) guides the negotiation of the Indian developmental state. The private sphere is mobilized to resist the public (Western) sphere, but consequently becomes more conservative. The tensions between allegiance to community and allegiance to capitalism are the fragments of nation. There are, Chatterjee writes, creative and powerful results of the nationalist imagination in Asia and Africa that are posited not on identity but on difference with the nationalism posited by the West.

What this shows is that India produced their own domain of sovereignty within colonial society well before beginning their political battle with the imperial power—meaning, in support of Bhabha, nationalism and political nationalism are not the same thing. Narration comes before nation.

By focusing on interethnic intimacies and private networks of resistance, Freyre and Darwish contribute to an alternative vision of the national space that is not necessarily power-driven or organizational in structure, as is the political nation of Israel. Their vision is different in that they, through noninstitutionalized forms of expression, assume the goal of fortifying the group identity against hegemony. Here I take up, in part, their investment in noninstitutionalized forms of expression by turning momentarily to a popular literary example and an Internet forum that represents how the discourse of defiance via intercultural mixing is emerging in Israel-Palestine.

In addition to her importance to one of the Middle East's most canonical poets, the Jewish mistress is increasingly figured in pop culture and personal accounts on the Internet. She provides a literary device for popular women authors as well as men in Israel-Palestine. In the graphic short fiction piece, *Jamilti*, by internationally acclaimed Israeli illustrator and storyteller Rutu Modan, an interethnic kiss between an Israeli woman and a dying suicide bomber yields a powerful social commentary about Israeli bigotry. A young Jewish nurse, Rama, flees to a café after a fight with her loutish fiancé, sparked by her disapproval of some commonplace, racist chit-chat between him and the taxi driver condemning the Palestinians. Coincidentally arriving just moments after a suicide bomb goes off, Rama gives CPR to the yet-unnamed, dying bomber, who, in his last breaths, croons to the heroine, "Jamilti." Confused as to the meaning of such strange last words, Rama asks her fiancé later that evening what it means, careful not to offer the context. Only half sure, her fiancé says that it means "My beautiful one" in Arabic. Modan uses an affective strategy to humanize the suicide bomber—perhaps the most embodied object of Western/Israeli fear and reproof—by depicting him as a lover. This is one example of the growing interest in eros as a strategy for commentary in both pop culture and literature.

This trend is not restricted to sophisticated rhetorical forms. On a blog featuring sexualized images of female Israeli soldiers in femme-fatale military postures, a blogger under the name of "Haiki" contributes to the generally jeering thread, posting, "This is what Arabs call 'love that kills'" ("Beautiful"). I suggest we think through what some might read as a juvenile joke as a redemptive desire for intimacy in the taboo space intersecting enemy camps instead. State ideologies that would bar such a coupling between "Haiki" and the Israeli soldier produce the conditions out of which aggressive blog threads like this one arise. However, the antagonistic relations in part yield

to the sexual sphere—capitulate to imagined contact with the enemy. Laypeople across the divide have put stock in eros to destabilize the ethnic nationalist agenda, reinforced by militarism. Darwish's metaphor of Rita's gun on the poem's draft next to the stockings on the chair is a staging of violence in the erotic arena, which, paradoxically, resists homogenous state constituencies protracting such violence. Its reiteration on the blogosphere translates private desire to public significance. Similarly (and just as literarily), Freyre's treatise on miscegenation between "masters" and "slaves" entertains eros between opposing social groups in order to claim for Brazil a history worthy of celebrating when Brazil was most in need of reform and image control. One then finds in Freyre the same desire to reconstitute the public sphere as in Darwish, Modan, and the blogosphere through the trope of miscegenation.

Paired with an updated understanding of the turn toward positive biopolitics in all its problematic and possibly generative effects, revisionist and anticipatory social representation like that of Freyre and Darwish becomes strikingly relevant to new material approaches to Israel-Palestine concerning intimate relations and demographics. Further, reading Darwish in the reflection of Freyre inspires a return to his first love, Rita, as a creative progenitor. She clarifies the poet's interest in the role of private desire in restructuring demographics and, consequently, the state.

Third Emergences

Darwish and others form a body of emergent art expressing desires for intercultural intimacy. The philosophy of biopolitics—specifically that of contemporary theorist Roberto Esposito as well as intimations of the biopolitical in midcentury Brazilian social theorist Gilberto Freyre's work—is a useful theoretical framework through which to understand Israel's demographic war. The theory's systematic analysis of the state's interest in the orchestration of life provides a language for talking about Israeli discomfort with miscegenation, Jewish settlements in the West Bank, the fertility boom among Orthodox settlers in Occupied Territories, and restrictive tenant laws against Palestinians married to Israeli citizens, among other cultural and legal tyrannies over Palestinian life. Darwish's love poetry engages the biopolitical in that it presents points of departure toward protesting oppressive state sanctions in the Middle East that restrict intercultural marriage and sustains myths of ethnic purity, specifically in their branding the Arab-Jewish relationship as

taboo. I have mobilized Freyre and Esposito to think more radically about the Arab-Jew romance and its increasing appearance in Israeli-Palestinian narrative. I have attempted to shift the critical reception of Darwish's love poetry, which has tended to depoliticize these works by tracing Rita through Darwish's oeuvre and closely reading her relevance to biopolitics. The symbol of the gun on the poem's draft evokes not just the tense dynamic between love and violence, but also stages persistent critical urges to control and compartmentalize Darwish.

Darwish's "Rita" cycle is one of many instances of poetic intercultural couplings in both Palestinian and Israeli stories, most of which end in absence—where the subject somewhat complacently longs for the lover, as in "Rita's Winter"—or calamity—where the subject mourns the lover, as Palestinian heroine Maryam mourns for her imprisoned Jewish husband in Miriam Cooke's novel *Hayati, My Life*. David C. Jacobson compellingly has shown how Israeli women writers such as Savyon Liebrecht, Emuna Elon, and Michal Peleg experiment with plots centered around the Arab-Jewish affair, pointing out that, though these fictional relationships are ultimately unsustainable due to extrinsic and internalized political limitations, the recent trend in romantic content creates spaces of tolerance ("Intimate Relations"). My interpretive work puts pressure on emergent scholarship dealing with Arab-Jewish intimacy not only to address the hopeful nature of imagined intercultural relationships, but also to probe how and why these relationships are fictionally safe yet materially unsustainable, and why they are ultimately rendered unprocreative despite the fact that children are the obvious outcome of most real-life hetero unions in the Middle East. I have shown how imagined love, though generative, should not be celebrated as the point of arrival in Darwish's works, as though merely imagining a sexual democracy signals reform; if critics read love for Rita as such, they privatize strategies of resistance, relieving the state of its responsibility toward democracy. Stories of romance, then, are not political statements in themselves but for what they desire, promise or threaten. They ultimately insinuate the production of the unstable racial body, which presents itself only as a rhetorical challenge so long as antimiscegenation remains institutionalized in Israel.

Even as Freyre and Darwish rely on the female body to encourage democracy, the unstable racial body intimated in their vision, if materialized, has the power to confront the taboo of the mixed union in Israel-Palestine. Read beyond its procreative interpretation,

the hybrid child also signifies the corporeality—with the emphasis on "reality"—of a third, nonreactionary option for statehood that slowly emerges out of the continuing (indeed, timeless?) close-quartered living conditions of two inextricably linked diasporas. Darwish's words in an interview invoke such a possibility of a naturally emergent third space:

> It is impossible to ignore the place of the Israeli in my identity [. . .] Israelis have changed the Palestinians and vice versa. The Israelis are not the same as they were when they came, and the Palestinians are not the same people either. Each dwells inside the other [. . .] The other is a responsibility and a test [. . .] Will a third emerge out of the two? This is the test. (Brenner, "The Search for Identity," 91)

An emergent third entity must coincide with the material and legal dissolution of the taboo surrounding desire for mixing, allowing the Jewish mistress to be relieved of her constrained and exploited place in Israeli-Palestinian rhetoric. Only then will the Israeli news stories of soldiers snatching back "their" women become stories of Israeli home-wrecking rather than rearticulations of Helen of Troy myths.

4

“Intimate Histories”

Internal Miscegenation in A. B. Yehoshua’s *A Late Divorce*

> Such is the definition of freedom: to maintain oneself against the other, despite every relation with the other to ensure the autarchy of an I.
>
> —Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, 46

> The genetics confirms a trend noticed by historians: that there was more contact [in the middle ages] between Ashkenazim and Sephardim than suspected, with Italy as the linchpin of interchange, said Aron Rodrigue, a Stanford University historian.
>
> —Nicholas Wade, “Studies Show Jews Genetic Similarity,” nytimes.com

In Rutu Modan’s graphic short fiction piece *Jamilti*, which I examined in the previous chapter, the figures of the heroine and bomber are drawn with black hair and olive skin while the fiancé’s red-haired, freckled, and bloated visage combine with his insensitive and entitled posture to caricature him as a rich, out-of-touch Ashkenazi. Based on the aesthetic of the other drawings, Rama’s illustration is a much more embodied reminder that Jews and Arabs consider themselves ethnic cousins, and she could even pass as Arab. The frame depicting the CPR-kiss between the aesthetically Mizrahi heroine and the dying Arab man graces the cover of Modan’s short story collection. Modan is upending racial norms in Israel, which traditionally have privileged Ashkenazi over Sephardic, Mizrahi, and African Jews, even though she possibly reifies racial commonplaces in the process of doing so. By valorizing the non-Ashkenazi female and

locating through her coupling with the enemy the erotic—read "peaceful"—possibilities in the contact zones, Modan's text shows how available the Jewish mistress's body has become for imagining political resolution, which, I have argued, simultaneously provokes a necessary conversation about racial and ethnic privilege in Israel and risks further privatizing available spaces for peace in an increasingly unrepresentative public sphere. More importantly for this chapter, Modan shows how significant the mistress's racial makeup is in the process of articulating the political project in Israeli-Palestinian discourse.

Modan's piece contributes to a tradition of racial poetics. Ethnic and racial anxieties among Jews toward other Jews emerge in the literature of the Occupation era. A. B. Yehoshua's 1982 novel *A Late Divorce*, for instance, offers a picture of the ethnic and racial cataloguing within Jewish life that occurs amid the upheaval of 1970s Israel-Palestine. *A Late Divorce* chronicles the struggle of the Israeli Kaminka family over a span of nine days, culminating the day after the seder. The father, an Ashkenazi Jew, has returned to Israel from a low-profile professorship in America in order to divorce his institutionalized wife who is a Sephard; more specifically, she is "half of one . . . on her mother's side" (190). The three Israeli children are all adults, and their old father, Yehuda Kaminka, must urgently divorce their mother, Naomi, and return to America, where his new suburban girlfriend awaits him, heavily pregnant and waiting to marry him. Through the subversive figure of the half-caste madwoman who frustrates Yehuda's divorce, combined with a patterning of dark-skinned imagery that racializes internal tensions, the novel shows how self and other discourse in Israel are much more complicated and dispersed than the commonplace binary privileged by the Occupation. The story responds to the Occupation by shifting the Jewish subject's gaze onto the self, finding an ethnic inconsistency that challenges any stable notion of Jewish national identity from which Zionism makes its claims. Through the character of Naomi, Yehoshua uniquely employs the trope of the half-caste madwoman; this device discloses profound and localized racial and ethnic divisions within Israeli Jewish culture.

Yehoshua's story continues a conversation about demographic privilege within the Jewish community that became relevant in 1947 and has grown in intensity amid subsequent land redistributions. Each chapter is narrated from a different character's

perspective, which heightens the dialogic feel of the novel. The late-1970s story takes place at a time when the Arab "enemies" have been captured and sectioned off,[1] and the increasing Israeli military occupation and a growing Jewish settlement program have effectively reduced Palestinians to a minority; but the Israeli subject, who is voiced through multiple personalities and internal dialogues in what some have called a Faulknerian style[2] (captured skillfully by translator Hillel Halkin), is still haunted by an enemy other within. This other is markedly primitive and oriental and is depicted as a physically and emotionally darker presence than the European Jewish subject. This is in large part chronicled in the maniacal interethnic romantic union and its intended breach between Yehuda and his wife, Naomi, who bears competing Jewish pasts in her ethnic makeup. Though not treated in the novel's critical reception as such, Yehoshua's is a story of internal miscegenation and the destabilization of a Western-oriented Jewish selfhood. By calling attention to Yehoshua's deployment of difference within Jewish Israeli society and the novel's interest in miscegenation vis-à-vis the character of Naomi, as well as Naomi's resonances with a canonical colonial madwoman, Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*, I trace legacies of the British Mandate in the novel's preoccupation with dark skin, and I contextualize Yehoshua's orientalist depictions of Mizrahim and Sephardim within Ashkenazic political and economic dominance in Israel.

Yehoshua demonstrates how available essentialisms become for picturing life in the contact zones. Either fittingly or ironically, Yehoshua's critics reveal their own essentialist desires in the process of interpreting them. His 1977 book *The Lover*, published seven years before *A Late Divorce*, set a precedent in Yehoshua's oeuvre in terms of sexualizing the Occupation through the mixed romance. The love affair between the Palestinian auto body shop boy and the Israeli Jewish daughter of his employer provided plenty of critical fodder for imagining what a Jewish female body can do for complicating the Occupation, some of which was blatantly gendered and racist in its assertions regarding Arab desire. A current work, *The Liberated Bride* (originally in Hebrew as *Kalah Ha-Meshadhreret* in 2001, and translated in English by Hillel Halkin in 2003), continues the experiment in revealing critical bias. By claiming the novel serves as an allegory for ousting the Arab pathology of desiring the law of return and for warning against the "perils" (363) of a one-state solution,

Gilead Morahg, vis-à-vis Yehoshua, seems to want not just to divest Israel of any political agency owed to the Arabs but to divest them of their symbolic claims as well. Insisting that the Arab Israeli character Fuad's departure from Israel and relinquished obsessions with his lost wife purge him from the "delusions" (a term Morahg uses 20 times throughout the essay) of return, Morahg's charge to a Palestinian would register as, "Get out, and give up your poetry on your way out the door." This is evidenced by his claim that a "liberating transformation of the Arab mind" through the "conscious relinquishment of the moral commitment to a delusional desire" fuels the "hope" of Yehoshua's novel (378).

Further, Morahg states that the novel "thematizes the debilitating effects of obsessive striving to restore an unattainable past" (371), without pausing to consider how the same could be said of the Israelis. A relatively anecdotal moment in *The Liberated Bride* that actually provides a salient thematic pivot involves a parable of the hybrid creature, an incarnation of Kafka's crossbreed. A monstrous, sexless character, it signifies to Morahg a consolidation of the "hybridizing right of return" (366); but Morahg ignores its more literal interpretation as the Arab-Jewish child, a fearful, emasculated, conservative continuation of the relatively innocent and youthful Arab-Jewish romance in *The Lover.*

Though I would not advance the celebratory Zionist inflection of Morahg's reading, it strikes me as a legitimate interpretation of Yehoshua's recent politics, which have become increasingly intolerant of the Palestinian and Arab cause. Accommodating Morahg's reading, the novel represents a latter-day conservative Yehoshua whose Zionist entitlements are met with a strain of negative orientalism, an orientalism I would argue was always present but which smacked of love for his subject matter (the Arabs) rather than disdain. The tonality of Yehoshua's darker patriotism mirrors the underbelly of what Said would call academic orientalism, given that the telos of his study of the Arabs is one of denigration and purgation.

My reading in this chapter shows preference for a younger Yehoshua who was more critical of Israeli colonialism, as shown in his comparative poetics linking Naomi to Bertha Mason.

The translated critical history of race in this novel is relegated to a single article surveying Yehoshua's fiction: Gila Ramras-Rauch's "A. B. Yehoshua and the Sephardic Experience," written

in 1991. Ramras-Rauch outlines the biographical conditions that led to Yehoshua's interest in the Sephardic character. She traces how the Ashkenazi were appointed to high-ranking positions during the British Mandate and were the most influential in officiating the new state. She argues that this must have had a profound effect on a young writer's mind. Yehoshua's father encouraged him to respect Ashkenazi rather than Sephardic role models, or "the high-ranking Jewish officials serving in the administration of the British Mandate and the Hebrew University in Jerusalem." His grandfather, however, "with his black robe and Turkish turban," humiliated the otherwise European-gaited Yehoshuas (13). Though Ramras-Rauch provides a helpful author-oriented case for Yehoshua's interest in Sephardim, she does not rigorously critique race as a signifier in *A Late Divorce*, nor does she note the important role of the creolized female protagonist. To understand how race figures in the novel and how its definition is in flux with that of ethnicity, it is important to look at the presence of darkness and dark skin, how these figurings begin to move interchangeably with non-Ashkenazi Jewish ethnicities, and finally how they provide the backdrop to an understanding of the madwoman's ethnic and racial duality.

Darkness and the Abject

In this section, I examine how darkness and native-ness is patterned throughout the novel in order to trace the preconditions of Yehuda Kaminka's notorious transnaturing in the text's final pages. Therein, Yehoshua stages a Barthesian absorption of the other as his protagonist meets his death wearing his ex-wife's (the madwoman's) clothes.[3] The motif of darkness first appears in the novel as embodied in the legal secretary of Yehuda's abrasive son-in-law, Kedmi. Levana, a North African Jew, appears in Kedmi's thoughts as a swarthy, uncivilized native. Ironically, the meaning of her name is "white," or "moon" ("Lebanah"), which satirizes Kedmi's racist sentiments and seems intentional on the part of the notoriously witty Yehoshua. Kedmi, pondering Levana's coldness, thinks to himself, "They can't forgive us for having rescued them from the caves of the Atlas Mountains and introduced them to civilization" (35). Kedmi invokes the large-scale emigration of North African Jews to Israel after Israel's Independence (the Nakba, or "Catastrophe,"

for Palestinians and their international Muslim compatriots) as well as the Zionist settler movement that made living conditions on the margins of Israeli strongholds treacherous for Jews. Kedmi's racism is at once squeamishly laughable in its absurdity and deeply disturbing in its acuteness. It is especially disturbing since he seems aware of his own tactlessness: "Those dark Moroccan eyes regard me does she get it or am I jerking off another joke in vain she's already cried more than once over my jokes in a second she'll cry again I'll have to add the cost of all that Kleenex to the electric bill" (36). Kedmi's racism and noisy humor is symptomatic of a larger fear of abjection,[4] which might be read as the perverse manifestation of one aspect of the Jewish experience.

One interpretation might easily flatten Kedmi's character into a detestable presence adding texture to a cast of characters who are otherwise all well-meaning. His internal dialogue exceeds the bounds of indecency. Add misogyny to the mix when a phone call home prompts him to compare his wife to Levana. He thinks,

> I know she's smiling now into the phone that wise tender smile that I married her for not like Levana's who isn't missing a word her curly African head down grinning to herself for sheer joy . . . They've hassled the hell out of me Ya'el my mother and now this little darkie too. Just imagine if every darkie around here should start opening his mouth and saying dark things. It's not enough that ninety percent of them are in court all the time. They want to give us lessons in etiquette too . . . I'll show that little darkie yet. When the right moment comes I'll turn off that heater and fire her. (41–44)

The novel introduces readers to the worst side of Israeli bigotry through, ironically, the archetype of the harsh, penny-pinching lawyer. The bloated commonplace that is his character allows Yehoshua to distance the Jewish subject from such espoused bigotry.

If not made complex, Kedmi is at least made vulnerable when his ethnic-, racial-, and increasingly apparent class-based resentment is transformed by a forced encounter with the other. Out of desperation, Kedmi goes to Levana's neighborhood to search for her after work, thinking she has stolen a client's check. "What a wasteland," he ponders. "Such quiet passive people how slowly they walk it's only on television that they start to shout they're all carrying packages now matzos for Passover when I grab them to ask the address they look at me calmly what

family is it that you want. Pinto?" He softens at the humility of the people, marveling when "a small gang of boys and one adult have become my escort they must get a kick out of seeing a big paleface like me running frantically around their neighborhood" (57). Levana is washing the dishes when he arrives, and seeing his desperation, she "runs to an inner room full of colorful pictures of her ancestors dressed like sheikhs" (58). Kedmi's material culture depictions collapse categories of Sephard, Mizrahim, and African Jew into a Disney-like Arab tableau.

Kedmi's account reads like a travel narrative, recording an array of Arabic signifiers through the gaze of economic and racial superiority: "half a dozen swarthy gangsters invite me to sit down but I still can't get a word out I raise one hand in a crazy salute and whisper thank you" (58). As Kedmi mistakenly walks into the bathroom on his way out, his encounter might have shifted to a note of empathy were it not for the entrenched objectification in the way he sees brown people and women:

> I'm in a tiny bathroom facing an old witch sitting naked in yellow water lit by the lurid glare of a heater Lord have mercy she whispers in terror already gentle hands are pulling me out she takes my arm lightly and steers me to the exit leading me down the stairs she's worked a year for me now and I never knew she had such straight lithe legs they make me feel for her how was I to know when she's always bundled up behind the desk we're standing in the dark street now. (58)

However, in the street he tells Levana she could have written a note to alert him to the check's safety, and his empathy dissolves with the narrative: "IQ. That's what it all boils down to. Their IQ evaporated in the Islamic sun" (58).

One of the Kaminka sons is married to a conservative Jewish woman named Dina, who shares Kedmi's outsider's perspective of the dark other. When an Arab boy carries her groceries, she narrates, "I walk in front of the wagon rumbling after me Arab boys come back the other way with empty wagons they call out to my boy and clap him on the back. He smiles uncomfortably he steals a look at me is my beauty clear to them too?" (94). Despite her desire to be a burgeoning writer, she lacks self-awareness. Telling her literary agent that the Kaminka father teaches at "some half-Jewish college" in America (75), she reveals her purist ideology. Ironically, in a moment of literary inspiration, later in her chapter she writes, "*Our banalities*

are the most incriminating things about us" (103; Yehoshua's emphases). Here, her chapter's epigram—a Yona Vallach quote, "And so I think of wherewith to protect/ Myself against the self's own self-reversal" (64), develops significance. Dina abides by a projection of her self—literary, writerly, enlightened—that is subverted by the self's own private sentiments, revealing themselves to be naïve, purist, and out of touch. Dina's incessant, yet misguided self-reflection signifies beyond her character flaw. The fact that she misreads the self as mono-self gestures to circumstantial tensions of the novel: Zionism as an ideology is perverted by its agents' preoccupation with difference. This alone is not an original or even radical claim of Yehoshua's fiction, but it can engender a radical continuation of its logic. Zionists oppress the very hybrid constituency they claim homogeneously to represent. Moreover, the Occupation turns the gaze back onto the very self that projects that gaze outward to the segregated other.

The novel allows readers to question whether the Israeli psyche can make room for Jewishness that does not identify with Zionism. Anti-Zionist or post-Zionist identities generally have been associated with the Sephardic or Arab subject whose ties to the Holocaust are less emphasized and embodied in commonplace survivor imagery, despite the egregious conditions many North African Jews suffered under Nazi occupation of the area. In fact, it is ineffective to directly correlate the level of contact one had with the Holocaust to his/her stance on Zionism, as a burgeoning movement organized by anti-Occupation Jews emerges across ethnic and racial divides. These identities have been eclipsed in favor of a European Jewish nation-state.

Some respond to the subjugation of Sephardim by memorializing their history, rewriting Jewish national mythology to valorize the Sephardic function within it. For instance, Tsvi Kaminka's lover, Calderon, a proud Sephardic Jew, racializes his workplace at the bank, elevating Sephardic and Mizrahi employees over Ashkenazim. He refers to a colleague as "one crazy German Jew, always looking for the biggest opening to put his money in…if he didn't have us three Sephardim, Atias, me and Ronen (whose name used to be Mizrachi, by the way), to keep an eye on him, he'd land us all in big trouble…Yes. Mizrachi. Did you really think he was born Ronen?—A pure Iraqi. I'm surprised you didn't sense it" (175). Additionally, Calderon restratifies ethnic classes within his aforementioned collapse of Sephardim and Mizrahim:

> We true, old-time Sephardim aren't your troublemakers from North Africa. They really have a wild streak in them . . . and sometimes we're confused with them on TV . . . but we're actually a well-established middle class. You'll find us mainly in the banks, the courts and the police—not at the very top, but in responsible positions. Wherever there's still a semblance of law and order. It goes back to British and even Turkish times, when we were sought out for administrative posts. For desk jobs. That's where we feel best. I once said to Tsvi, this business of a Jewish state, all of Zionism in fact, is really a little too much for us. It's all too fast, too high-powered. We were used to the Turkish pace, to the British sense of decorum. (193)

Strangely, he then adds a racial hierarchy to his taxation, extolling his daughters' Aryan qualities: "They're twins. Beautiful, fair-skinned girls, you'd never know that they came from a Middle Eastern family. Almost blond" (191). When Yehuda comments on his mixed diction, he means to praise him, but Calderon's response resounds as an apology: "Everything today is all mixed up. We live in a mixed-up age" (191). Calderon's tendency to racialize and collapse his own identity combined with his preference for an Aryan aesthetic in his daughters demonstrates a latent awe for current racial hierarchies in the West, which subsequently might be read as a subconscious self-loathing.

There are several levels of transference of Western taste at play: he displays the effects of long-standing habitation under colonial rule in the Arab states, having internalized a Western aesthetic such that praise of Sephardim is situated in European (British) values; doing so, he restages the British Mandate despite the fact that most Sephardim and Mizrahim emigrated to Israel after its dissolution; finally, he reifies the very aesthetic categories used against Jews in Europe while now using them to abide Ashkenazi elitism at the very moment he criticizes it. Using ethnicity or race as a measurement proves to be an essentialist trap into which Calderon carelessly walks.

Calderon embodies the reverse colonization phenomenon that Ngũgĩ Wa Thiong'o identifies in African Diasporic literature and which Salmon Rushdie has referred to as the empire striking back, whereby the formerly colonized emigrate to the "Mother Country," taking with them deeply entrenched psychological handcuffs to the colonizer (12). Calderon represents this process in a more intricate way. His family would have been living in a former colonial stronghold that became independent

but in which his family went from being outsiders to outsiders again, only to immigrate to a country poised to be their authentic motherland but, as it turned out, was still structured according to the earlier colonial hierarchies. The colonial management of Israel is thus available for critique through the character of Calderon. His rehearsal of an old, oppressive order is alienating, although Yehoshua does not pander to the reader with an alternative political solution.

Though the novel experiments with an imperialist gaze by turning on its own racial and ethnic signifiers, it is at once critical of Calderon. Normative scripts of race, country, sexuality, and money all mutually cause Calderon's undoing. After having been seduced and introduced to his heretofore repressed sexual orientation by Tsvi, he distances himself from his own family, becomes possessive of Tsvi, and begins obsessing over the Kaminkas, fixating on their mother's Sephardic heritage as a talking point. Skeptical of whether Tsvi will repay a loan he gives him, he attempts to explain his concern in terms of their greater emotional implications: "I'm just asking you to be careful with me, I've fallen into such a bottomless pit . . . and I don't know if it isn't too much for me. This whole country is too much for me. Just don't destroy me . . . No . . . don't make me want you too much . . . it's too dangerous" (183). His relationship with Tsvi becomes codependent because it represents his embrace of the abject as a new form of stability rather than unstable in its own right. This relationship is destabilizing on multiple registers—it queers the traditional Jewish patriarchal family structure and, because of the mixed racial coupling at play (Tsvi is mostly Ashkenazi), it complicates the racial power dynamics at work between Jews. Calderon's need to elide Tsvi's Ashkenazi ethnic constitution is further evidence that Jews work to deny the abject even when the abject is sleeping in their beds.

Colonial Legacies in Israel

Yehoshua deploys what Spivak calls the "worlding" of the native space, and this worlding is explicitly racial. "Worlding," for Spivak, is the process of coding the native subject in such a way as to mythologize the native *for* the native, *for* the empire. This process is underwritten by a culturally inherited belief in the right to ownership and mastery over touched domains. "Worlding" helps describe, for instance, how canonical Western

authors have attempted to organize and account for that which they could not otherwise contain, where the object of study granted the opportunity to represent itself. The "worlding" of the native space is effected through the geometry it implies: as the process by which colonial destinations become mythologized as extraneous sectors, codified as outside the center, scattered, irrational, romantic, bizarre, and carnal. Tara Ghoshal Wallace calls this "European mythmaking on [foreign] soil."[5]

The highly theorized *noble savage/royal slave* trope, commonly featured in eighteenth-century abolition and travel literature, illustrates Spivak's argument. This archetype, figured in characters like Behn's Oroonoko, Defoe's Friday, and Equiano's autobiographical protagonist, further naturalizes slavery even as it attempts to negotiate the personhood of the native subject. It helps to contain any disordering cases of native agency, which would otherwise be an epistemological threat to English hierarchical and financial systems. Anna Bernard argues that the noble savage trope is actively pursued in Hannah Gonen's repressed desire for the "Arab Twins" Aziz and Khalil Shahada in Amos Oz's *My Michael* and Geula's fearsome desire for the Heathcliff-like Bedouin in "Nomad and Viper." Bernard argues that Oz mocks the usual "gendering of encounters between settler and native, and the equation of the figure of the native with danger and excitement," and that he makes,

> knowing and explicit use of the racist clichés of colonial literature, drawing on such stock representations as the overly sexualized Arab, the itinerant Arab [. . .] But on the other hand, by amplifying these very resonances, Oz's novels seek to diminish their power, once again concerting the political urgency of "the situation" into a sign of private trauma. (106)

The degree to which the private seems to seriously burden the public in Oz and Yehoshua's domestic tableaus may have to do with the metacognitive commitments of the authors.

I would add, moreover, that the timbre of these texts changes in an increasingly racialized Israeli climate, one in which the Ashkenazi body has achieved mainstream representation as the figurehead. It suddenly seems less facetious and more telling that Oz puts adjacent to Geula's pimply whiteness—"her face was pale and thin" and "the spots on her face were glowing" (374)—the Arab's darkness—"his skin was very dark; it was alive and warm (372). Despite his insistence on deconflating Israel and South

Africa, Oz is apparently still very interested in racial difference as an engine of both colonial violence and imperial commonplaces. Jewish writers have long been interested in the Jewish subject's relationship to the racial politics of other colonial spaces. Observe Nadine Gordimer's esteemed position in the Jewish canon as a critical race writer. Dan Jacobson's short story "The Zulu and the Zeide" narrates the growing intimacy between an old, senile Lithuanian Jew and his Zulu aide in Apartheid South Africa. In this story, segregation is complicated by the Jewish presence, because the Jewish subject's experience of being almost-white under Dutch dominance enables him to pass between mainstream and black African society, although it be to the dismay of his bigoted son. The son represents the Jewish immigrant who desires assimilation to aristocratic colonial society. The Zulu and the Zeide's partner narrative, infantilized and feminized in Jacobson's diction, provides a sentimental abolitionist take on the Jewish subject's special role in eliminating prejudice. Similarly, in Oz's works, the changed power and proximity of Ashkenazi Jews in Israel renders them suddenly not as Europe's others, but as those who do the othering. Oz's sexually tortured Ashkenazi ingénue narratives—tormented by their desire for, yet fear of, the dark Arab—carry with them not only the national allegoric character of the colonial narrative, where land is conflated with the Jewish woman, but the racialist element as well. While Bernard argues Oz's tone buries these problems into the private sphere of his characters, I would argue that the current racial tension in Israel—particularly over miscegenation—carries them back into the public. Similarly, Yehoshua's staging of tensions over mixing within the Diaspora (not illegal, though culturally vexed) acts as a microcosm of legal questions happening between the Diaspora and its outside, where mixing is both culturally worrisome and legally compromising.

In its movement to distill the Jewish character of Israel, the Occupation and the shrinking land distributions for Palestinians inadvertently disclose latent ethnic and racial divisions within Israeli Jewish communities. Since both segregationist programs—like the Occupation and partition solutions—invoke questions about national belonging for Israeli non-Jews and Israeli Arabs, consequently they foreground questions of ethnic entitlement within the Jewish Diaspora. That is, Jews have not yet worked out whether those with Sephardic, Mizrahi, or Ashkenazi ancestry have a greater claim to the homeland. This

is a tension that is exacerbated by Zionism because its agents have historically identified with the more privileged Ashkenazi class. The surfacing of such ethnic prejudice within Israel is alarming and terribly ironic, considering European Jews historically have battled assignations of racial inferiority and have previously been ousted from white European society (and continue to be in some anti-Semitic circles). Now, though, as Joseph Massad points out in "Palestinians and the Limits of Racialized Discourse":

> When we consider the status of European Jews as a pretextual axiom governing discourse on the Palestine/Israel question, it is important to note that both Jews and Palestinians are viewed as objects in relation to "white" gentile European subjects. To white Europeans, European Jews (as Edward Said has shown) represented the Orient inside Europe, with the Arab later becoming their "fearsome shadow." Despite the fact that European Jews are seen as holocaust survivors and as helpless refugees (objects of white sympathy and support), this racialized discourse bestows on them an honorary white status vis-a-vis the (until now) nonwhite Palestinians. It is this status as honorary whites which privileges European Jews over the Palestinian Arabs. (101)

If Arabs represent the "fearsome shadow" of Jewry, then certainly Said's psychoanalytic construction can be extended to say that "brown" Jews threaten to interrupt the field of "white" signification, for their racial and cultural proximity to Arabs. With the exception of the pioneering work by Ella Shohat,[6] this experience of internal racism is largely overlooked in the critical discourse on Israel-Palestine, which is focused on Arab-Jewish relations as the key casualty in the ongoing Middle East conflict. A phenomenon that remains to be considered is how the enduring project of the ethnic nation-state oppresses Jews on behalf of other Jews.

As numerous human rights groups have pointed out, Israel subjugates where it attempts to protect, committing human rights violations in the name of a majority who are only partially represented, directly violating the tenets of democracy through its advanced policies of exclusion. Though initially well-meaning in its attempt to construct a sanctuary for the exiled and persecuted Diaspora Jew, what exactly constitutes a proper citizen of the Diaspora has exceeded its own meaning in 1947 and is increasingly vexed by intermarriage and immigration. The state has not caught up with

the changing Diaspora, reflected in its breach of representative governance and further exacerbated by an unending Occupation of Palestinian Arab lands that has served to formulate protection and welfare on the backs of another ethnic group.

Although Israel prides itself on being a beacon of democratic values in the Middle East, the Ashkenazi nation-state resembles what Gilberto Freyre positioned as the antithesis to democracy. Freyre conceived of two trajectories of a nation, both inflected by the biopolitical. The first, which moves toward racial and civil democracy via miscegenation (as in his idealized Brazilian case), and the second, the Germanic weltanschauung, where the "national direction" is motivated by "the blood-stream of families . . . of a race . . . as the expression of a biological reality" and/or "by an all-powerful State or Church" (xiv); that is, the latter, in part, builds the nation through antimiscegenation programs and ethnic cleansing. It is an uncomfortable issue, increasingly hinted at by critics and Internet ranters who have found it convenient to link the discursive and militaristic similarities between the Holocaust and Israel's strategies toward the Palestinians,[7] that Israel is trying to achieve weltanschauung. Concomitantly, stringent marriage laws force questions about marriage sanctity between differing Jewish sects and ethnicities in that if one partner has Arab ancestry, his/her Jewish identity is called into question by existing prejudices against Arab and Sephardic Jews within Israeli society.

The Ashkenazi's elite role in the colonial Middle East led to the Sephardi's degraded status in contemporary Israeli life. At the same time, the Ashkenazi's association with poststatehood worked to romanticize the "other Jew" as well as the Arab as prestate natives. Arabs, in turn, were cathected with the mythos of ancient Jews to be "brought back into the fold" (Ramras-Rauch 9). This national logic that would reduce Arabs and Jews to enemy subjects who must put intimacies aside in order for borders to work creates a crisis for ethnic diversity within the Israeli Jewish community.

The way some fiction writers have negotiated this crisis is to try and retrieve an antiquated Israel or Palestine that offers itself up to shared affinities between Arabs and Jews. Yehoshua uses internal miscegenation between Ashkenazi and Oriental Jews—as marked in the creolized lunatic wife who is mysteriously in touch with her Arab past—to imagine a purer and more peaceable ur-Israel. As borders deteriorate in this novel, and as walls are broken down, Zionism is increasingly delegitimated.

However, the process, in turn, legitimates Israel as earning a rightful place in the Middle East.[8] This is dangerous territory for the Zionist who also concerns himself/herself with native retrieval, as the same logic can be applied materially: while segregation and Occupation actually work for the Zionist cause, regranting or mutually owning land and eroding Occupation actually help to retrieve the land's past, and, moreover, they help retrieve an ancient unity between Jews and Arabs. Anthony D. Smith calls this gesture "dual legitimation," explaining that when the authorities of both divine and scientific states try to adapt religion to modern rationalism, the result is an ethnic historicism working to find a pure, uncorrupted religion/community (119). Yehoshua's Sephardic character Calderon corroborates this exoticization of the oriental Jew. Describing the difference between Sephardis and Ashkenazis, Calderon explains that the latter have no material ties to their families, as they mostly died in Europe in the Holocaust. Thus, Ashkenazim feel nostalgic toward their ancestry (dressing up in "caftans and beards on Saturday night"), but they do not find these caftan-clad family members in their "living room" ("the whole ghetto of theirs") as they do in Calderon's family (198). As Calderon illustrates, what can result from native retrieval is a form of racial charting: besides traditional costume, skin color becomes the most obvious marker of distinction between these two groups.

To redirect emphasis to the importance of internal racial tensions in Israeli culture and state-making, I interject a recent argument made by Hannan Hever, in which he explains the failure of democratic Zionism:

> Today, the Israeli state is a nation-state that has abandoned the Zionist claim to democracy and turned into an undemocratic state based on repression, racism, exclusion, and the negation of rights. The original Zionist experiment, with its inherent contradictions, failed to create a democratic state whose system of rights and responsibilities applies to all citizens based on the foundations of Israeli sovereignty with the theology of a Jewish nationality. (631)

According to Hever, Israeli intellectuals such as Anton Shammas imagined Zionism as the first step toward establishing a democratic state, necessary only in streamlining its construction, after which Israel would overcome Zionist democracy's inherent contradictions to move toward a secular nation and sanctuary for Jews and Arabs alike. Hever identifies the 1942 Biltmore Plan as the moment when

Zionism could have taken a more democratic course; instead of choosing a binational solution, the plan encouraged massive Jewish immigration while making no mention of the Palestinians, who at that point comprised two-thirds of the area's population (633). Hever notes that if the Socialist-Zionists had been more influential, the binational model could have gained purchase at a crucial moment in Israeli policy-writing. I argue that the power structures in place during this time were already poised to preclude such an option.

Due to the Ashkenazi and otherwise Western demographic of the officiating parties—the UN and David Ben-Gurion, together with the reactionary model of state-building, which conflated all Jewry with the European Holocaust-survivor—Israeli democracy was, a priori, impossible based on internal racial and cultural divisions within the Jewish Diaspora. Perhaps, for a term, it became convenient to elide these differences to enact national solidarity, but the initial Zionist claim to democracy was already underwritten by an inherent racism against Sephardic and Arab Jews obstructing its ideals. This chapter examines this racial anxiety among Jews through *A Late Divorce* in order to challenge a stable reading of Yehoshua as "an idealist with a fixed idea, the necessity for gathering the spiritual remnants of Jewry, lest Jewry and Israel both perish," as Harold Bloom asserted in his 1984 review of the novel.

Here I also extend and intervene in Anna Bernard's and, by association, Joe Cleary's work on "partition literature." Anna Bernard defines partition literature as "texts that represent either the event of territorial partition or its consequences (10) and contends that certain fictions have "generic affinities" that would be more "convincingly explained as a common form of reference to partition than to the more general and variegated history of imperial rule" (28). "This is a different claim," she says, "from the commonplace assertion that fictional accounts of partition 'interrupt' (Pandey, Routine Violence 15), 'destabilize' (Didur. Unsettling Partition 11–13), or 'expose' (Hasan 39) the new national narratives formed in the aftermath of partition." Bernard argues that partition "literature can do more than counter official narratives," and further, "it is not necessarily or even typically anti-nationalist. Instead, partition fiction has a special capacity to gesture towards and, in some cases, formally construct, visions of collectivity and nationhood based on solidarity, not separation" (12). It would be useful to categorize

A Late Divorce as a partition fiction because the text expresses a desire for an organic Israel and homeland through the motif of the Jewish family and the exiled Jewish patriarch returning home, even though he does so at the vision's own (self-conscious?) demise.

However, I am wary of Bernard's categorization because it universalizes as it seeks to particularize. Importantly, Yehoshua's novel is also an imperial historical fiction because it ascribes to commonplaces of race constructed by imperial ideologies, even though, at the same time, it struggles to make these racial commonplaces relevant. As Yehuda Kaminka tries to appropriate the other into the self—an other that is markedly dark and native—the fact that the self is ultimately unraveled and transnatured by this absorption makes a bleak case for solidarity. For instance, when Yehuda desires to comfort his son's Sephardic male lover, Calderon, in Calderon's grief over coming out to his family, Yehuda wishes "to make room for him in me too" (319). This desire "to make room" in himself for an alternative sexuality and race prefigures his transformation and death in the final chapter when his reception of the half-caste feminine into his constitution of selfhood not only drives him mad, but kills him. In other words, the persistence of difference kills the sameness-seeking self. So while the novel responds to partition by expressing a desire for solidarity, its protagonist devolves into abjection because of his inability to transcend essentialisms of race.

Yehoshua's Bertha Mason

There is scant feminist investigation into the novel that engages its critical race issues as mutually constituting. Esther Fuchs explored the feminist implications of Yehoshua's madwomen ("Casualties"), but to date no scholar has examined those implications in terms of ethnicity or race. Most critics see Naomi, the half-Sephardic institutionalized wife, as a metaphor for the wild, "uncultivated land of Israel to whom the Jewish pioneers (symbolized by Naomi's husband Yehuda) swore allegiance" (Fuchs, *Israeli Mythogynies*, 55). This explanation misconstrues Jewry as a collective identity that can be reduced and mobilized toward a national solidarity project or literary paradigm. In this section, I offer a new approach to this text that examines anxieties of miscegenation and colonial legacies through the novel's Bertha Mason figure, Naomi Kaminka.

The protagonist's racially mixed wife exemplifies how significant the Jewish woman's racial makeup is in the process of articulating the political project in Israeli-Palestinian discourse. She necessitates a reading that considers inextricable the gendered and racial components of both the Zionist and peace projects commented upon in Yehoshua's fiction. As a half-caste madwoman, mother of the Kaminkas, and obstacle to Yehuda's white Americanization, her matrilineal rule is orientalized. Her resonance with the creole madwoman of *Jane Eyre* helps to trace legacies of the British Mandate in the characters' preoccupation with dark skin. Yehoshua converses with a canonical colonial text to comment on the orientalist and gendered depictions of the North African Jew within the larger context of Ashkenazic patriarchal dominance in Israel. The colonial inflection in the subnarrative of Naomi's maniacal interethnic union with Yehuda is rooted in the relationship's deeper purpose, which is to force the imperial gaze back onto the dominant community in a way that they then must overcome. Bronte's Bertha Mason provides this catharsis through her immolation. Yehoshua's Naomi, on the other hand, does not avail the reader of such a tidy restoration of whiteness. Her difference proves to be all-consuming.

Yehuda's institutionalized wife provides the most compelling embodiment of racial tension within Jewish identity as well as the clearest basis for a colonial reading. That is, she has several prominent qualities of the murderous creole wife who remains locked away as an embarrassment to the Rochesters. Like Bertha, she, unprovoked, attempts to murder her husband, and she frustrates her husband's intent to reestablish the ideal domestic life. Also like in *Jane Eyre*, the madwoman's illness is unexplained; the text provides no other source for Naomi's attempted murder of her husband other than that Yehuda Kaminka "disappointed" her. The reader is obliged to study the gaps that Naomi otherwise would have been able to fill had she been given a rational voice. Jean Rhys does this kind of work in *Wide Sargasso Sea* by revising *Jane Eyre* through the perspective of Antoinette (Bertha) Mason. Yehoshua's novel deserves a similar revisiting.

I suggest readers study Naomi's elusive madness by first looking at Yehoshua's employing a familiar misogynist character paired with insistent references to her Sephardic heritage. To this end, I hope to pave the way for critical discourse on this novel and other Israeli fictions to consider seriously the

relationship between Jewish marriage practice and theories of hybridization/creolization. In Naomi's case, her (selective?) incapacity to sign divorce papers impedes her husband's freedom to marry his white American mistress, Connie. Naomi is, like Bertha, not only insane but of mixed racial origin. When Yehuda fantasizes about his escape from Israel once the divorce proceedings are over, his fantasy is marked by a return to whiteness, to Western progress, and procreation safely within these realms. He says to himself, "A few hours from now you will bank steeply over clouds and land in a gray alien dawn straight into a big American kitchen filled with quiet suburban light. Into a cold and peaceful exile. The Return of the Old Israeli laying his now available name beside the swollen white belly" (299). He desires to escape the homeland, which has become unheimlich, to return to an "alien" land that is, paradoxically, more comfortable—"cold," yet "peaceful." He will then be free, both in name and body, to father his white American child in the solace of that "big American kitchen"—a symbol of wealthy, un-claustrophobic domesticity. He desires, in essence, to assimilate totally to a Western ideal.

More than all other terrors, Yehuda wants to run from Naomi. Naomi is distinct from Bertha in that she becomes a catalyst for Yehuda's undoing, rather than a bump along his journey to purity. Yehoshua does not stage the killing of the nondomestic female as women have been killed into writing (Gilbert and Gubar), nor does the reader witness a "self-immolation" of the "good wife" by the native female (Spivak, famously in "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism"), since her incarcerator is the one who dies. However, she is unfit to live among civil Israeli society because her unstable racial constitution represents the possibility for Israeli Jewish abjection as this identity is predicated upon a stable notion of Jewry—European, Holocaust-survivor, Zionist, non-Arab, ur-Christian, and so on—all of which constitute the ideal Western imperial advocate and are easy to partition off from the Palestinian/Arab others.

Naomi's non-Western heritage is an important motif of the novel. Calderon, Sephardic lover to Yehuda's son Tsvi Kaminka, gestures toward Naomi's Sephardic heritage with obsessive interest. When he meets Tsvi's mother for the first time, her bloodline is his first talking point. An excerpt from Naomi's chapter, told through her perspective, reveals how reflecting on this heritage triggers her insanity:

> (Calderon) "Mr. Kaminka told me that on your mother's side . . . that you . . . I mean, that you have a bit of us in you"
>
> (Naomi) "A bit of who?"
>
> (Calderon) "Of Abrabanel." He pronounced the name grandly. "That you're part Abrabanel . . . I mean that you have their blood . . . "
>
> (Naomi, thinking) *When did they meet and what made Yehuda tell him about Grandmother Abrabanel?* (*sic*)
>
> "Does that seem important to you?" I asked softly.
>
> He squirmed redly. "It's another way of looking at yourselves . . . a different bloodline . . . the Abrabanels are of very fine stock. Of course, it's not literally the blood . . . I don't believe in that . . . it's something intangible"
>
> He glanced at Tsvi with such deep love that it appalled me. Tsvi smiled mockingly back. And just then I saw *her* pass quickly by above the treetops. I felt a splitting pain in my head and made a face. (272–273; my emphasis on "her" and my parentheticals)

The double personage to whom "her" refers figures the abject. In this and other instances in which "her" is invoked, Naomi appears to be grappling with a projection of the mother—the Sephardic link.

Figured as virginal, archaic, and also, in her army attire, as a protector of the Diaspora, Naomi's double also recalls the biblical virgin-queen, Esther, who saved the Jews from genocide through her negotiations with her husband, the Persian king, Abasuerus. Theirs was another example of mixed marriage. Prompted by Tsvi's reminder that he accompanied her during her first seder at the mental hospital, Naomi reflects,

> I thought, was I really with him that seder or only with her, so alert and enjoying herself? And I lifted my eyes to the mountains and saw in the soft light of the setting sun a distant dot that made me freeze. It was she, on the trail in an army windbreaker, her hands in her pockets, traveling light. I couldn't tell if she was moving toward me or away. And then suddenly I felt the old throbbing, the urge to have her be part of me again like a heavy backpack, the joy of her wild otherness between knife thrust and light flash. (271)

In her "army windbreaker," Naomi's double alludes to the iconic image of the female IDF soldier. Importantly, too, she is virginal and originary:

> "You see," I began to explain to him, "there's someone else here now. It's hard to draw the line but there's an other in me, perhaps a whole extra person. You have two wives now. But don't be afraid. You can cope with her. Just go along with her, don't panic and try to fight her. She may even be the original me. Perhaps she's a virgin. I'm only first getting to know her. She's still quite primitive." (290)

With Yehoshua's emphasis on contemporary and biblical images of the female soldier, Naomi bears a genealogy of guardian Jewesses.

The militarization of the Jewish woman is an important point of my larger critique, which is that women in both the liberal poetic/fictional imagination and Israeli biopolitics risk further privatization by men's investment in their bodies toward a national telos. So far, in Darwish, Freyre, and Yehoshua, her racial constitution and her availment to intimacy constitute her power to determine either a hybrid or Zionist future for Israel. The militarization of her is a corollary expression of this worth. About the process of gendering the national activist, Robin Goodman writes:

> the various situations that women engage with military service—as mothers, wives, prostitutes, rape victims, service providers, nurses, as well as noncombat soldiers—[is] caught between maneuvering, where gender is controlled for strategic ends on the part of power, and empowerment, where the military accepts once-excluded minorities and is democratized by the acceptance. What remains out of the scope of either of these options is to question the inevitable status of the military—an institution whose role in invasion, combat, and occupation is to de-democratize the public—as the only viable participatory public sphere. (45)

What Goodman gets at for my purposes is an elucidation of the increasingly shrinking public sphere that points resistance in the direction of the private, forcing writers to have to imagine ways of transforming the public from within the confines of the private. Though the intent is to ultimately transform the public procedural response to unstable identities, the woman (especially the Jewish woman) gets further relegated to not just her reproductive role, but her instrumentality in an outside political schema.

Comparing Naomi to Esther unlocks questions concerning race and marriage that prefigure the Israeli state. Both Esther's

and Naomi's marriages are politically significant in that they both involve matches that at one point or another threaten the maintenance of a strong Jewish identity. Esther is able to use her marriage to the Persian king to the Jews' advantage, albeit with the threat of genocide hanging in the balance. As a result of Esther's double-dealing, the Jews are saved and become even stronger, with Mordecai appointed to a high rank in the Persian court. Still poignant in contemporary Jewish mythos is the notion that Esther's politically advantageous strategy in her intermarriage not only saved the Jews but led to the designation of Persian or Iranian Jews as "Esther's Children" (Sarshar). For Naomi, however, her biethnic heritage renders her insane and dissolves her marriage; the novel shows how dark skin is either maligned or terribly exoticized in Yehoshua's Israel, such that the Anglo-centric conditions of contemporary Israel necessitate Naomi's repression, and thus, institutionalization. This causes one to question what kind of Jewish identity is possible in the new Jewish state. If one must look to ancient Persia as a model for diversity and democracy, then Jewish marriage in this novel would appear to enact contrived racial and religious homogeneity in the midst of ethnically hybrid material conditions. As the conservative Russian Rabbi who stalls the divorce laments, in broken English: "everywhere is same big mess . . . but marriage is holy" (279).

The famously dual-natured Queen Esther is only one forbearer of Yehoshua's archetypical madwoman. Nehama Aschkenasi confirms that the dual-natured female—whose origins are as old as men have been writing—is a popular trope in Modern Hebrew literature. About Yehoshua's schizophrenic female characters, Aschkenasi writes, "the mad double is often a creation of a woman more lucid than her sane contemporaries," estranging and "a truthful mirror of our existential fears and social maladies" (*Women and the Double in Modern Hebrew Literature* 127). She notes that for Naomi, it was "Yehuda's calm, self-assured manner and his refusal to acknowledge the primitive, non-intellectual side of life, and the inherent duality of Israeli life in particular that estranged Naomi from him" (127). Despite pinpointing Naomi's savagery as the source of her estrangement, Aschkenasi says only in passing that Naomi is Sephardic and Ashkenazi. This important ethnic mix is the unacknowledged impetus of her fractured psychology.

> The "wild" other inside of Naomi seems to, among other instances, appear when Naomi has committed a crime. Her presence is called forth during the breach of the social contract, signifying further Naomi's savage alterity. Naomi relays how she tried to explain her shoplifting incident to Yehuda:
>
> > She isn't used to stores, she can't even tell the difference yet between what's hers and what isn't. She comes from the desert." And she really did begin to, quickly and in my mother's voice, saying the most complicated, confusing things. He slammed the door and fled, and as soon as she stopped I fell asleep. (290)

Yehoshua's narration of this figure depicts the Sephardic mother as the return of the repressed.

Naomi's double brings with her a convoy of non-Western identity narratives—she gestures simultaneously to ancient Sephardic Jewry, Persia, and occasionally she is spirited by the presence of Arabs. At her hospital's seder after the divorce, Naomi realizes the rabbi who interjected on her behalf during the divorce proceedings, nearly compromising its fruition, is not only a woman dressed as a man, but that it is "her," the other (294). In her madness, she escapes the seder, running out to the guard house, where she hears Arabic music playing inside (294). She then has an epiphany that the other is a deity called "She," "Godina," "Queen of the Universe" (296). She resists this unfamiliar feminine god, yelling, "That's enough, I'm not listening. I'm through with you. Go back to the desert. Die!" (297). Her Sephardic heritage renders her intimate with the meeting ground of ancient Israel in a convoluted amalgam of mysticism and madness. The universalizing figure of Godina threatens to consume both Naomi and her original, much more deferential, other. This other's savagery invokes the commonplace, noted earlier, that Arabs and Sephardim are primitive, ancient Jews to be gathered into the new order. However, Naomi also emphasizes the fearful relationship between internal (within Jewish culture) miscegenation and madness. I would not argue that Yehoshua's experimenting with these commonplaces makes him a colonialist writer; rather, he seems keenly aware that a nineteenth-century British colonialism has not already been read in twenty-first-century Israel.

Yehoshua's madwoman illustrates how facing one's constituted otherness meets with an unheimlich terror. This

is further underscored by the fact that the Arab presence in the novel stands as an organic reminder of Israel's unsteady presence. In fact, the Jewish main characters in the novel are materially vague compared to the worker Arabs. Yehoshua constructs them through the mad chatter of their often incoherent thoughts, wherein there is quantitatively more observation of the dark other than there is self-reflection. The characters are built through their mental projections wherein the reader only gradually locates patterns, making difficult the sifting of reliable details from unreliable details about their identities. The hospital in Acre begins to seem like a suitable residence for all of them.

Haifa Bay, where the real-life Acre mental hospital resides, is an important site of interracial and interreligious mingling. The spatial dimension of this setting deserves consideration. The real-life Acre has witnessed considerable racial strife and Arab/Jew dislocation over the years, but largely has remained diverse. The famous hospital is a prominent reference in other Israeli-Palestinian fictions, especially as a place of incarceration for characters that have gone mad from exile or poverty (Amit-Kochavi 149). Further, Mt. Carmel, the view of which Yehuda and Naomi persistently meditate on from the Acre hospital, literalizes racial and economic stratifications in Israel, as the social stratums of settlers decreases the further down the mountain one goes (143). This fact has been explored in other local literatures. The protagonist of Yehudit Haendel's *Rehov ha-madregot* returns from military service "to his poor home on . . . 'Rehov ha-madregot' [Stairway Street] and is unable to find a socioeconomic foothold in post-war Israel due to his low personal status as a poor uneducated Oriental Jew. He falls in love with Erela, an Ashkenazi rich man's daughter who lives up the mountain in a beautiful and rich neighborhood, but love cannot surmount the socioeconomic difference between them" (151). Though Yehoshua does not set Yehuda's and Naomi's domestic years within Mt. Carmel, the class differences between them might account for their preoccupation with its view at the end of their marriage. Their constant glances at Mt. Carmel are gestures toward the spatial dynamics of racial and economic inequality among Jews. Yehuda's brief performance of transference into his wife at the end of the novel is thus more than a gendered and ethnic conversion, but a socioeconomic one at that.

The Transnaturing Power of the Abject

Using Kristeva's theory of the abject together with Barthes's notion that the abject is ultimately negotiated through subject-object absorption, this section discusses the final scene of the novel when Yehuda returns to Acre after the divorce to retract the property deed he surrendered, only to wind up wearing Naomi's clothes in an attempt to escape the asylum unseen. I have argued that Sephardic heritage, marked as darkness in this novel, complicates the Zionist project because it calls attention to racial and cultural heterogeneity within Jewish life, serving as a reminder that majority constituencies within Israel and the Occupied Territories are not so far removed from Arab civilization. I have also argued that the creolized madwoman signifies the unstable racial body that is both a result of miscegenation and a marginalized figure of partition. Yehuda's compulsion, then, to cross-dress in the hybrid lunatic's clothes can be seen as a Barthesian staging of the appropriation of the object that threatens the subject's constitution. Yehuda's death, which seems to come as a direct result of this appropriation, warns against identity erasure. Zionist readers might consider the very prospect of a hybrid state symbolized by the cross-dressing to preclude identity. Advocates of partition might see the cross-dressing moment as a dramatization of persistent Israeli attempts to deny the existence of Arabs in the land through rhetoric of erasure and illegal settlement programs, providing further evidence that the two groups cannot coexist together. Yehoshua scholars might read the cross-dressing scene as another instance of his famously self-destroying protagonists. However, a critical outline of how race functions in the novel indicates an additional interpretive layer that reveals miscegenation as a source of unease. In any case, Yehuda's destruction should signal the death of an old state program based on a European, Ashkenazi model of Jewish law that seeks hegemony over diversity and oppresses Jews who threaten to interrupt a Western vision for Israel.

Yehuda's chapter, the last one of the novel, opens with an epigram by Eugenio Montale Xenia: "I still am haunted by the knowledge that, whether separate or apart, we are one thing" (298). The word "haunted" invokes a psychoanalytic understanding of the subject/object divide such that its degeneration provokes fear. The novel operates centrally on the threat of binary degeneration—the abject. Crudely stated, the novel narrativizes the racist ideology that miscegenation breeds crazy people and murderers. In Yehuda's

chapter, Yehoshua describes the parents of Kedmi's legal client (to whom the characters affectionately refer as "Kedmi's murderer"); of the "Millers," one is German and one is possibly Sephardic, and in describing their entrance, Yehoshua writes, "two more figures emerged, one of a short, sturdy old workingman wearing a threadbare suit and gray cap and clutching a plastic bag, and the other of a swarthy, unkempt, gypsyish-looking woman of undefinable origin" (301). One might overlook the importance of this description of the murderer's parents if the interracial union were not clearly implicated elsewhere in the novel. Notably, the oafish lunatic Acre inmate, Musa, is ambiguously Arab/Jew. Just before he meets his death by Musa's pitchfork, Yehuda thinks, "The main thing's not to panic not to touch them they're like dogs fear only makes it worse" (354). It is not clear whether the "them" to which he refers implies Musa's race or his mental class, or both. As Yehuda is wearing Naomi's dress, Musa actually mistakes him for Naomi, but when Musa comes to realize the ambiguity of her person, he lashes out. Here, the confusion that ensues due to Naomi's consumed identity erupts in violence.

It is important to note that Yehuda's transnaturing is originally driven by desire, though it is of a destructive type. As Diana Festa-McCormick proposes, clothes "act as the revealing factor for often unavowed psychological responses on the part of the narrator and as indications of the wearer's social roles" (31). Narratologically, Yehoshua follows a familiar and antique structure of intention in narrative, marked by Peter Brooks as the Freudian death instinct rendered in literature. Brooks is referring to the necessary destruction of the self on the path toward the fulfillment of desire, desire being the desire for knowledge, and the process of desire emulating the plot of the sexual act—arousal, climax, and the end of pleasure (death). As Brooks puts it, "With the possibility of the total realization of desire, the self encounters the impossibility of desiring, because to desire becomes, and can only be, the choice of death of that same self" (51). In terms of race and ethnicity, the depth of this relatively simple plot impetus can be opened up using the terms of Louis Althusser's theorization of power in "The Reproduction of the Conditions of Production." Althusser uses Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to explain how coded within dominant systems are their own means to regenerate.[9] Since hegemony—white hegemony in this case—must reproduce itself in order to survive, desire is created out of it; although it is not a Marcusean desire (productive) but, rather, a consuming, identity-erasing desire.

Therefore, a desire to be with the other is unsettled by the risk that being with the other signals the consumption of both selves. Given the novel's illumination via psychoanalysis, Marcuse and hegemony theory, it suffices to say that by restricting certain types of desire, the state has not only created its own transgressors but has secured its reproductive capacity for sameness. Freyre's model would suggest that this process in Brazil was avoided by the precondition of heterogeneity. A retrospectively applied fantasy of origins or not, this narrative now functions as already read for Brazilians. Therein I would ascribe an unbounded power toward affective revisions of a national trajectory. I read the tragedy resulting from Yehuda's persistence toward sameness as a pre-conservative Yehoshua working through the possibilities of a heterogeneous public sphere.

The destruction of the protagonist's momentarily felicitous experience of ambiguity—dressed and embodied as man, woman, "other" woman, Sephard (native), and Ashkenazi (colonizer)—fractures the optimism of hybridization and creolization. The novel is set within a society that seeks legitimacy through plurality despite the material reality being creole. I use Kamau Brathwaite's definition of plurality versus creolization: the former, a "historical dichotomy becoming the norm," versus the latter, the process by which native/slave traditions gain "articulation, centrality, prestige" (311). The tension between ideological democracy and the material conditions of racial and ethnic oppression is compounded by the state's insistence upon one hegemonic narrative of claim. Of course violence is the only conceivable end for such impossible terms and modes of denial. Thus, I share Shalini Puri's caution regarding the limits of readings of hybridity and creolization. "The rhetoric of hybridity," Puri asserts, "can be both a defense against racism and a weapon in its advancement" (19).

The narrative follows an arc leading to Yehuda's attempted appropriation of Naomi that mimics the abject steadily driving the subject mad. It takes root when Naomi begins to speak through him, her voice merging with his own internal dialogue (315). In his daughter Ya'el's house, packing for his trip back home, he looks at the document assigning his son Asa the power of attorney when "a shadow flashed across the ceiling." "Mine or some object's in the room?" he wonders (316). His distress over the prospect of his property ending up in Tsvi's unreliable hands triggers delusions. It happens again while meditating on his family: "The line that runs between them all at once there are tears in my eyes my shadow leaps out from under the bed I shove the valise back beneath it

making some order around me" (325). The satisfaction of unity is interrupted by some shadowy other.

Kedmi's racist comment to their Arab waiter triggers another fearful response. Embarrassed by Kedmi, he slips into a daydream, thinking, "I always feared her even those first years when we made love. And suddenly two of her" (335–336). This escalates into a mad dash for the asylum to retract the property deed from Naomi's drawers. Upon dressing in Naomi's clothes to escape the asylum unnoticed, he stops to think: "And supposing that the pleasure that it [the cross-dressing] gives me does destroy my very self?" (354). For a moment, Yehuda allows for the possibility that dissolving the foundation of his social constitution could be pleasurable. However, Yehuda allows racial fear to compromise such a solution: "All at once I see him before me the giant mute colossus of a man just standing there moving in slow motion as though remote-controlled he faces me in the little path blocking my way staring at me hard. They call him by some Arab name Musa I think that must be it but I'm sure that he's a Jew. Well what's on your mind? Have I disappointed you too? 'Naomi…' he mutters. 'Naomi'" (354). His fear serves to exacerbate the impending violence and he meets an ambiguous end, only hinted at by his American mistress's visit a year later when she comes to Israel to investigate his death.

Yehuda, who loves Connie for "such American goodness such bold givingness" (307), seems more in love with the simplicity and singularity of her nature than anything else. In contrast, recalling his divorce with Naomi, he thinks, "No more of her and her other. No more lunacy" (309). Later, he meditates on Israel, just before the episode at the hospital, and his fears for Israel mirror his fears in his marriage:

> We who saw this country being born thought we could always bend it to our will always correct it if it went off course yet here it was out of control full of strange mutations different people odd permutations new sources of unexpected energy. The clear lines have been hopelessly smudged. If only it could at least be a homeland when will it settle down to be one. (313)

Yehuda's question should not be dismissed as a hypothetical. This is not a divine question but one of human choice—Israel: chaos or hybrid? Racism or tolerance? His death should not be read as an acceptance of the other but rather a consumption of it at the behest of fear. Yehuda's mistake is in his absorption of the other rather

than his tolerance of her own disparate dignity. Notwithstanding author intent, Yehoshua's story teaches that democracy happens through the personal and willful subversion of state ideology, a distinctly affective transformation. Recall Godina's murmurings to her ego, Naomi: "Nowhere else. Deep down. That's where the war will be. Deep down" (296).

5

"Mixed Syndicate"

Poetics of Fabric under Occupation

> A moment's reflection brings to mind any number of instances in which a cloth or thread metaphor illuminates similarly "tied" relations [. . .] Indeed, cloth metaphors echo from many parts of the world, today and in the past. Social scientists and laypersons regularly describe society as fabric, woven or knit together. Cloth as a metaphor for society, thread for social relations, express more than connectedness, however. The softness and ultimate fragility of these materials capture the vulnerability of humans.
>
> —Annette B. Weiner and Jane Schneider, *Cloth and Human Experience*, 2

Cued by Naomi's dress that decorates Yehuda on his descent into madness, I pursue further the theme of clothing as transnaturing,[1] meditating on two registers of the word "private": its connotations of intimacy and industry. These dual meanings converge in my reading of the pervasive discourse of fabric as a catalyst for Arab-Jewish intimacy in Israeli-Palestinian poetry, discourses of the Israeli textile industry, and in a recent work that connects the two by blending poetics and industrial politics: Israeli writer Orly Castel-Bloom's 2006 novel *Textile*, released in English in 2013. This chapter shifts from an analysis of Naomi's dress in *A Late Divorce*, which is figured, I argued, as transnaturing, feminizing, and miscegenating. The relationship, figured through the dress, both threatens and promises to produce a mixed social sphere originating in an affective transformation. The mutability of race and gender borders in Yehoshua's *A Late Divorce* evokes the abject, as the protagonist, Yehuda, by donning the fabric of the miscegenated wife in the last pages of the novel, leads himself to certain death. Other Occupation discourses by Jews and Arabs, such as those discussed in this chapter, use fabric motifs to imagine borders as fluid, yielding, tenuous,

threatening-to-uncover, intimate, and even erotic; moreover, they do so in order to experiment with the potential, rather than the abject horror, in identifying with the enemy. Ultimately these discourses have located in fabric and the private labor sector in Israel useful metaphors to negotiate networks of intimacy while respecting the need for cultural and sexual boundaries. Fabric borders, as opposed to concrete or gated ones (those usually associated with the Occupation) offer a way of conceptualizing either a binational solution or a more ethnically heterogeneous single-state future.

The textile setting lends itself to an interestingly nuanced depiction of labor politics in Israel quite differently than other labor settings have done, as the cultural bifurcations invoked in wall and stone metaphors become much more unstable when labor and love are imagined in terms of textiled perimeters. Several anthologized Palestinian stories depict Israel's other significant industry, construction and contracting, to explore the catch-22 of seeking work under Occupation. Muhammad 'Ali Taha's short story "Faris Rateeba" and Ghareeb 'Asqalani's "Hunger," for instance, narrate the personal struggles of Palestinian men exploited by the Israeli practice of ciphering cheap construction labor from Palestine and the Occupied Territories. These men are forced literally to superstruct the nation that oppresses them. Another example is Savyon Liebrecht's short story "A Room on the Roof," which explores the psychological processes of guilt and sexual attraction in a Jewish woman's dealings with her Arab contractor. A Palestinian construction worker helps to liberate Liebrecht's female protagonist from Jewish patriarchal dominance by allowing her to manage additions to her house while her husband is away. Though she develops a sexual attraction to one of the workers, by restaging Israeli dominance over him she perpetuates a rift between them. Having internalized them as personnel rather than persons, she becomes afraid of her own attraction to him. Her instinct is to view him suspiciously, as a criminal who must be kept under her thumb. She worries that if she gives him an inch he will take a mile, or that he might steal from her while she is not looking. These fears lead her to insult him by nervously retrieving her baby from his fatherly caresses. To her disappointment, he never comes back, and the other workers finish the job. The divide between them proves ultimately to be an impermeable one, made vivid by the construction imagery that symbolizes blocks to intimacy and existing labor imbalances.

Conversely, I argue in this chapter that the relationship imagined in terms of a textile is much more penetrable. At its best,

the connection between enemies is figured as a fragile string, as in Anglophone Palestinian poet Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi's "Night Patrol," or as an object of affect, as is the case with Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai's "Jerusalem," in which the white sheet of the enemy is simultaneously an erotic object and one that inspires empathy. At its worst, the textile is too permeable, as for Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti the fabric object helps figure the Occupation as a form of rape. It signifies across all of these registers in mixed-language Israeli writer Orly Castel-Bloom's 2006 novel *Textile*, where the textile and its industry become—to use Nicholas Thomas's anthropological comment on the material cultural object—an "index of the extent to which relations are sustained or disfigured" (19).

Beyond its general anthropological fecundity, cloth is a powerful, geographically specific expression of national, religious, ethnic, and economic solidarity in Israel-Palestine. Accordingly, the textile industry's implicit connection to economic unfairness in Castel-Bloom's novel can be made to comment on neocolonial values at work in the industry. Cotton was the original commodity/export in the Middle East (Gelvin 24), and its economic and anthropological heritage echoes strongly today. Israel still prides itself upon its quality textiles as its chief industry. Jews' strong connection to their handiwork and silk trading history, as well as the importance of special, kinship fabrics in accompanying ceremonial events, constitute the Diaspora's aesthetic heritage. The novel, however, limits the extent to which its industry strengthens its national ethos in its alliance with Western capitalism. Its partial reliance on Palestinian labor and land also muddies the waters.

Notwithstanding the power that fabric offers Israeli-Palestinian writers to reimagine relationships in positive ways, the fact remains that fabric in Israel invokes a complex situation on the ground. Lately, the booming Israeli textile industry has come under fire as relying on exploitative capital. The Jewish Voice for Peace has exposed numerous clothing manufacturers as illegally operating out of the West Bank. Israeli-owned textile companies contribute to the widening gap between affluent Israelis and the Arab poor; because of their skilled labor, Arab women become the primary victims of this type of economic exploitation. Textiles and clothing production are also, however, a talking point for global human rights oversight, with the European Union withholding benefits for companies illegally settling in the West Bank. Given this duality associated with the life of fabric in this area, Palestinian and Israeli writers have found that textiles offer not just rich metaphorical

possibilities for representing intimacy between Arabs and Jews, but they also help expose inequalities and political injustices. Fabric's proximity to skin, its evocation of dressing and cross-dressing, and the networks of relationships the industry itself engenders help writers challenge the Jew/Arab binary; further, fabric also helps writers illustrate economic exploitations and bodily violations at work under Occupation.

The textile metaphor reveals these authors' gendered reading of human relations, although the fabric domain as feminine is, too, subject to transmutation by fabric's permeability. There exists a risk in imagining the private sphere as an engine of peace, in that an investment in private capital based on the textile can falsely place peace in the domain of women while restricting their empowerment to enact real change. I practice interpretive caution when I read the textile for its permeability as a metaphor, as it can be easy to forget that its attractive commodity status, when exploited, can reinstate the very barriers between humans it has the power to erode. I am careful to separate its utility in the poetry as an inalienable object from its iteration in industry as a potential hegemony-creating consumer good. In order to link Israeli-Palestinian poetics of fabric to a growing world commitment to conceptual and material "fair-trade," this chapter ends with a picture of the textile industry in Israel and its production of private intimacies made possible by its status as a private business—protected from the more hegemonic military/political outside.

As I have argued throughout, the increasing emphasis on the private sphere as an engine for peaceable relations can disburden the political sphere. Further, metaphors of intimacy can actually distract publics from enacting change if they are conflated with progress. In Chapter 1 of Fanon's 1959 work *A Dying Colonialism*, "Algeria Unveiled," he opens with a treatise on dress. Dress, he writes, "constitutes the most distinctive form of a society's uniqueness, that is to say the one that is the most immediately perceptible" (35). This commentary on the national semiotics of clothing, namely women's, is a point of departure to explore how the war on Algeria is a war waged on the "home" and on definitions of "woman." He argues that the veil and the Algerian woman have been mobilized to stand for or "disarm" the Revolution; this was imposed on Algeria by the colonizer, a movement that started in the 1930s, when the West attempted to "liberate" the Algerian woman from the veil and the home in order to disarm Algerian nationalism and emasculate the Algerian male. Fanon praises the

Algerian woman for standing boldly in the home as a form of resistance. It is conspicuous how Fanon's celebration further subjugates the Algerian woman by confining her to the domestic role in the name of patriotism, making the private sphere the place of resistance, necessarily rendering it more conservative. Thus, I both critique the emerging reliance on the Israeli private sphere and celebrate it as a strategy toward envisioning a new community that strikes at the foundations of Ashkenazic Jewish patriarchy in Israel, which is as much national as it is economic. My methodology in this chapter is informed by Freyre, who sees the everyday wielding of objects as seamlessly transacted with a culture's mythologies and commonplace discourses; hence, I deploy the rhetorical strategy of shifting to the textilic life of Israel-Palestine from the textilic life of its contemporary literature.

Reading the Textile in Israeli-Palestinian Literature: A Freyrean Model

Freyre's anthropological focus on material culture and the role of commodities in drawing people into networks of multiracial intimacy offer new insight into the increasingly pressing global issue of privatized women's labor, the textile economy in Israel specifically, and the availability of textile imagery to Israeli-Palestinian authors seeking to depict human relations. Freyre's interest in the life of objects in the formation of a mixed Brazil connects him with current material culture theory, much of which, though focused on cultural discourses during the dawn of industrialization, provides the framework for how I view the texts in this chapter. For instance, material culture critic Madeleine Dobie perceives objects as rhetors when she argues that eighteenth-century furniture converses with literary and sociological preoccupations with the orient, while in some ways still eliding colonial geopolitics.[2] As with Dobie's furniture, textiles as metaphors can be mobilized to connect enemies in intimacy while at the same time they elide their situatedness in economies of suffering. Mimi Hellman is interested in objects that are "not simply owned, but indeed performed."[3] By foregrounding "madeness," Hellman's work reanimates the decorative object as it would have been animated for its author/audience, using it to better understand the anxieties and desires of the viewer or wielder.[4] Before Hellman's work, many eighteenth-century household artifacts were considered to be categorically bad art, with little worth other than their ability to mark a historical period.

By reading these pieces as a language capable of helping people articulate and assert social capital as well as form relationships with other people, Hellman redrew attention—for example, made them conversation pieces as they would have been in their period—to otherwise neglected artifacts. In the same vein, I extract from the literature and reanimate the textile object in terms of its everyday function and communicative possibilities in Israeli-Palestinian life. Too often, postcolonial critics eclipse the singular importance of the poetic object in the deployment of human relations in favor of expansive political theory.

The reader should note coexisting strains in thinking about the fabric object that relate to whether it can be read as an agent of human connectivity and kinship (inalienable), or as a consolidator of empire (commodity).[5] McClintock picks up Said's notion that constructing and dominating the domestic sphere was central to the imperial project, going further to examine artifacts, fiction included, to argue that the concept of the "home" features prominently in the colonization of Africa. McClintock identifies three "circulating themes" of her book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender, and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (1995): "the transmission of white, male power through control of colonized women; the emergence of a new global order of cultural knowledge; and the imperial command of commodity capital" (2–3). McClintock begins with a psychoanalytic reading of the map in Rider Haggard's King Soloman's Mines, identifying it as a chart of the female gynecological form, arguing that "the diamond mines are simultaneously the place of female sexuality (gendered reproduction), the source of treasure (economic production) and the site of imperial contest (racial difference)" (5). Male critics of empire have persistently elided gendered dynamics in imperialism. McClintock intervenes, examining the doubly oppressed and difficult situation of colonized women—they had to "negotiate not only the imbalances of their relations with their own men but also the baroque and violent array of hierarchical rules and restrictions that structured their new relations with imperial men and women" (6). She also notes the importance of facing how white European women have been implicated in black women's suffering, to which her project responds with a strain of feminism that challenges certain Eurocentric feminist essentialisms; feminism is as much about race, labor, and class as it is about sex. Race and ethnicity are not synonymous with black or colonized. She agrees with Paul Gilroy in that the dichotomy between essentialist

and nonessentialist theories of black identity is not helpful. It is the "inventedness of historical hierarchies that renders attention to social power and violence so much more urgent" (8). She calls for a changed and original inquiry into the relationship between psychoanalysis and socioeconomic history, addressing how the Victorian metropole and consequently the African colonies become stages for the imperial spectacle and the reinvention of race, examining racism and fetishism through commodities, adventure narratives, photography and museum exhibitions, and other such artifacts that contribute to the cult of domesticity and the reinvention/reification of patriarchy.

McClintock argues, "The mass-marketing of empire as a global system was intimately wedded to the Western reinvention of domesticity, so that imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of domestic space and its relation to the market." McClintock analyzes the infamous "Pears' Soap" ads that employ Kipling's poem "The White Man's Burden," invoking the logic that the burden that lies with the white man to colonize, civilize, and domesticate is partly fulfilled by teaching cleanliness; thus, mercantilism was deeply tied to ordering, and vice versa—McClintock calls this "commodity racism."

Since for McClintock the imperial space is constituted by commodities announcing cultural convergence, it is all the more interesting that Freyre relies heavily on dress, custom, and economy to reread Brazil's emergence out of an imperial space as a hybridized union of personal desires—a joining of native and European cultures, as well as feudal, aristocratic, and Republican economies. Crucial to his theory is Brazil's movement from an agrarian, feudal economy to one democratized under the principal industry of textiles, which led to Brazil's growing cosmopolitanism (*Ordem* 263). Textiles became, for Freyre, one major marker of Brazil's shift from a slave economy to modernity. Stanley J. Stein details Freyre's reading of Brazil's changing economic profile:

> In Freyre's analysis the end of the slave trade, technological stagnation on sugar plantations and the expansion of Europe's sugar beet cultivation, the commercialization of agriculture and the irresistible attractions and costs of cosmopolitan life, gradually impoverished the extended families or clans of sugar planters. Evicted from their plantations by foreclosure, they found economic security in the expanding bureaucracy of the Second Empire and the republic, as recent plantation histories and planter diaries testify. (in "The Historiography of Brazil, 1808–1889," 265)

Freyre's narrative is not wholly mythological, as the Brazilian government's recognizing the nation-building potential of these new bureaucracies of which textiles was a major part led to its decision to protect the textile industry from tariffs (275). By creating a historical trajectory that culminates in the textile industry, Freyre reiterates his thesis that the private sphere produces the nation. By a similar reasoning, the European Union recognizes potential for interethnic collaboration in Israel's fashion industry and has begun to fund co-ops under programs like "Partners in Business, Partners in Peace," where Israeli designers and Palestinian manufacturers share in equal profits ("The Future").

For Freyre, the co-op further contributed to Brazil's racially democratic character. While he is known for crediting the native woman with the foremost contribution to Brazilian society given her ability to reproduce the hybrid child, a significant component of his recognition of her relates to her ability to produce circulating objects that shape the domestic realm. Two compelling Freyrean moments in *Casa-Grande* illustrate this point, the first of which is an articulation of his thesis: "In the study of their intimate history, all that political and military history has to offer in the way of striking events holds little meaning in comparison with a mode of life that is almost routine; but it is in that routine that the character of a people is most readily to be discerned" (xliii). For Freyre, who narrates the nation with poetic vigor even in the confines of the sociological report, the figurative/folkloric significance of a nation is inextricable from its seemingly mundane social economies, as are the peoples' expressions of empowerment or disempowerment in relation to everyday objects. Asserting the gendered aspect of Brazil's material cultural foundation, he writes:

> The native woman must be regarded not merely as the physical basis of the Brazilian family, upon whom, drawing strength from her and multiplying itself, rested the energy of a limited number of European settlers; she must also be considered a worth-while cultural element, at least so far as material culture goes, in the formation of Brazilian society. Thanks to her, Brazilian life was enriched, as we shall see further on, with a number of foods that are still in use today, with drugs and household remedies, with traditions that are bound up with the development of the child, with a set of kitchen utensils, and with processes having to do with tropical hygiene…She gave us the hammock, which still rocks the Brazilian to sleep or serves him as a voluptuous couch. She brought coconut oil for women's hair and a group of domestic animals tamed by her hand. (87)

Hence, Freyre places in tandem with one another (if not conflates) a democracy of humans with a democracy of objects,[6] so far as to say the absence of one precludes the presence of the other. For example, in *Ordem e Progresso* ("Order and Progress") Freyre portrays the Goiana Mills Company as the paradigm of the industrial democracy, calling it "a mixed syndicate of management, office staff, and factory workers from the highest executive to the most humble laborer," and praising the co-op system it represents for providing egalitarian distribution of funds and benefits (327). Freyre offers Goiana Mills as only one model for a slew of others, suggesting that by the twentieth century the co-op became the norm in Brazil rather than the exception. From *Casa-Grande* to *Ordem e Progresso* Freyre's logic unfolds as follows: the proclivity toward miscegenation produces racial democracy and with it more pliant consumers and producers of native/foreign cultural objects, resulting in sociable relations in the labor sector as well as workers more adaptable to fluctuating industries.

Latent in Freyre's account is the essentialist organization of textile labor that, when revisited more critically, adds friction to his concept of a truly mixed economic sphere. Israeli-Palestinian writers have toyed with a similar investment in the private material spheres to imagine democracy. David C. Jacobson has illustrated work and labor as important themes which draw Israeli and Palestinian fictional characters into intimacy, but he misses the dilemma it poses for feminists. Since textile production is the dominant industry in this area—an industry largely staffed by Arab women and governed by Jewish and Western entrepreneurship, the textile product is, in part, complicit in patriarchal economics. Therefore, while I take up Freyre's indexing interethnic relations in the textile economy to read similar indexes in Israeli-Palestinian discourse, I expand this reading to include a critique of the gendered oppressions at risk of elision in such a prematurely celebratory analysis of the private sphere.

The Nation as Violation: The Poetics of Fabric in Occupation Poetry

Several anthologized Palestinian and Israeli poets use fabric and thread as conceits through which to express desire for intimacy with the political and racial enemy, rejecting a "conventional, modernist version of the nation" (Rabinowitz 759). The modernist vision of the nation projects the state as a cleanly bounded

space.[7] Homi Bhabha resists this reductive notion, calling it a misreading: there is "a particular ambivalence that haunts the idea of the nation . . . It is an ambivalence that emerges from a growing awareness that, despite the certainty with which historians speak of the 'origins' of nation as a sign of the 'modernity' of society, the cultural temporality of the nation inscribes a much more transitional social reality" (306). I would argue that Bhabha's ambivalence theory greatly informs Israeli-Palestinian poetry. Rather than try to rebuild structures where they have been eroded by shifting land-grant deals and the failure of the modernist vision of nation, poets, through fibrous depictions of segregation, imagine intimacy between the speaker and the "other" in a way that rewrites yet still maintains cultural integrity. They therefore open up the definition of "nation" to invoke a network rather than an essential whole. In other words, invoking its etymology, they allow readers to understand the nation as not born, but rather, always in the process of being born. These definitions allow the nation to be penetrable as well as to contain disparate cultural dignities. Moreover, they allow poets to express empathy with the politically defined other, resulting in alienation from the state.

Poets offer a far more encouraging conception of national enemy relations in their ambivalence rather than in their adherence to the modernist vision. The following poem by Palestinian poet Hanan Mikha'il 'Ashrawi shows a deep entanglement between her national identity and the enemy's, which she mediates using textile imagery. In "Night Patrol (An Israeli Soldier on the West Bank)," the poet puts herself in the shoes of the enemy. The speaker, an IDF soldier, pleads,

> If I should once, just
> once, grasp the elusive
> end of the thread which
> ties my being here with
> their being there, I
> could unravel the beginning.
> (1–6)

The soldier quickly interrupts his/her mind from discovering a history of origins that might complicate the IDF's mission, choosing to view his/her existence as independent accomplishment rather than fate. However, this resolution devolves into defeat and alienation; he/she would rather "lie down and take a nap" (12) than further ponder the issue. Still, the question has been asked: has

history caused the soldier to act in excess of his/her intent? If so, does not that same history connect the soldier with the enemy in a mutual goal? Perhaps the speaker feels like napping because the answer presents a conundrum. If fate brought both self and other to the Holy Land, then that robs the IDF of the agency to declare dominance. If it was will, on the other hand, then the speaker would have to admit his/her acts of protection and dominance are constructed rather than ordained. The soldier's frustration continues into his/her dreams; the speaker burrows into his/her bed:

> turning
> over in sleep clutching my
> cocoon of army issue blankets
> (19–21)

During this state of unrest, the speaker longs for "a different posting in the morning" (22–23). Though questions of connection vex the speaker, he/she expresses a fantasy of empathy and common suffering, propped up by the fabric motifs linking the two subjects' existence. It is, in some sense, an anthropological understanding of connectedness, evoking an ancient metaphorical relationship between material artifacts and social interaction. The lines, "fabric woven by hands / other than mine" (10–11) implies the other sustains the speaker's existence, especially given the invoked cocoon metaphor, which suggests birth, development, or rebirth. The speaker in Anglophone Palestinian poet Nathalie Handal's poem "Jenin" also entertains this metaphor, but uses it to emphasize the absence of comfort; from the perspective of the occupied, the meditative lament includes "A night without a blanket, a blanket / belonging to someone else, someone / else living in our home" (1–3). While the sentiment in Handal's verse is pained and self-pitying, Ashawi's skirts the line between animosity and empathy, since, though the lines imply the parasitic relationship between colonizer and colonized, the poem's dominant tone is empathetic. That the Palestinian poet can imagine her subject as an IDF soldier "clutching my / cocoon of army issue blankets" suggests an interest in the enemy's comfort. Moreover, the gesture itself suggests a desire to have one's own need for comfort be recognized. The mythology justifying the Israeli soldier's presence (and possibly also the enemy's presence, though that line of reasoning is only implicated) does not preclude his/her feeling of intimacy with the Palestinian, nor does it preclude feelings of defeat

toward military authority (hence, the soldier's "hope for a different posting in the morning").

Empathetic poems like Ashrawi's compel readers to think past the normative program of not just the nation, but the ethnic nation-state specifically; as I discuss in chapter 4, ethnic and racial character has been shown to be at issue in the maintenance of Israel in its current form. I examine how Israeli and international proponents of segregation operate on a reductive conception of ethnicity, which, in Israel, has resulted in essentialist notions of belonging and has caused the categories of ethnicity and race to collapse. Though partition never formally transpired during Israeli independence (the Arab states did not accept the UN's proposal), a segregated and eventually occupied Palestine replaced partition without granting Palestinian sovereignty, as would traditionally happen for the partitioned nation. This is not to say that a formal partition would have ameliorated the racial divide. Joe Cleary has the following to say about the veiled racial character of partition programs:

> In effect . . . partition has always represented an attempt to engineer, usually in an extremely compressed period, nation-states with clear and decisive ethnic majorities in precisely those situations where ethnically intermingled populations were least amenable to those results. Not surprisingly, therefore, the attempt to implement partition has invariably been accompanied by various forms of ethnic cleansing, forced population transfer and coerced assimilation—all in the name of producing the supposedly normative conditions of liberal democratic nationhood. (21)

Palestinian and Israeli writers who take up intercultural intimacy as subject matter problematize the ethnic distillation at work in not just Occupation, but partition strategies in general. If read radically for their inference toward procreative transgression—which I show to be an available reading of Darwish, for instance—they directly resist the logic of partition. Israeli-Palestinian poetics of fabric contest not only the Occupation's attack on the desires for intimacy between Palestinians and Israelis but also how they problematize partition as a political strategy.

Cleary's definition of the ethnic nation state cannot be understood without a developed theoretical genealogy of the nation. Critics such as John Breuilly, Anthony Smith, John Hutchinson, and Francis Robinson define the nation according to three basic categories that explain differing political sentiments and can roughly be divided in terms of their beliefs toward innate or constructed

national values. John Breuilly, in "The Sources of Nationalist Ideology," sharpens the distinction between critical questions that probe the role of the state toward society and the role of government to its subjects. These two relationships yield different questions, he contends. The former deals with the connection between politics and nonpolitics (issues of identity) whereas the latter exists solely in the political realm (103). He claims that the shift to historicism in the academy was an attempt to mediate the tension arising from the conflation of these two separate philosophical questions. Historicism was supposed to provide a disinterested language for talking about these distinctions, but he notes that historicism actually gives rise to value judgments regarding authenticity. It poses questions regarding what is natural and unnatural, or imposed, in history (104). Breuilly ultimately concludes that societies are unique, and that governments imposed by alien societies do violence to the unique national spirit (111). Each nation must have its own government, he concludes. That government is the nation-state; what follows is the figure of the nationalist, who demands said statehood (111). However, Breuilly maintains Bhabha's point that there is a certain level of ambiguity in the process of producing national identity. Since the identity of the nation is produced in arbitrary ways, in an ideal state the community will not be split into cultural and political spheres (111). The nationalist can exploit this ambiguity, and does so at the level of symbolic repetition in rhetoric and ceremony (111). If national identity becomes reified by its reiteration in language—both discursive and ceremonial—then Palestinian and Israeli poetics of intimacy, which are both deeply discursive and ceremonial themselves, are without question rich repositories of national identity. Hence, their acts of theorizing each other constitute a part of their national identity. Likewise, legitimating Israeliness for an Israeli writer is as much about legitimating Palestianness as it is about legitimating the self. This mutually constitutive relationship is made vivid through the language of fabric borders.

Israeli national poet Yehuda Amichai illustrates the part of Israeli identity that hinges on "thinking the Palestinian." In his highly anthologized poem "Jerusalem" he depicts fabric as a universalizing and humanizing metaphor, emphasizing its potential to demarcate the polarizing conditions of poverty but also its ability to communicate desire for intimacy between antagonistic groups. The Israeli's experience of the Palestinian in this poem shows the speaker gazing at the enemy and their laundry from an elevated position. The

white sheet figures centrally, an image intrinsic to Middle-Eastern culture and literature: the traditional, white linen Palestinian headscarf is marked with humility and purity, and the accounts of Israeli soldiers disregarding white sheets over Palestinian doors during the 1988 raids serve as scars in the Palestinian and international imaginary. The poem begins with the speaker looking out from a roof in Jerusalem, seeing

> laundry hanging in the late afternoon sunlight:
> the white sheet of a woman who is my enemy,
> the towel of a man who is my enemy
> (2–4)

The laundry—the white sheet, and the towel—fasten mutual human experiences together, but in a complicated way. The white sheet, especially, recalls the Palestinian and his/her struggle across the fabric's various historical and symbolic registers. Here, though, the laundry also connects universalizing bodily activities, such as sleeping and sweating. That the speaker is watching the labor of the other suggests his own alienation from it, however. The two enemies are separated by a social divide complicated by the empathy of the spectator, who associates his enemy with fabric's whiteness, symbolizing innocence and vacuity. There is no patriotic significance to white. If anything, it suggests defeat or death, as in the white flag raised in surrender during wartimes or a mortician's winding sheet. The everyday white fibers are familiar, yet at the same time, the speaker's position as onlooker—literally above his subjects—and his knowledge that the subject at which he gazes is supposed to be his enemy render something foreign or alienating in this provincial tableau, into which the speaker desires access. Feelings of desire are invoked in the inherent intimacy of the woman's white sheet, an icon of the marriage bed. They are even invoked in the sensuous reflection of the sweating, toiling man ("to wipe off the sweat of his brow," line 5). The fabric's connection to the domestic, laboring realm may heighten the differences between the spectator and subject, but the fabric embodies a guarded connectedness.

Amichai introduces more solid borders as the poem unfolds, but not before a kite belonging to an invisible child completes the image of fluid borders between two distinct national entities. The juxtaposition of the child renders harsh the dehumanizing borders of a solid wall. The solid wall, in turn, leads to the image of a fabric object wielded for political pursuit. The sky in Jerusalem transitions

to a kite, "At the other end of the string" (8) of which there is a child that the speaker cannot see because of the wall's obstruction (9–11). On this, this speaker cogitates,

> We have put up many flags,
> they have put up many flags.
> To make us think that they're happy.
> To make them think that we're happy.
> (12–15)

The domestic, everyday fabric of sheets and towels leads to the string and kite, signifying play. But play is a prospect made inaccessible by the wall, as the speaker's vision of the child is blocked. The noninstrumentalized metaphors of the private realm are interrupted by the public polemics of the wall and the flags. Thus, fabric moves from evoking human-to-human empathy to mobilizing nation-to-nation performance. The reader is cued to its being a performance because of the equivocation in the repeating lines, "To make us think that they're happy. / To make them think that we're happy," as well as the final stanza's departure from the authenticity of toil, sweat, and play. These activities are linked in the morphing fabric image of a towel to a sheet to a kite and finally a flag.

Metaphors of kites juxtaposed with flags traverse Palestinian and Israeli contemporary poetry in part because the national significance of flag-raising is so highly charged in this area where two national movements essentially live on top of one another. Additionally, the Middle East witnessed Israel express anxiety over the semiotics of fabric in their laws against displaying the Palestinian flag. Resistance to these laws began to manifest in the form of Palestinian women wearing the national colors as an available means of protest. Fadwa Tuqan's June 1988 poem, "Song of Becoming," translated by Naomi Shihab Nye, meditates on the image of the kite. The accepted interpretation of this poem is that it represents a celebration of the Palestinians' maturation and rebirth after the Arab-Israeli war of 1967 (Arana 413), but the grief over the loss of innocence is just as—if not more—compelling. In my reading the flags that the youth fly before they are forced into becoming guerilla soldiers startlingly invoke both the Palestinian and Israeli flags. She writes, "They're only boys / who used to frolic and play / launching rainbowed kites / on the western wind, / their blue-red-green kites / whistling, leaping (ll. 1–6, 316). For Nye, as is the case in Amichai, kites stand for innocence lost in war.

However, the promising nature of fluid, textilic borders provides the subtext to otherwise overwhelmingly tragic poetry. A kind of optimistic energy abounds with the children's "leaping" and "whistling," made possible and mirrored by the kite-flying.

Amichai's and Nye's fabric objects can be read as a language that is in the process of negotiating intimate, though disparate, communities irrespective of national polemics. As Breuilly argues,

> If language is thought, and can be learnt only in a community, it follows that each community has its own mode of thought. Furthermore, to go on to argue that languages are unique could lead to the conclusion that the language is not simply a particular way of expressing universal values. Rather, it is the manifestation of unique values and ideas [. . .] the arguments can be extended much further if all other human activities are understood as sorts of languages. Dress, architecture, customs, ceremonial, song, law: all these and many other activities can be understood in the same way. (105)

When mobilized as an object of human relations, fabric produces a common language between enemy communities, linking the two in a united front against national polemics. Its poetics invites the reader to question whether the nation-state is indeed a protector of community or an agent of violation.

However, neither Brueilly's concept of communal language nor Freyre's concept of miscegenated objects can adequately theorize the way these poets deal with the democracy of fabric as an extension of human empathies. The reason is that poets must assert this new language, which at base arises out of private intimacies and networks of objects produced by the domestic sphere, but within the logic of the nation because the poetry cannot escape its charged national circumstances. For this reason, it becomes crucial to theorize Israeli-Palestinian poetry within multiple national paradigms. While a cosmopolitan reader might be tempted to interpret the Arab-Jew relationship as irrevocably tied mythologically and historically to the extent of subsuming contemporary borders in order to deauthenticate political categories of Jewishness, Amichai and Ahsrawi actually resist native retrieval by refashioning relationships according to exigent, everyday realities. In this way, they confirm Smith's point that the nation poses a predicament while also asserting the need for some kind of borders, even if not historically legitimated. Historicism is a logical outgrowth of the Enlightenment (113) in that rationalism and science displace theocratic rule in

absolutist territorial states, especially as kings harnessed the patriotic power of interstate scientific competition (113). This sweeping intellectual revolution led to a crisis of authority; the problem of meaning moved from the spiritual sphere onto the material (116). Out of this crisis emerge three sects in modernity, all ultimately engaging in ethnic historicism: neotraditionalists, reformists, and assimilationists (117). Neotraditionalists utilize modern methods of mobilizing people but for conservative ends (117). They use ethnic historicism to give the faithful a history; the religious congregation, therefore, turns into an ethnic community (117). Assimilationists, on the other hand, accept science and rationalism wholeheartedly. They typically embrace the West and ascribe to cosmopolitan ideals (117). The assimilationist who finds that he/she has been alienated from the West returns to his homeland in an effort to retrieve a native past. Ethnic historicism underwrites this act (117). Finally, reformists accept science and rationalism but with reservations (117). Israel-Palestine presents a unique problem because one can argue that the national advocates for both nations—the world-affirmed Israeli nation and the struggling-to-realize itself (and be realized) Palestinian nation—fall into all three of these categories.

The poetics of fabric in these poems, though inescapably politically charged by the very conditions of their production, defer and place into tension ideas of national belonging. The fabric evokes complicated experiences of the enemy marked by communal longing and guarded pain. That there is a unifying community evoked runs counter to John Hutchinson's estimation that nationalism can be bifurcated along the two categorical interests of cultural versus political (122). Hutchinson argues that the political nationalists envision a civic polity of educated citizens united by common laws and mores, mirroring Classical antiquity (123). The figure of the cosmopolitan would fall into such a category, as cosmopolitans look toward a common humanity that transcends cultural difference (122). Their cosmopolitan fervor is tempered by the fact that they have to work within territorial borders; the cosmopolitan political nationalist's ideals are modernist, and they aim toward securing a representative state (122). The political nationalist usually adapts ethnic-historical identities in order to mobilize groups toward securing such a state (123). While the theme of affinities in Ashrawi and Amichai may seem to align their poems with a political nationalist sentiment based on their universalist/cosmopolitan interpretive possibilities, there exists an aporia of happiness and

unhappiness caused by borders that the fabric seems to ameliorate. It can be used to comfort the soldier through the gaze of his enemy civilian (Ashrawi) as well as bring the enemy's humanity into startling view (Amichai); however, it can also be used to recognize the enemy from a safe distance, such as by the connection of a string or the performance of conversant flags.

It would be a violation to call even the most liberal Occupation poetry cosmopolitan, considering its inexorable connection to cultural nationalism. For cultural nationalists, the state is accidental. The essence of state is its distinctive civilization (122). For Israelis and Palestinians alike, the mere existence of their respective states arises from ancient mythologies creating a storied contemporary notion that both Palestine and Israel are primordial expressions of a naturalized individuality (122), based not on law or consent but on passions implanted by nature and history (122). The primordialist strain must respect "natural" divisions within the state (129). However, as Hutchinson argues, cultural nationalism fails to meet communitarian goals; though it can be generative in nation-building, it can be regressive and hypocritical in its policy to revive folk communities while (like Israel) still developing modern means of military and technological advancement (125). Primordialists view conflict as an essential component of social development that necessarily ends in a retrieval of the past (129). Even Freyre, a romantic and an essentialist, understands that a nation's success is determined by its ability to move forward rather than backward—to assimilate even if it means constructing a new narrative constituted by a belief in the corporeal presence of a historical pastiche.

One could compare cultural nationalists to Smith's reformists and neotraditionalists while political nationalists corroborate Smith's assimilationists, but another category is needed to understand the unique conditions that inform the Palestinian poet's relationship to nation, borders, and intimacy. Mourid Barghouti's "My Grandfather's Cloak" signifies across all of these registers. The poem represents the trauma of Occupation through an image of his grandfather's torn cloak and evokes a primordial conception of his violated ancestry. The politics of authenticity implicated therein are somewhat clarified by nationalism scholar Francis Robinson's theory of Muslim primordialism. Robinson deduces that Muslims tend to form strong political communities within or separately from the dominant power (214), and that throughout history, Muslim governments have been concerned with maintaining political agency, bringing power to Islam and vice versa (215). He also argues toward a monolithic notion of the Nation

of Islam as formed by Muslim primordialists who see nations as born through the "givens" of the human condition, providing the basis for "easy affinity" with those who share the same conditions (217). Instrumentalists, on the other hand, see nations as formed out of the manipulation of a group by elites toward a common agenda (217). Though Robinson aligns Islam with the primordialists, Barghouti's poem depicts the Palestinian in a more nuanced manner that explores two poles of his condition in tension with one another—one of natural-born Palestinian and the other of coerced national subject.

The peaceable grandfather figure is contrasted with the forced nationalism of the new generation in the face of militaristic annihilation by the Jews. The ancestral aesthetic space faces desecration in the new world order: "My grandfather, still harbouring the illusion / that the world is fine, / fills his rustic pipe / for the last time / before the advent of helmets and bulldozers!" (trans. Ashour 39–43). The cloak becomes a conceit for the near-destruction of the grandfather, himself a metonym for cultural relics, as it "gets hooked / on the bulldozer's teeth" (44–45). The bulldozer morphs into a brutal predator, machinelike yet primeval:

> The bulldozer retreats a few metres,
> empties its load,
> comes back to fill its huge shovel,
> and never has its fill.
> Twenty times, the bulldozer
> comes and goes,
> my grandfather's cloak still hooked on it.
> (46–52)

The conceit of the speaker's grandfather's cloak reifies the material cultural thesis that writers invest objects with experience. There is a sexual and violent inflection in the relationship between the grandfather and the bulldozer as we witness an anthropomorphic rape. The repetitious violation inferred by "Twenty times, the bulldozer / comes and goes" makes this poem bleaker than the other examples. Four lines before this excerpt, the speaker has momentarily escaped the cosmic violence that inaugurates the rape, hiding out in an antiquated building with an "imposing dome" and "merciful arches," and finding comfort in "warm blankets" amid his "grandfather's pictures" (trans. Ashour 31–34). The lyrics shift from refuge to a patrilineal violence against the cloak, both pictured in terms of fabric. The machine of progress violates an organic past; the cloak,

like the arched domes, is a premodern costume piece, invoking a sacred precedent. The bulldozer does not neatly reference a human enemy, however, but a disembodied third entity: it is not a Jew who tears the Palestinian cloth, but a military machine, recalling the armored bulldozers used by the IDF. Since the bulldozer is also a commercial machine, it might also invoke a form of economic violence. It is the state itself and its alliance with capital that exacts violence upon the Palestinian, perverting the relations between humans. The humanity of politicians and soldiers has been exceeded by something inorganic.

In Barghouti's verse, cloth is communal in that it evokes an organic existence under threat by a machine, and it is timeless and resilient. The cloak in Barghouti also embodies sexually inflected violence between occupiers and the occupied. Poets imagining the interethnic or self-other relationship have developed the erotic possibilities of fabric with more or less brutal connotations. Rita's stockings on the chair in Darwish's "Rita's Winter" illustrate a noncoerced intimacy between occupier and occupied, for instance. However, as "My Grandfather's Cloak" makes clear, even bulldozers cannot crush a family textile heirloom:

> After the dust and smoke
> have cleared from the house that once stood there,
> and as I stare at the new emptiness,
> I see my grandfather wearing his cloak,
> wearing the very same cloak –
> not one similar to it,
> but the same one.
>
> (Trans. Ashour 53–59)

Lyrical expressions of cloth highlight the fragility of human relations and the intimacies that, paradoxically, become engendered during a war of close quarters. "My Grandfather's Cloak" opens with a raging and hellish storm, which cosmically uproots the land and herds the sea. The land takes on a grand pathetic image of upheaval. The speaker takes shelter in "that house with the imposing / dome, / merciful arches, / warm blankets," and his "grandfather's pictures," which are fixtures of the walls—part of the structural integrity of the house (ll. 1–40). Then the cloak emerges in this piece as a new cultural mnemonic, replacing obliterated monuments.[8]

The poems examined in this section yield seemingly contradictory readings—a cosmopolitan vision that universalizes the human experience and a cultural nationalism that must respect the area's

mythologies. In the background looms the increasingly pressing need for a binational solution or fair, representative advocacy for Palestinians in a reformed Knesset. By expressing these tensions through permeable, fabric borders, poets resist compromising on concrete or gated borders that violate both cultural visions; any concrete or gated wall demarcating nation-spaces violates communities and, as one reads in the intimations toward enemy intimacy, walls also infringe upon communities' latent affinities for each other. The most poignant theme on which these poems agree is that the nation, concretely rendered, produces violation.

Having submitted the interpretive possibilities of "Jerusalem," "Night Patrol," and "My Grandfather's Cloak" to salient theories of the nation, I arrive full circle at Bhabha. Bhabha complicates the seemingly clear-cut divides between assimilationists (political nationalists), neotraditionalists, and reformists (cultural nationalists), rendering the poetics of fabric the only graspable language of borders in this aporia of a world scenario. Bhabha's line of thinking enriches and is enriched by the image of fabric borders in Israeli-Palestinian poetry. For Bhabha, cultural temporality interrupts stable ideas of origins. Moreover, cultural boundaries of the nation contain thresholds of meaning that must be crossed, erased, and translated during cultural production. He depicts the nation as having a kind of in betweenness, theorizing the other as never outside or beyond the subject. Influenced by Derrida, he contends, famously, that nation is narration—there is always incomplete signification. Yet, the materialist strain in his theory leads him to note that national consciousness is important for international legitimacy. In national "foundational fictions," the origins of national traditions are acts of affiliation as well as disavowal and displacement. Bhabha ultimately calls into question the very existence of nation if its definition defies itself by being a cultural space marked by transgression and interrupting interiorities; his questioning marks his own work as an act of deferment.

Neoliberalism as Violation: The Textile as an Index to Intimacy and Alienation in Castel-Bloom

In feminist Egyptian Israeli writer Orly Castel-Bloom's 2006 novel *Textile*, translated into English by Dalya Bilu in 2013, fabric becomes a means to negotiating intimacies and boundaries with the other, very much in the spirit of Amichai, Ashrawi, and Barghouti;

but in this novel, the textile is always poised on the verge of economic exploitation, hindering the very same intimacies it engenders. The story follows the wealthy, though fractured, Gruber family's response to their mother Mandy Gruber's death. Mandy, a compulsive plastic surgery patient and head of a family-owned textile factory, dies during a shoulder blade replacement, her most invasive operation to date. Mandy's death leaves much unraveled: a broken marriage between her and the bumbling genius scientist, Irad Gruber, a sensitive son forced to numb his emotions in order to work as a sniper for the IDF, and a privileged daughter and financial heir ready to defy the traditions of the family pajama business. As the profiles of these generally flat characters unfold, one reads Castel-Bloom's most explicit criticism in her illustration of neoliberalism. The definition of neoliberalism, in terms of its relevance to the novel, is that economic progress and big business are culturally liberating. Castel-Bloom critiques reasoning that deploys capital as a sustaining force such that it takes the responsibility off of religion or politics to connect and organize people. Instead of political nationalism, capital is endowed with a trickle-down organizational structure. However, as this novel shows, this system only contributes to the growing gap between rich and poor and only further estranges communities from their culture. The textile industry is figured centrally in this exploitation.

The novel depicts Israel like a textile, framing the narrative with the Law of Shatnetz, which prohibits mixing fibers. This ritual law mirrors the Israeli laws that prohibit certain types of coupling. Through a competing image of a spider's silk, the novel ultimately shows how mixed fibers can be (like the spider-generated fibers) often stronger and more durable, as in the reading I offer of Amichai's and Ashrawi's threads and the nuanced vision of the nation imagined by them and Barghouti, where ethnic tensions can be harnessed to strengthen the nation. An epigram of the Law of Shatnetz opens *Textile* and constitutes the dominant metaphor throughout the arc. The introductory pagination reads: "*The Law of Shatnetz: / You shall keep my statutes . . . / You shall not sow your field / with two kinds of seed, / nor shall you wear a garment of cloth / made of two kinds of material. Leviticus 19.19.*" The Jewish prohibition against mixing fabrics becomes the central image articulating the characters' solipsisms. It, along with other fabric metaphors, illustrates the characters' alienations from each other, which are sharpened by latent racisms and economic privilege in Israel. For instance, the son, though deeply sensitive at heart, practices denial

in order to do his military duty. He reads the classics as an escape, because "after shooting someone, he felt the need to connect with something uplifting" (25). That he chooses reading material that valorizes Western civilization in a bygone era over third-world authors or contemporary political texts demonstrates his need to experience a whitewashed narrative of the human condition that bears no relevance to the segregationist human conditions he has been employed to uphold.

The Gruber daughter, Lirit, is laughably privileged. When she leaves her new-age hippie boyfriend to watch the factory while her mother undergoes her invasive plastic surgery, Lirit thinks to herself: "There was no doubt that escaping from the natural and organic life with Shlomi to the artificial life supported by every possible gadget had done her good. All in all she had really missed civilization and especially globalization, and wanted to buy some Diesel clothes, and a few other brands that enriched the rich and impoverished the poor" (128). Castel-Bloom's satiric characterizations mostly cluster around their stance on networks of textile currency, and their inability to see themselves as privileged by it. The purism invoked in the Law of Shatnetz provides Castel-Bloom with a concept on which to draw forth the various contradictions in Israeli life, including: the tension between ethno-centric oppression/violence and protection of another historically persecuted diaspora; between prohibitions against ethnic mixing and the maintenance of democracy; and between traditional Jewish industrial pride and global capitalism that effaces cultural distinction.

The intimate nature of clothing and the easy metaphorical possibilities of the textile as a network of intimate parts impose an irony on the characters' overwhelming narcissism and ignorance. This irony is further dramatized by the father's character. The Defense Ministry hires Mandy's oblivious but genius husband, Irad Gruber, to invent special lightweight suits that would increase ease of movement for soldiers while arming their skin. His research on the project leads him to connect with a brilliant, young Jewish woman scientist in America working on extremely durable and light spider silk, which Gruber hopes to harness for his project. Confident he will secure the Nobel Peace Prize by utilizing the scientist Bahat McPhee's research, Gruber fails to see the sinister nature of his work, let alone the exploitative relationship between the natural process of the spiders and human violence. There is a classical and biological connection between spiders and women—a la the Arachne myth and the fact that female spiders are the primary

web-weavers.[9] Gruber's intent to exploit the spiders, then, calls to mind the larger, growing problem of global, neoliberal investments in women's work.

The story is full of similar social criticisms. To begin with, Gruber is immensely racist, especially against American and Ladino Jews. However, his racism is outmatched by an American's perception of Israelis that actually conflates Jews and Arabs. McPhee arranges for Gruber to get a massage with a celebrity masseuse upon his arrival to the states. Toward the end of the session, Gruber, impressed with the masseuse's bodywork, tries to convince him to move to Israel. Not responding to the question, the masseuse says, "That's how it is with you people in the Middle East," and after a long pause, "You kill them, they kill you. You have no choice, you have to kill one another" (101). Here, Jews and Arabs are linked both as natural racial enemies but simultaneously one Middle-Eastern race destined to kill itself. Gruber's inability to read the American other, combined with his callousness (or, rather, blindness) to Israel's exacerbating population boom, contribute to the novel's theme of misunderstandings that happen between people who lack intimacy with one another.

This contradictory and unforgiving perception of the other abounds. In another example, the American academic caricature, Propheta, a Ladino Jew whom Castel-Bloom satirizes as having achieved fame for writing a moronic book (the premise sounds strikingly in line with the Italian biopolitics philosophers), is in love with McPhee. However, his being uncircumcised calls his Jewishness into question and precludes their intimacy, as a coupling between them would be like miscegenation (162). His pro-Arab sentiments further serve to hinder their intimacy (119).

The image of the textile helps to articulate functioning incongruities in Israeli life. These biases even between Jews suggest that Jewish life is textured and constituted by threads in tension with one another, much like a textile. Ironically, within it the fibers of all that constitutes being non-Jew from the perspective of the dominant Israeli constituency actually precludes intimacy. It fractures not just life between Jew and non-Jew, but between Jews as a community. On the other hand, textiles help readers think through the concept that these heterogeneities and tensions actually define Jews in the sense that tension itself becomes a unifying definition of Jewish existence. It is this tension that underscores Castel-Bloom's criticism of Jewish racism; her characters' denial mechanisms do not serve to strengthen the textile—the tensions between the

fibers—but only to fray it. Sephardim, Mizrahim, American Jews, Arabness, anti-Israel sentiment (especially under the posture of the Jewish academic), and issues of globalization and cosmopolitanism all form contentiousness within the Diaspora. These diversities do not in themselves fracture Jewish life; rather, people's adherence to their position in a hierarchy does, and Castel-Bloom makes clear that the hierarchies are constructed and exacerbated by a diffuse economic hegemony.

The one thing that absolutely alienates and fractures Jews in this novel is psychological absenteeism, paralleled by economic absenteeism. The Gruber family largely suffers from indifference, illustrated in a major way by their numbness to Mandy Gruber's death. Paradoxically, the family makes its living off of producing intimate and comforting garments for Orthodox families, who by tradition are tightly knit. Audrey, Mandy's mother, who passed down the textile factory to Mandy and told her on her death bed never to sell and never to alter its traditional business practices, "held to the opinion that the factory should serve only the ultra-Orthodox population, since the ultra-Orthodox population was the most stable thing in Israel" (31). Audrey "acquired a few classic Singer sewing machines, and insisted on handwork even when technology made faster and more efficient machines available" (32). The method behind Audrey's conservatism is a holistic one: "Only in this way can the connection of the material with the thread be felt, while the movement of the foot accelerates the blood circulation and improves concentration of the workers" (33). Even after the advent of new technologies and the trend to "outsource" (if one could call it that) in the West Bank and Palestinian territories, and the now common practice of syphoning cheap, Arab labor to man the machines, Mandy's textile factory still hires Jewish women to run the only 60 Singers, and most of them are ultra-Orthodox (33). The factory, called "Nighty Night," makes one kind of garment—pajamas—using only the best fabric, which is hand-chosen by Mandy herself and always by daylight (37). The family invests in the factory as a form of stability, a Freudian-like displacement of her life's unravelings: an unhappy marriage, an entitled daughter, a killer son who could himself be killed any day, and a volatile political climate.

The traditional factory serves as a false sense of security. After Mandy and her daughter Lirit have a fight, Mandy persuades Lirit to go check on the factory "so things won't descend into anarchy there like in the Palestinian Authority" (44). Here, any hint of instability is projected outward on the Palestinians, but her

comment merely redirects a deep uncertainty. This denial reifies Jews' alienation from their neighbors/enemies and contributes to growing resentments toward each other. Castel-Bloom endows her characters with moments of honesty, but denial always creeps in. The sniper brother is, counterintuitively, best equipped to empathize with the other, being the most sensitive character of all of them, but his tendency to compartmentalize his feelings constitutes his dominant trait. "He had a talent for stepping momentarily into somebody else's shoes," the third-party narrator writes, "which ostensibly seemed completely in contradiction to the fact that he was also an outstanding shot. But he never stepped into the shoes of the people he shot" (136). Even Bahat McPhee elicits the reader's disapproval of her tendency toward denial, as she justifies handing over her research to Gruber as an act of charity to Israel, which satisfies one of the steps of her becoming a Reform rabbi, even though the research will inevitably overpower the IDF.

Castel-Bloom delivers a startling glimpse into her characters' humanity. Shlomi's wishy-washy break up with Lirit over the phone reveals both Lirit's fragile self-esteem and a learned hardness used to deal with her low self-esteem. "She would cry only after she had taken care of her mother," Castel-Bloom writes, "and after her father had returned to Israel, and after Dael [the brother] had survived the army, when life got more or less back on track, or found a different track. She got into her parents' beautiful comfortable bed, and the pills she had taken put her to sleep in five minutes" (132). Lirit's tragic resolve to renounce action until some kind of an outside stability fortified her enough to face reality evokes the emotional determent that citizens in Israel live by in order to survive, on the one hand, military supremacy, and on the other, economic hierarchies which exacerbate guilt, denial, and perverted self-worth in those who happen to be on the right side of economic history.

The Gruber's lucrative textile factory contrasts Gruber's American counterpart, Bahat McPhee's, work with the *Nephila* spiders; while the factory remains fixed in traditional business practices with a small-scale consumer base, McPhee's crowning achievement was impeding the "control mechanism of the gene, forcing the female *Nephila* spiders to spin more and more, faster and faster" (85). McPhee's bioengineering accomplishments figure industrial developments in the textile industry which have also capitalized on and expedited women's work. McPhee wants to get out of the business. She is willing to pass off her life's work to Gruber, and leave it all

behind to become a Reform rabbi. The novel's affinity toward her above all the other characters that are otherwise treated with wry contempt suggests Castel-Bloom is compelling readers to question the ethics of big business. Her business principles mirror those of the provincial Jewish textile manufacturers before Independence, when Jews and Palestinians managed fiscally local properties side by side. Nighty Night's conservatism might also be said to hark back to the rich tradition of garment-making fundamental to ancient Jewish trade and religious practices, which they carried out in relative harmony under Arab sovereignty. Castel-Bloom's parentage stems from Francophone Egypt, an area that to this day feels the absence of Jewish garment workers.[10]

If one could identify an overarching moral in this extremely complex network of satires, it would perhaps be that the westernization of Israel is contributing to its growing estrangements. Lirit "remembered how her mother used to say that it wouldn't do anybody in the Levant [a wealthy neighborhood in Israel] any good, however much they played at being in Europe or Los Angeles, they didn't have the first idea about aesthetics . . . It's only now that they're beginning to get it into their heads . . . but they're already in the swing of building a state and they can't change their style" (171). Lirit tries to think through the fact that her mother made outward criticisms like this but never looked inward to comment on how the family or their newly built neighborhood, Tel Baruch North, a suburb of Tel Aviv, was also guilty of trying to mimic the West. She realizes she had always assumed the family and neighborhood were "international" and "progressive" because of the lack of Zionism or socialism. Shortly after this revelation, Lirit, while walking downtown, "looked at a new clothing store that called itself FREEDOM" (171). The clothing store represents bare neoliberalism, as it blatantly appropriates the rhetoric of freedom that nationalist movements mobilize in order to give the consumer a false sense of independence.

Castel-Bloom figures the hegemonic economic sphere in persistent references to forbidden mixing of fabric in Jewish law, such as in Leviticus 19:19 and Isaiah 59.6, as well as in the characters' own refusals to engage the "other" or themselves in a sustained and honest way. On the plane to America to collect his new research partner's notes on the spiders, Gruber passes out from the anxiety of executing the invention. While passed out, he dreams he is at a party full of "representatives of enlightened countries," and that one of the guests explains to him that "there were countries

in the world which were so multicultural, that grief and bereavement were the only things that kept the peace there and prevented civil war from breaking out." Abruptly, the guest then says, "It's impossible to establish a new state every two streets and a square." The prophet Isaiah immediately appears to Gruber in the disembodied form of the following command from Isaiah 59:6: "Their webs shall not become garments, neither shall they cover themselves with their works" (55). Remembering this dream when he comes to, the rattled Gruber waits for his plane to land in a sweaty panic. Gruber's foreboding dream raises a philosophical question first intimated by the novel's epigram. The novel has depicted how an outdated fear of impurities—illustrated by the prohibition to mix fibers—underwrites the characters' inability to acculturate. The reader then watches this conservative position transfer to a perhaps even more problematic alternative, wherein economic globalization emerges as an answer to the conservative market. Surely, bigger markets produce more heterogeneous products and thus a more mixed public sphere—as in the Freyrean case—but the effect is that globalization and neoliberalism merely cast people in terms of their benefit to capital. Further, as this novel points out, there exist original problems closer to home that needs to be worked out and handled honestly first, and these are the violated intimacies between human beings.

After reading *Textile*, one is obliged to question the neoliberal ethic of locating progress in the private sphere. (Thinking of the Israeli-Palestinian fashion partnerships, whom do they benefit? Do they not bring capital into an already saturated Israeli economic sphere? Do they bring the Palestinian power? That is, will they help the Palestinians to achieve representation in the Knesset and/or bring legitimacy and strength to the PA?). Lirit—whose response to grief is to spend more capital (shopping)—chooses globalization over tradition, and ultimately defies her mother and grandmother and overhauls the factory. Gruber's character also mirrors the transition from tradition to globalization. Gruber, in fact, fears cosmopolitanism; he worries that staying in America will erode the authenticity of his Hebrew tongue and his "solid"-ity as a Jew (123). His fears are warranted, as America proves to be transnaturing. While the Gruber children deal with their mother's ignominious death in Israel, Irad Gruber is devolving into an occupier in his exiled home of America. That Western capitalism turns him into an occupier confirms the questions Castel-Bloom poses are worth pursuing by Jews.

Castel-Bloom uses the language of fabric to illustrate Gruber's invasiveness. Whether compelled by grief or by a newly found freedom after his wife's death (which he hears about over the phone), he falls in love with McPhee, who becomes the occupied. He begins wetting Bahat's sheets at night, both urinating and sweating in them. The sheets mark both his reversion and his burdensome presence—they literally inhibit intimacy. He decides to miss his plane back to Israel and settle into an extended stay at McPhee's, while she is forced to clean up after him and deal with his erratic and aggressive, albeit pathetic, behavior. He decides he likes McPhee's place because it feels "lived in," compared to his home neighborhood, which, because "there's an overdose of newness there," he feels an "obligation to the house itself," as it is "less frightening when you're not the first" (225). Gruber clarifies this to say, "I don't like buying directly from the contractor, certainly not from the contractor's paper…When there are previous occupants, you go into a place that *exists*, and you merge in quietly, like a side street with a main road. But when you move into a place like my apartment, you get an existential shock" (226; emphasis in the original). Gruber, in Bahat's house, is performing like a madman looking for a home, but he ends up becoming the occupier. Castel-Bloom's dramatization comments on an insurmountable problem plaguing the Jews: the problem of not belonging and the persistent failures (and violations therein) to make a home in the pursuit of retrieving a lost past. Of Israel, Gruber laments, "I'm not prepared to go back to that rootless place. Sometimes I actually feel that I don't exist there" (229).

Once Gruber finally realizes that he has to abandon his occupancy in Bahat's house, Bahat releases her resentment of his abuse of her and her home, and they actually share a night of sexual intimacy together and honest conversation. It is as if his release of oppressive behaviors allows the oppressed to forgive him, and even to love him. One reads a not-so-subtle hint here that intimacies between occupier and occupied are possible. As with the poetry, this intimacy is also made possible by maintaining partial boundaries. Once Gruber leaves, McPhee reinstalls those boundaries with fabric, trying to forget his oppressive, though ultimately appealing presence. She strips the sheets, deposits them into the laundry, strips herself of her own clothes, puts on an "old flannel nightgown," and gets into her bed (232). By recuperating the self through a return to the old, traditional comforts, Bahat wields fabric in order to redeem an estranged life. In the final pages, Castel-Bloom stages

fabric for its potential to create malleable, but present, boundaries between humans and cultures. Though there is a kind of miscegenation in this novel between occupied and occupier, Castel-Bloom warns against a completely assimilated economic sphere as a means toward peace between humans, as it can result in whitewashing a culture and alienating a community from itself. The human textile indexing relations and family traditions is aesthetically rich, but it can easily be alienated through its exploitation as a commodity rather than a metaphor.

Though the political sphere unquestioningly informs the domestic entanglements in *Textile*, the story transcends its unique geopolitics to enrich the reader's understanding of the larger problem of Diaspora, especially when a Diaspora is being managed and defined by the state. Mandy Gruber's botched plastic surgery ends up killing her, and on her death-bed (which tragically doubles as her surgery recovery bed), her final fragment of memory includes a reiterated warning, passed down from her mother, to keep the factory conservative. "Children. Body to science. The funeral later. For what's left. No to organic cotton . . . No nonsense. My line to continue. Like my mother. From generation to generation . . . I'll haunt you from above," she warns her daughter, in whose hands the factory will fall. Lirit has no plans to maintain the integrity of the business according to her grandmother's and mother's definition; however, for a brief moment she worries about the validity of her mother's threat, for she "remembered how her mother would say that death was the unraveling of a thread from the fabric of life, and from the point of view of the dead, death was a final exit. It seemed to Lirit that she had discovered a contradiction in her mother's words, because if death was a final exit, the unraveling of thread, how would she be able to haunt her from above?" (140). But that aporia is part and parcel of the duality of the textile itself.

The Material Culture of Israel-Palestine

While textiles signal Israeli economic progress, given that it constitutes one of its chief industries, and while it provides opportunities for interethnic entrepreneurship, it can also embody social unrest within its borders. The world has seen the Palestinian struggle encoded in phenomena such as the keffiyeh controversy, where people came under fire for donning the recognizable black and white

patterned scarf in what came to be a Western fashion statement of solidarity with the Arab people. Israeli Occupation, of course, is predicated upon a recognizable uniform as well. Palestinian people, especially women, are granted relative anonymity due to traditions of veiling and head-wrapping, adding a sense of power and security to social protest. As I have demonstrated, Israeli national poet Yehuda Amichai negotiates the humanity of the "enemy" with white fabric motifs and the archetypical kite, because kites are a growing national symbol of innocence, shared by both Palestinian and Jewish writers.

Folded within Israel's industrial progress is a concerning human resources issue involving Arab women textile workers and their Jewish managers. According to Israel Drori who extensively studied a cluster of factories in the Galilee region of northern Israel (most of them underwear producers), the "process of creating a work culture amid a ubiquitous structure of domination" involved comprehensive exploitation of the "Arab patriarchal tradition of male control over women" in order to maintain a "system of managerial control over workers" (2). Sometimes this power dynamic takes on a sexual tinge (182), but it does not imitate the romantic master/slave relationship that Freyre envisions in his Brazilian case. There is no account of a worker-manager relationship that results in family-building, and the relationship certainly does not produce a mixed social sphere. What one can surmise is that the relationship produces more capital for Israel while contributing to the subjugation of the subaltern woman. She ends up being doubly suppressed—once by her native codes, and again by the occupier who, contradictorily, images himself as her progressive opposite. While these relationships sometimes create bonds between Jewish and Arab men during negotiations over the women's labor, these bonds are still being formed on account of what has become a gendered skill. Moreover, it is more likely that these bonds bear underlying feelings of resentment, especially on behalf of the Arab families who have been coerced into dependence on Jewish industry. So while the private sphere in Israel can bring antagonistic ethnic groups into contact, the labor hierarchy restages colonial patriarchal dominance.

Drori's study illustrates the contradictions of neoliberalism in miniature. His fieldwork correlates to the figurative implications examined in this chapter to the extent that it presents the limitations of textile intimacy when it meets industry. Though

the constraints of his genre preclude him from theorizing figurative implications in his observations, a material cultural reading of these factories sees the importance in the fact that the women are sewing not just any clothing or textile object, but designer intimate garments specifically. They are also ostensibly working them with the utmost care, under pressure to maintain the legacy of Israeli quality. The Galilee plants present, then, in even starker view than Castel-Bloom's literary pajama factory, the deep affective side to textiles, even in their industrial contexts. If politically antagonistic bodies work with intimate objects, and in close quarters under protocol that attempts to protect the private from the raging political outside, the relationships are bound to undergo a physical and emotional dialectic. This is in part evidenced by the sexual deferment between the Jewish manager and Arab seamstress, imaged vividly in the intimates apparel. The manager's actions can be read as desire overcoming political boundaries—as in the Freyrean case—or as perversely executed and exploitative if the ethnic and economic hierarchies go unchanged—as articulated in feminist interventions of Freyre.

There exists a redeeming private sphere that brings enemies into healthy intimacy. Nonprofit Fair Trade textiles and handicrafts cooperatives like *Sunbula* (meaning "spike of wheat") and *Servv*, which promote the mission of financial independence through cloth and its power of unity, bring Jews and Arabs together in a way that the Israeli textile industry cannot. Freyre would be happy to compare these collaborations to the Brazilian co-ops; as part of their mission, Arab-Jews work together to attack the larger neoliberal structure that is causing mutual experiences of suffering. In a crucial way they pick up where Freyre left off by promoting the empowerment of women specifically, thus attempting to alter the patriarchal dialectic that Freyre so prized.

Due to its role in the burgeoning consciousness of nationhood, the Palestinian handicraft and arts movement deserves identification as one way Palestinians are asserting power. In his chapter "On National Culture," from his later work, *The Wretched of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon theorizes handicrafts and native art as strengthening national ethos (48–49). Widad Kamel Kawar's landmark book *Threads of Identity* (2011), which displays her 3,000-piece Palestinian costume collection, amassed over 60 years, provides international scholars and curators (as well as laypeople interested in local markets) with the pathos

(and bourgeois appeal) to invest in the Palestinian cause. The author, and the women textile artists who offer themselves as subjects, remind us of the profound textuality of their handicrafts. One woman's story provides the framework for the entire book, wherein dressmaking helps her "deal with the trauma experienced after Occupation" (27). Their narrative elements preserve the Palestinian national mythos while also preserving the cultural bond that textiles can create.

In the deployment of fabric conceits in Amichai, Ashrawi, and Barghouti, in the narrative textiles of Occupation, and in the collaborative fiber networks, I read a celebration of affect as the only *logical* step toward peace. The craft movement provides both an emotional language and a very material expression of national solidarity. This is another legitimating feature of the Palestinian "nation." Free trade, not-for-profit organizations largely run by Palestinian women, such as *Sunbula*, use narratives of independence to attract global patronage to the many craft cooperatives with which they are contracted. The handicraft and costume projects, while valiant, have also provided the fodder for the new "face" of Palestinian victimhood: the peasant woman in traditional garb, weaving in her displaced home, a figure problematized by Tina Sherwell in "Palestinian Costume, the Intifada and the Gendering of the Nationalist Discourse." Notwithstanding its feminist tensions, the emphasis on native textile art helps Palestinians testify to what James Clifford calls "the concrete reality of an earlier stage of human Culture" (224), much like the grandfather's cloak in Barghouti's poem bears witness to a history that refuses to be silenced. In the Occupied Territories, craft is promoted to a higher aesthetic and political value because it is contextualized within its purposive present (Clifford 224), which is, ironically, to retrieve a somehow more authentic past. The more it produces and disseminates, the more legitimacy it gains in relation to the dominantly accepted Jewish storyline.

To some international human rights advocates (including, in a large part, Jews), the Jewish storyline is on the verge of losing its status of "nation" based on Renan's theory of the legitimating process of communal suffering. However, Palestinian and Israeli poets are providing witness to a type of intranational suffering affecting both nations, which is engendered by empathy for the enemy. Amichai, Ashrawi, Barghouti, and Castel-Bloom offer a different vision than one of anxiety over legitimacy. They

suggest legitimacy will be achieved through inviting intimacies and allowing for the encounter to be contested. If figurative relationships can be imagined through fabric, it would be inspiring to see it manifest materially, perhaps through more Jewish-Arab collaboration in the handicrafts and nonprofit arts sector, such as that currently promoted by cooperatives like Sidyanna of Galilee, where Jewish women work together with Palestinian women to sell their handicrafts. This point cannot be overstressed: these literary and material discourses proclaim the value of specifically female-female cooperation in the program toward peace.

The success of the Arab Spring revolution depended in large part on the widespread use of itinerant signs, able to be wielded with ease and collected quickly in flight from martial forces; the body became its chief vehicle of protest. Fabric head wrappings, arm and head bands, flags, banners, and just general clothing marked the "protester" and his/her regional identity. The Spring caused a boom in the global art world and one of the many ways it inspired artists to respond to the revolution was through fabric art and story quilts. One woman's quilt made a splash in the folk art community. Titled "Arab Spring on Facebook," Judy Paschalis depicts the participating locales in a patchwork connected by social networking discourse and thread. Some international Jews endorsed and even participated in the "network." The effect of social communication and an increasing body of aesthetic work concerned with affect indicates that perhaps now, more than ever, there is a desire for unity in the air. I argued at the outset that based on the theoretical frameworks of "nation" considered by Bhabha, Israel is being increasingly contested as a monolithic presence in the Middle East. Israeli hegemony, especially in its martial demonstrations and economic violations in Palestinian territories, appears to be increasingly unsustainable for writers. Themes of miscegenation and interethnic intimacy have emerged as an affective strategy toward imagining a more representative public sphere. These gestures should be read with interpretive care, however. Readings that conflate metaphors of intimacy with progress achieved risk relying on the private sphere for public change. In order for these metaphors to impact the public materially, more Israeli citizens and supporters will have to join coalitions such as the Arab Spring, Jewish Voice for Peace, Jews for Justice for Palestine, or support co-op initiatives that

garner from culturally distinct handicraft and fashion work an equal distribution of profits. In order to mobilize under a common fight against political and economic tyranny, literary expressions of intimacy, such as those examined in this chapter, are ideal textual artifacts to employ in the pursuit of not just a peace dialectic, but a truly egalitarian Israeli-Palestinian public sphere.

6

Reading Past Freyre

Disembodied Miscegenation

There exist yet more questions to be answered through a deeper understanding of Palestinian and Israeli writers' expressions of intercultural intimacy as points of resistance to state sanctions in the Middle East—sanctions that restrict mixed unions and marriages, reify national myths of ethnic purity, justify Occupation, and render transgressive the bodies of Arab-Jewish partners. Through an understanding of miscegenation as a literary strategy rather than a point of arrival, I have investigated the limitations and potentialities of intimacy in an unyielding and unrepresentative political climate, but I have not done all I can do in the way of the feminist implications of these unions.

When placed in conversation over the shared theme of interracial/interethnic intimacy, Israeli and Palestinian literature of the post-1967 Occupation era—increasingly, a "fertility war" era—divulges the female lover as a litmus test for the conservative enterprises of Zionism and Palestinian nationalism, as well as, more surprisingly, for the liberal, cosmopolitan third-state imaginaries. The feminist's dilemma of authors' investment in the beloved begs amplification. As a final point, here I delineate the politics of mixed love in Rula Jebreal's *Miral* and the poetry of Natalie Handal and Morani Kornberg-Weiss. These writers' more disembodied aesthetics of mixing should be read alongside the more embodied hybrid tableaus of Amos Oz ("Nomad and Viper" and *My Michael*) and Savyon Liebrecht ("A Room on the Roof"). I read each to problematize the other along a feminist conundrum: due to her capacity for intimacy and her ability to birth stable or unstable national citizens according to her choice of a mate, the Israeli or Palestinian mistress is figured largely as a playing field on which Arabs and Jews negotiate power and identity. Imagined as the means for the private

to become the public, she thus risks being reified as a private citizen for her singular, corporeal role in that process.

Lila Abu-Lughod warns against the tendency for Westerners to champion sexual and marriage sovereignty as a triumph of democracy over honor societies, and free love as a marker of liberalism as well as a suppressor of domestic abuse. Reminding that this thinking is both premature and self-congratulatory, Abu-Lughod writes,

> Historians, political theorists, philosophers, and feminist scholars have questioned these dogmas. Michel Foucault, for one, has shown us how modern discourses of sexual liberation came with new forms of discipline, medicalization, and a language of perversion. An older Marxist tradition held that the subordination of women emerged with the development of private property and the nuclear family. Many feminists have documented the ways women are objectified and turned into commodities in our late capitalist consumer society, whether to sell cars or pornography. But even if one ignores this kind of theorizing and research, shouldn't one at least ask for a more nuanced understanding of the place of love in [sharaf societies]? (126)

Abu-Lughod cautions against a misreading of the West as sexually liberated, and she also emphasizes the importance of giving voice to the profound presence of love and romance in Middle Eastern literary history. As critics tend to focus on the ways Arab culture turns on themes of *sharaf*, they have downplayed the fact that "love has been a special theme since pre-Islamic Arabic poetry and on to the romantic storytelling that formed the basis for European chivalric genres [. . .] Things can go wrong for people everywhere. Some fathers are violent, some brothers commit incest, there are men who kill their wives and lovers on suspicion, and there are families and marriages that are dysfunctional and abusive. 'Honor cultures' do not have a monopoly on violence against women" (126). Accordingly, as I interpret the feminist work of disembodiment within the following Israeli-Palestinian pieces, it is to recall the invocation of the cultural necessity of love as a narrative thread, enclosed within a critique of its biopolitical instrumentalization within strained contemporary nationalisms.

Avoiding the Heterosensual Mode in Rula Jebreal's *Miral*

The repression of desire in Jebreal's work is a strategic response to the burden of writing the nation. Her novel *Miral* challenges the

notion that Israeli-Palestinian women have access to representation while they have been invested with the reproductive power of liberation, peace, and/or Zionism, and she submits for consideration the degree to which their intimate choices are predetermined. Jebreal redeems the Israeli-Palestinian woman as a politically active cosmopolitan figure, but her successful heroines' power exists ultimately in their chasteness. Miral's ultimate destiny to be an unmarried educator—that of a leader who cannot be burdened by the Jewish, Palestinian, and Christian men who ruined her mother's life—represents her resistance to privatization. But can this only be accomplished through the disavowal of hetero intimacy? Jebreal's text errs on the affirmative, but only insofar as she sets romance aside to watch the more immediate project of educational liberation unfold.

After the massacre at Deir Yassin in 1948, Jebreal's backdrop heroine, Hind Husseini, makes a life-affirming decision never to marry, which enables her to solidify her plan to orchestrate a school for war-orphaned girls in Palestine. The decision is presented in the novel as self-evident. Expressing thanks to Allah for her life's work to date, she then prays for help three times, as is convention; while praying, without transition, "she decided she would never marry" (25). The reader might assume the decision is a consecrated outcome of her prayer in an otherwise secular novel. Hence, it takes on a higher order importance that frames the entirely desexualized content of the rest of the book. For Jebreal, there is something that makes women's political action incompatible with the loss of sovereignty at risk in marriage. The public aspirations of Hind cannot be integrated into a private life, at least as the conditions stand for women in the contact zones in Israel-Palestine.

While the sensual mode is ultimately absent from *Miral*, it is not devoid of romantic partnerships, particularly the mixed romance. These relationships are dryly articulated, itemized, and traversed without sentiment or reflection. Though this may be taken for artistic lack, the methodology seems motivated. A novel about women's political action in Israel-Palestine that intends to problematize binaristic notions of the two-state solution could quite easily collapse into the straightforwardly vivid allegories of interethnic sex or Palestinian-Jewish procreation, but it avoids this pitfall. Jebreal features less embodied, more myriad examples of mixing. Several examples abound: Miral's mother, Nadia, after fleeing the sexual abuse of her stepfather in the rural Arab town Halisa, finds accommodations with a Moroccan Jewish restaurant owner

in Jaffa, and they become lovers. She leaves him when he proposes marriage. She later falls in love with a Catholic businessman named Beni from Nazareth while she is dancing in an Israeli-owned nightclub. It is with him that she conceives Miral. The man leaves her, and she believes he has rejected what she had perceived to be their shared Israeli identity, unable to reconcile her religious (Muslim) or occupational (dancer) identities with his own Catholic heritage. It is the relationship's breach that brings into focus her inheritance as a Palestinian.

Curious is Jebreal's choice not to theorize the telos of Arab-Jewish mixed intimacy. Of Nadia's lovers, she chooses the one who produces the least problematic body to be procreative—the Arab Christian. Likely this is because this subject can more seamlessly traverse Palestinian and Israeli society than a Palestinian with Jewish heritage. A Mizrahi father and Palestinian Arab mother would complicate the narrative: while Jebreal might be able to submerge the ethnoreligious tension into subtext, based on the absence of matrilineal Jewishness, Miral's demographic would still force Jebreal to address questions of citizenship that would seem to be beyond the scope of her novel. Specifically, it would draw too much attention to Miral's body in theorizing her subject positioning and its relevance to her political action.

At every turn, romance works to destabilize any clean notion of an Israeli state, but fully fledged romantic unions are ultimately vexed, as Nadia's eventual suicide demonstrates. However, through the impossibility of healthy love and its fruition, characters assent to a progressive calling. Rejecting marriage enables Hind and Miral to devote themselves to education, and Beni's desertion of Nadia brings about her pride for a cosmopolitan identity. Nadia's conversation with her fellow prisoner, Fatima, illustrates this pluralistic desire:

> If you're born in Israel, that means you are born as an Arab or Jew, and every day there will be someone who glares at you suspiciously. I pretend not to notice, I walk with my head high, but more and more I feel as though I'm being scrutinized and judged. I'm a minority within a minority because I don't belong to anyone or anything. I have olive skin, black hair, full lips; my entire physical appearance is a reminder that I'm a Palestinian. I associate with them, I go to their clubs, and their music is the same, just as their food is the same as the food I eat. And yet I have never felt that I was one of them [. . .] Why did she necessarily have to be either Arab or Jewish? Couldn't she just be Nadia, Nadia the rebel, Nadia who was free? (81)

The expressed desire is for all the material trappings of hybridity to project a transcendental identity of freedom. She pleads against an essential hybridity, wherein the subject's pluralism is confirmed by pointing to a synthesis of two agreed-upon stable signifiers; adversely, she wants to get outside of the body, toward the more abstract signifier of "free" subject.

Mixing in this novel is also, importantly, homosocial. Female Palestinian solidarity with Jewish women is inflected by resistance to a larger patriarchal system that has failed women. Fatima points out her fellow Jewish women prisoners "were all thieves, prostitutes, and unfortunate wrectches, basically victims in their own right" (93). The lack of ethnoreligious segregation in women's jails is, on the one hand, a leveling force, and on the other, a reminder that a binaristic Israel only sees women as national subjects for their procreative potential. Namely, it is of no consequence to the Israel of this novel that women would form political bonds in prison (Jews and Arabs are not segregated in Israeli women's prisons, unlike men's). This great oversight to which Jebreal alludes has the potential to liberalize Israel from within, if the jailed subjects are eventually reintegrated into Israeli society. Utilizing this procedural difference, Jebreal emphasizes intimacy with other women, rather than women's bonds with men, as the primary force for progressive change. As the mouthpiece for eros being a luxury not afforded the region, the revolutionary, Fatima, who is struck by Nadia's beauty when she first meets her in jail, declares: "there's no room for Venus in this tormented land [. . .] this is where beauty dies" (70).

The premise of heterosexuality is not a platform for writing the nation in *Miral*, as it has been for the other authors examined previously, who have used it to imagine third space or to express anxiety over miscegenation. Far from being so, the closest the novel gets to the erotic mode transpires during the same-sex kiss between the daughter of an IDF officer, Lisa, and the Palestinian Miral. Miral meets Lisa through her Palestinian friend, Samer, with whom Lisa has begun a romantic relationship. From the beginning, the hetero-romance is doomed: "[Samer] loved Lisa, but he knew all too well that 'mixed' relationships often fostered an initial illusion of happiness and equality before the weaker of the two parties, if not both of them, plunged into an abyss of incomprehension and racism" (249). While the union does eventually meet its breach, as is inevitable in fictional, normative Arab-Jew romances, it has enabled Miral and Lisa to meet; moreover, the longevity of their relationship remains free from threat. While the novel deaestheticizes the

hetero-relationship to demonstrate its being a luxury of more equitable geopolitical conditions (where one party does not possess such stark institutional power over the other), it entertains glimmers of aesthetic possibility in female-female intimacy, narrated as follows:

> "Do you want to know how to *really* kiss a man?"
>
> Miral looked at her friend in astonishment, not knowing what to expect from her. Then, in a faltering voice, she replied, "Y . . . yes?"
>
> [. . .]
>
> Without hesitation, Lisa stepped close to her and delicately seized Miral's chin between her thumb and her index finger. Then she looked at Miral with a reassuring smile and said, "Now relax, don't think about anything, and follow me." Lisa pressed her lips to Miral's, and a feeling of warmth flooded through her. (251)

I argue that this fleeting erotic sensory imagery afforded these characters is allowable because their relationship does not bear the burden of being a biopolitical intervention. However, importantly, their relationship still poses a political threat under the radar of Israeli and Palestinian radicalism—which is solely focused on a demographic war—in that their camaraderie is tremendously binding.

Though Jebreal resists reading the nation through women's fertility, she undeniably invests in women as the future of a liberal Israeli(-Palestinian) state. The daughter-mother relationship presents a distinctly gendered and generational challenge to the increasingly intolerant, old-guard politics of Israeli men. Lisa's distancing from her father's conservative, fear-based politics to her mother's socialist, more humanistically nuanced ones represents this double emphasis on generational renewal met with feminist solidarity. Of Lisa's shift toward identifying with her mother, the narrator writes,

> [Lisa] adored her father, a strong, brave man in whom she had taken great pride when she was a little girl. Lately, however, a kind of uneasiness had grown alongside that sentiment as she watched the violence on the daily news programs. He never allowed his daughter to forget that they were on a mission in Israel; [. . .] During the last two years, with his promotion to general, their talks had become increasingly tense. Every time she saw him, he seemed harder, wearier, and driven more by intolerance than by his old resolve.

> During those same years, Lisa had discovered in her mother a woman who was much more interesting than she had ever believed, while her father's sporadic visits had become more of a nuisance than a pleasure. Her mother would tell her about her youth in various kibbutzim, where the socialist ideal was very strong, the people believed in justice and equality, and everyone worked the lands, lived, and ate together. (247)

Then the reader learns that Lisa's mother had left university to get married (248). It is interesting that this would come up at the moment of ego recognition; her newly accepted identification with her mother becomes entwined with a cautionary subtext of women's privatization. In Israeli-Palestinian women's relationships with each other, Jebreal locates the power to engage politically, beyond their relevance to the family-nation microcosm. She intervenes in an outdated generational hegemony, creating mixed intimacy, albeit chaste, in the process.

Textual Play in Morani Kornberg-Weiss's *Dear Darwish*

Other Israeli-Palestinian women authors' approaches to peace entail, not containing heterosexuality, but strategically disassociating bodily procreation from it, regarding intimacy only as one of many preconditions for political efficacy, and preferring the pleasures of the text to stage the mixed union. In my readings of poetry by Nathalie Handal and Morani Kornberg-Weiss, I find the influence of Derrida and narrative erotics on their works to be especially illuminating. Derrida fortifies his legacy with self-perpetuating themes, transcendent of authorship, claiming,

> a writing that is not structurally readable—iterable—beyond the death of the addressee would not be writing...to write is to produce a mark that will constitute a sort of machine which is productive in turn, and which my future disappearance will not, in principle, hinder in its functioning, offering things and itself to be read and to be rewritten...for a writing to be writing it must continue to "act" and to be readable even when what is called the author of the writing no longer answers for what he has written, for what he seems to have signed. (7–8)

Handal and Kornberg-Weiss disburden themselves of the corporeal imperative to produce statist ideals by transferring their focus to

the linguistic sphere. Those who had always held (or been invested with, either for or against their will) the power of bodily reproduction now have the added power of textual reproduction, posing a stymieing threat to an otherwise phallogocentric discourse. What Derridean poetics makes available to them, in other words, is the maintenance of the power of reproduction by rebuilding the means through the unstable sign, rather than the transcendental signifier. Derrida calls writing a "species" of general communication that circulates representation as ideal meaning (6), these endlessly deferred writings on the slippery signifier become their progeny, living on, ironically, through their authorship of hybridity.

On the invention of writing (by men), he writes,

> If men write it is: (1) because they have to communicate; (2) because what they have to communicate is their "thought," their "ideas," their representations. Thought, as representation, precedes and governs communication, which transports the "idea," the signified content; (3) because men are *already* in a state that allows them to communicate their thought to themselves and to each other when, in a continuous manner, they invent the particular means of communication, writing. (4)

Here he claims that language is a priori, and that writing is both a continuation of that state and "continuous" in itself, insofar as it plays by the rules of the game, as specified in his later work. Derrida locates its continuous nature in its ability to transcend the author.

Through poetic code that invokes Darwish the love poet, Handal and Kornberg-Weiss find ways to self-perpetuate despite the grave reality of death always looming behind their subjects and speakers. This code carries the impressions of having already been written time and time again, as the speakers utilize repetition and gaps; it promises to be continuous, such as their recognizable autoerotic metaphors that invoke Darwish. Interested in "the way *voice* and *body* intersect within lyrical practice" ("Students"), Tel Aviv poet/American student Morani Kornberg-Weiss's experimental 2013 dedication *Dear Darwish* uses textual play to refract the many ways intimacy with the other produces unresolvable political and personal questions, rather than a statist ideal. The work is characterized by a generative incompleteness that is hyper-aware and spiritedly critical of the phallogocentric narrative assembly of gender-body-knowledge. The result of a lyrical, erotic dalliance with Darwish—rather, his trace—is not an organic hybrid of a meeting of the two, but

a deferment of containable meaning that is blissfully defeated in its attempt to engender knowledge. To conjure Darwish, Kornberg-Weiss arrogates the writer's power to render the body present, yet recognizes the futility of doing so:

> There.
> I put you in this poem:
> < >
> Now
> You I we together
> in this poem.
> (35, ll. 1–6)

Darwish is both there and not there. The speaker seems to respect his absent presence as exile's poet. The spot for Darwish is an empty bracket. He is a memory, a Derridean trace, like a ship that disappears at first instant of docking.

Later, the speaker will repeat "strange" and "stranger," recalling Darwish's Jewish muse Rita, to whom Darwish persistently referred as both stranger and lover—the "fantasy of moving so close in you Mahmoud / so close you and i do not recognize each other / and act politely like strangers do [*sic*]" (36, ll. 18–20). However, the erotic lyricism and the invocation of Rita are announced as present solely within the confines of the poem, revealing the celibate intimacy of the poetic space.

> We are now in this poem.
> The space
> we share
> it: see:
> I you I you I you I you
> (7–14)

Being together in the poem represents a kind of textual play protected from the bounds of materialism. Moreover, the joining and fluidity of "I" and "you" actually negates miscegenation in the sense that it closes the binary necessary to an essentialized definition of interethnic love. However, the textual relationship does not preclude the dynamic of power, nor does it preclude a gesture to the material "outside," as the speaker will then ask, "What if I stand above you / (in this poem):" (15–16) and later the reversal, "What if you / stand above me?" (20–21). The parenthetical around "in this poem" suggests the existence of an alternative

space outside the bounds of the poem, perhaps a reference to a quite real "outside" constituted by a clear imbalance of power that privileges the speaker's people (like Rita's) over Darwish's. That would certainly strain the relationship between the speaker and the conjured Darwish. However, the bounds of the poem allow them to shift power between the two in a way that is reminiscent of the sex act as a stage for transgressing established power roles.

Through a single lower case "m" that invokes both the author's and the addressee's first name, Weiss's speaker transgresses the binaries between speaker and subject, poet and beloved, Jew and Arab, and so forth. That it is in a diminutive form versus a titular one—lowercase rather than capital—levels the authority, and thus, power, traditionally associated with naming. If one reads the "m" as an incomplete and decapitalized "Ms.," "Miss.," "Mrs.," or "Mr.," the egalitarian gesture is mirrored by a similar gesture to call attention to the fluidity of gender, especially in its relation to a hierarchy of personal titles. A "deep conflict" pervades her work, and that conflict is that place "where we decide if we got lost or lost ourselves / from an m" (36, ll. 26–28).

In the middle of the poem, the speaker alludes to writer, poet, and performance artist David Antin's words, "to contribute to human not understanding" (9). The final "m" replaces a title of degree (PhD) with a deessentialized, neutralized personal title. Knowing about Israel-Palestine—memory—distances the speaker from her addressee (perhaps those same memories that keep Rita and Darwish's speaker from being together). The speaker's words also evoke a rather influential 1989 article published in the *Journal of Applied Behavioral Science* by Z. D. Gurevich that drew from Israeli-Palestinian case studies to deemphasize the method of finding common ground in conflict resolution, positing that "the ability to not understand, rather than the ability to understand" is paramount to dialogic production (161). The word "strange" resounds prominently in Gurevich's work: "dialogue," he argues, "requires understanding, but it never overcomes the strange. The strange remains a creative challenge, a source of possibility and vitality, and a seed of alienation, opposition, and war" (161–162). In this study, observed dialogues between Arab-Palestinian and Jewish-Israeli teachers, in which each side tried to orient the other toward her or his interpretation of historical events, resulted in "points of impasse that exhausted any possibility that the participants' previous understanding could provide means for developing contact," and that once the participants were tired and defeated

by their assumption that a shared sphere of meaning exists, they could reach a point of generative stasis, so to speak, that would allow a "mutual recognition of defeat" (172). Gurevich calls this "active not understanding" that is both a "moment of separation" and one of "connection" in that it "touches the dialogic element itself. What seems like a defeat becomes a triumph—yet this is not the triumph of the self, but of the other as other for the self." In the retreat "from previous projections on the other," the subject "grants the other the power of presence" (172). Kornberg-Weiss's poetic language echoes the self-other reiteration in the scientific literature. Moreover, the self-object problem and the methodologies of negotiation that attempt to mediate it are not unlike the gender difference negotiation intrinsic to relationship counseling. The blurred line between discourses of ethnic conflict resolution in the Jewish-Arab context and that of the romantic partnership converges in Kornberg-Weiss's dedication.

The romance at the textual level is carried further in the lines in the seventh stanza on page 39 of the extended poetic address: "I undo you / letter by letter / breaking apart lines" (ll. 31–33). Undressing Darwish the poet—indeed, undressing the poem itself, Kornberg-Weiss proposes a kind of narrative erotics, in which the text stands in for the romantic encounter. Theoretically, this plays out a merger of Derridean trace, Marcusean eros, and anti-Brooksian (perhaps pro-Deleuzian) narratology. I reference Derridian trace here using the poet's own autobiography; resurrecting Darwish through the framework of unknowability, Kornberg-Weiss writes, "*Dear Darwish* enables me to encounter him as a poet whose existence was denied to me" (105). Marcusian eros abounds in the poet's investment in the erotic mode for a kind of civil reconciliation. In terms of narrative erotics, Kornberg-Weiss draws from its theoretical paradigm—procuring knowledge through the body of the other—but challenges its epistemological assumption.

Peter Brooks's framework of narrative intention in *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative* is the "death instinct," a concept he adapts from Freud's *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*. Brooks uses it to refer to the necessary destruction of the self on the path toward the fulfillment of desire, desire being the desire for knowledge, and the process of desire emulating the plot of the sexual act—arousal, climax, and the end of pleasure (death). As Brooks puts it, "With the possibility of the total realization of desire, the self encounters the impossibility of desiring, because to desire becomes, and can only be, the choice of death of that same self" (51). Brooks

is concerned with the death instinct's manifestation in what he calls "epistemophilia"—the preoccupation with procuring knowledge. The temple of that knowledge he finds to be located in the physical body, so that the literal uncovering of that body becomes an exercise in discovering knowledge. Epistemophilia is a preoccupied state that generally leads to love and loathing of the human body; the body's mystery inspires awe with the desire to uncover (and discover) as well as a simultaneous fear of the reveal. Contra Brooks, sex in Kornberg-Weiss's extended ballad to Darwish does not represent the fulfillment of knowledge; rather, the process of unknowing—actually destroying knowledge—is the engine of intimacy.

As the search to understand the other only takes the practitioner so far, especially in the Israeli-Palestinian case wherein the other is so very unknowable, there is no real finding out to be had. The pleasure of the text comes from the stasis of unknowability. The repetitious destructuring of the poem and of Darwish constitutes the speaker's pleasure with him. The maintenance of pleasure through repetition is Deleuzean. He writes, "Repetition came before the pleasure principle as the unconditioned condition of the principle. If we now return to experience, we find that the order is reversed, and repetition subordinated to the principle; it is now at the service of the pleasure, since we tend to repeat what has been found to be pleasurable, or is anticipated to be" (115). In repeating the act of not finding out, of antiempirical manipulation achieved in dressing and undressing the poem and Darwish, Kornberg-Weiss ironically finds the secret to self-other intimacy: blissful unknowing.

The poetry collection also suggests a way out of the political is possible through romantic will: "I don't want this one to be political Mahmoud / / So it won't be" (39, ll. 3–4). The speaker then sets the scene for apolitical opportunity, marked by a late-night visit from the addressee, making good on "a 'rendezvous' 'promised'" (39, l. 10):

> Mahmoud, "I would have possessed you,
> [. . .]
> you would have possessed me."
> And "then you and I" "would"
> become "rhythmic collusion."
>
> (39, ll. 11–15)

The speaker merges her own words with the beloved's (from *In the Presence of Absence*), words that were once his to say to his beloved.

Poet quoting poet, the merger is erotic—"You 'come' 'into this merciless night'" (39, l. 9) The speaker uses the beloved's own words to imagine "a 'private tomorrow'" (39, l. 22). Domestic imagery abounds: "The room stands, / bed / upright, I, another crease / in the sheets. The dimness / of morning, a cat mounted / on the night stand" (ll. 26–30). In this momentary arrest of politics, the private can truly be the private, albeit, ultimately, a cerebral affair.

The erotic is cathected into the poetic relationship. The speaker wakes, sensually speaking to her subject—"It is early Mahmoud" (40, l. 3)—and compulsorily clutches her thigh. This autoerotic gesture moves into the textual:

> The pages smooth
> in my hand uneven
> made stiff. A rigid
> living breathing object.
> (7–10)

The phallic imagery of Mahmoud's oeuvre turns to procreative imagery invoking a genealogy of the writing and sex act as synonymous, carrying a multitude of resonances, not the least of which is the phallic charge of the pen, and the symbiotic relationship between works and progeny or legacy. Lyric turns like "I make hundreds / of balls of you" (11–12), and "You are now most dense / in your outer regions" (16–17) secure this connotation. Then, an immensely erotic consumption of Mahmoud's oeuvre transpires:

> I move you into my mouth
> place your letters among my teeth
> and swallow each line.
> (18–20)

Despite this sumptuous display of textual appropriation, the speaker uses Darwish's own words to note, still, "The poem is incomplete" (24). In its generative, repetitious results, the act of letting the other in is, then, less like appropriation and more like hybridity. Kornberg-Weiss has taken on the role of Rita, and in talking back to Darwish, both of them post-mortem, yet revived in the body of the new poet, she has erected a third state that embodies neither and both of them. It is especially important that the process was erotic.

If critical consensus finds Yehoshua's fiction to be caught up in the idea that Jews seek their own destruction, and that destruction happens apropos of falling for the enemy, *Dear Darwish* acts contra to the death instinct, in that textual intimacy does not have to prefigure the destruction of the self if the self suspends the desire to know during the encounter with the other.

In the words of Darwish's stranger/admirer: "Ours remains a one-way correspondence. / An addressee without an address. / I refuse to colonize you" (44, ll. 37–39). Even if Darwish were able to respond, the cultural convergence of colonization would be circumvented because their conversation would produce a space "where logics cancel each other out" (45, l. 11).

Dislocating Self-Other Intimacy in the Poetry of Nathalie Handal

Palestinian Diaspora poet Nathalie Handal lyricizes the sex-violence tension, so uniquely a component of the close proximity of the ongoing conflict. Interrogating, lamenting, and sometimes celebrating the slippages between war and lovemaking, she asks, "When was the last time we slept without dreaming we died, / without wishing the killer dead, without looking for our gun / while making love" ("Twelve Deaths at Noon," 11–13). In the context of its poem, this line laments the impossibility of privacy or leisure, given the exigence of national (read "violent") duty. Within the context of the collection, the line is also a postscript to the slippages between enemies and lovers, as the speaker has elsewhere drawn out the slippages between self and other through the erotic mode. Moreover, the line harkens to Darwish: it is exactly these slippages that render so powerful Darwish's image of Rita's gun on the poem's draft, next to the stockings on the chair.

Rita is also present in "The Warrior." The speaker, ostensibly a warrior himself, has been drinking wine alone with an important, fearsome man, but has momentarily forgotten to fear. An ominous "they" arrives, but the speaker is unchanged, "even after the wine, even after [he] saw a goat and corpse cut open side by side," a violent sacrifice—whether this image is a perversion of the biblical sacrifice or a doubling of it is unclear. The speaker references the rumored curse of the land, but instead of engendering thoughts of biblical or political proportions, the arrivants cause him to have "strange" thoughts, unexpectedly provincial perhaps: he wonders, "was I a / stranger to the lover who saw my curves

and scars, kissed them / then slept like a deserter" (7–9). Invoking Rita, the stranger/lover could be the land or an opposing warrior, hence being "like a deserter" in the postcoital slumber. The arrivants pronounce "she died yesterday," likely referring to the lover, but an opposing voice, prospectively the speaker's, notes, "but I heard she died a year ago," and further, "later that evening I found out she will die tomorrow." A male voice responds, "*shut up, there is only one way / to fight a war. Become the other*" (12–15). "I cross my legs," the speaker says, "and take his face apart trying to find a way to remember this moment otherwise" (14–16). Does the speaker literally maul the messenger's face, or just blazon him to try to unpack the confounding pain and uncertainty? Either way, the intent is the same: to misremember the moment of grief over the beloved, who could be the land, a casualty of war, or an enemy deserter all in one. That the speaker also composes a less vulnerable posture—crossing the legs—suggests the moment of trauma is marked by a defensive closure to intimacy. Becoming or consuming the other precludes intimacy and allows for the destructive event (the blazoning, or the traumatic misremembering).

As with Kornberg-Weiss's *Dear Darwish* collection, Handal's *The Lives of Rain* plays with the erotic mode to imagine the spaces of desire that open up in the midst of suffering and otherness. Textual play trumps that of the corporeal in the former. For the latter, the corporeal is pejorative. In "Gaza City," for instance, Handal reflects on the procreative as a source of perversion under the given political circumstances of Occupation. Inside Gaza City, the speaker holds her "hands" and a "check" against a "cold wall" (1–2). Embarrassed to be paid for her work, the speaker "hide(s) like a slut, ashamed" (2). Using the image of the cloak much like Mourid Barghouti, Gaza's destruction is likened to a state of violated undress: "I pull the collar of my light blue robe so hard / it tears, one side hanging as everyone's lives hang here" (3–4). Then, a religiosexual ecstasy goes awry. The speaker self-mutilates:

> My fingers sink deep into my flesh,
> I scratch myself, three lines scar my breasts,
> three faiths pound in my head [. . .]
> [. . .] *Debke* is no longer part of life,
> only funerals are. Gaza is pregnant
> with people and no one helps with the labor
> (5–10)

All of the usual constructive or procreative symbols—sex, dress, breasts, religion, weddings ("debke"), birth, welfare—are turned negatively to prostitution, tattered undress, defaced breasts, depravity (God has died), funerals, and overpopulation without opportunities for care.

Handal makes clear that, while the conditions of Israel-Palestine are rife for textual experimentations with hybridity, they are too degraded for corporeal hybridity, and therefore, corporeal hybridity must be imagined elsewhere, where the conditions are mythologized more confidently. Just as I have turned to Freyre to theorize mixed intimacy as a political and aesthetic strategy in Israeli-Palestinian literature, so, too, does Handal find Latin America a ready site for imagining hybridity in terms of desire and miscegenation.

The gesture of going elsewhere for love is a way of disburdening the already overburdened sphere of Israel-Palestine to produce sexual democracy. In other words, for healthy mixed intimacies, Israeli-Palestinian rhetors must first think outside of themselves. For example, comparative methodologies furnish writers a means toward unknowing, allowing them to get beyond the premise of its uniqueness. This has implications for many discourses: if Israel can be compared to other nation-spaces, the conventional premise of its exceptionalism no longer justifies arguments conceding to the status quo. For Handal, Latin America is an important offsite place for imagining Palestine. Her speaker stands in this site, overlooking "those people below as if I were / on the Mount of Olives looking / at the Old City"; the language in these lines, 20–24, and the position of the speaker, invoke Amichai's speaker standing on a rooftop in "Jerusalem," and this scene is not unlike that of the protagonist's cosmopolitan view of Tel Aviv in the final frame of *Le fils de l'autre*. These elevated positions signify the transcendent nature of diversity. Handal's speaker then marvels at

> how these people got here,
> so far from the Mediterranean sea,
> the desert heat.
>
> (25–27)

The collection begins in Israel-Palestine with the slippery signifier leaping between the erotic and the violent, next moving to the pejorative corporeal mode in Gaza, and then arriving in Latin America where the mixed body is celebrated. In "El Almuerzo de Tía Habiba," a mestiza-Arab figure embodies indigenous solidarity.

An indigenous Mexican heritage merges with the diasporic Arab, whose own indigenous presence has been robbed. Handal writes of this figure, "Her Indian features recite poems her ancestors tell her / the way Tía Habiba's deep curved eyes / tell me about the holy land" (11–13). Latin America, a place where this ethnic and racial hybrid figure can thrive, emerges as an organic alternative to other cosmopolitan sites, such that, in the poem "Caribe in Nueva York," the "Caribeño" subject longs for the Caribbean despite enjoying the spoils of New York, telling the speaker, "I can't forget the sun on my back / in my eyes / but this is Nueva York in winter / and I can't see the beautiful brown legs / of *las mulatas* (*sic*)" (12–16). Wistfully Freyrean, the speaker, longs for a particularly embodied, sensual racial democracy uniquely associated with Latin America.

Handal, like Freyre, entertains the mythological romance of the mulatto. "*La negrita* is not far / from where I stand," the speaker in "Blue Hours" recounts. In their meeting, the speaker's Arabic starts to fade while her Spanish takes the forefront. They are bonded in the safety of dissolving language and culture barriers; they "desire" it, in fact. However, the speaker notes that her country and heritage still call to her, despite the momentary utopia that the intimacy with this woman and this racially cosmopolitan space afford. "*Compatriota*," the speaker's country calls to her, *"I will always find you / no matter what language you are speaking"* (37–38). Herein, female solidarity, self-other intimacy, and racial hybridity proffer a means for thinking Palestine. Further, the native retrieval lore becomes a way to long for the homeland.

After the mestiza/Arab experience of "El Almuerzo," "Caribe," and "Blue Hours," the reader reaches the Arab-Jew romance in "In Search of Midnight." In terms of poetic sequence, Latin America becomes a way of passing through, on the other side of which one can imagine the possibility of two enemies becoming two exiled subjects who can then share intimacy. The speaker recounts,

> He kissed my lips at midnight
> I let him
> He took my blouse off
> I let him
> ....
> ....
> He took my pants off
> I let him
>
> (1–9)

Through repetition, the speaker wants the reader to know that the encounter between the "I" and the male subject undressing her is consensual. What then, would be the alternative, but rape? The most common depiction of rape in Palestinian poetry is between the land and the Israeli state, particularly its martial incarnation; hence, that the speaker needs to convince the reader that this is not a case of rape, it would appear that the lover is an Israeli, yet importantly different. The speaker then discloses that the room in which the dalliance is taking place is "strange, dark / black and white" and that the city in which it takes place is one that the lovers "live in" yet "both do not know" (14–19). Both of them are cosmopolitan figures. The affair is interrupted by the lover's mispronunciation of the speaker's name, which prompts her to measure his privilege against her own profound diasporic experience:

> I stop him . . .
> Ask him if he has ever been exiled or imprisoned
> if he has ever mailed
> letters to a woman he
> once loved but would
> never see again
>
> (22–27)

Crucial to their intimacy is the subject's ability to understand exile. A blunder that would in any other circumstance arrest any further intimacy for a Palestinian, for whom names are so vital to the notions of identity and return, is mitigated by a surprising response; the subject provides his own testimony of having his name and identity violated. He testifies that he did not phonate his own name correctly in his "country," nor at the "enemy line," so he was "tortured" and exiled" (40–45). Further,

> I did not pronounce my name
> correctly upon arrival
> so I was given new papers
>
> (47–49)

Though this could be read in any number of ways along the general theme of the mutual assumptions of two migrant subjects in love, Handal makes a striking allusion to the paranoia of authenticity that makes a reading of the lover as a Jewish subject compelling. For one, he has a country from which he feels estranged as a diasporic figure. He has been given "new papers," possibly alluding

to the several historic moments in Jewish history that Jews have had to regenerate and carry around new documentation, particularly (and ironically) during their repatriation in Israel. Finally, he appears to be a victim of a mistrustful, monolithic nationalism that would alienate its own subjects at the behest of security. Especially tenuous is demonstrating one's allegiance and authenticity through the ability to pronounce one's Hebrew name.

Handal's hybrid cosmopolis is a place that is, by definition, elsewhere, and though it is also a sad place, marked by exile, its constituents are connected by a palpable lack. The dislocated relationship does not threaten the state because it is outside and immaterial to its demographic politics. Without this burden, the relationship between the two traveling subjects in the poem "In Search of Midnight" is figured as constructive, and both subjects seek out the night as a place to be reconfigured from its being a trigger of fear to being one in which lovemaking occurs. In the collection's poems set in Palestine, nighttime is conventionally—if not biblically—constituted not by its own tangibility, but by the absence of day. Night is associated with fear and coercive biopolitics, as in the lines, "tonight we will hear speeches / that tell us to open our legs / to scandal like whores" (7–9); and "tonight exiles, immigrants, refugees / will be caught in songbirds / cracked asphalt will recite old verses" (22–24). Night is also associated with violence, a usurper of love: "tonight love will be difficult" (31). With the proximity of Palestine removed, the miscegenated romance abroad entails a search for the dark's presence—indeed, a willingness to go into the dark and to reimagine its dynamic on more generative rather than destructive terms.

An excerpt from Anton Shammas's pseudoautobiographical novel *Arabesques* satirizes the tragic realities that proximity poses to the mixed romance. His portrait of the artist entails a self-conscious reflection on the forbidden Arab-Jewish romance as three mutually constituting elements: a common tragic trope in Israeli-Palestinian literature, a creative muse for Diasporic writers, and a reality affecting the Jewish and Arab Diasporas and their rapports with the nation-state. Anton daydreams,

> He will fall in love with a Jewish woman. With red hair. Married. To an army officer, maybe. An army officer's redhead. "One shore beyond desire," one David too many. A love that from the start is pregnant with the seed of its own self-destruction. A love that will never be realized. That's the initial premise. And when the forbidden

> fruit is revealed, the wounded husband will rage and, like Solomon, will make the woman choose: either the love split in two by the sword and the living child. And here, too, there will be a trial, at the end of which it will be decreed that everyone must return to his or her place. The living child will return to its mother, the dead love to the obtuse side of the triangle and life to its usual course. (93)

On one level, Anton and the red-headed Jewish mistress can never be realized: their love will not be legitimated in their own homeland, nor would it have been legal if attempted within the territorial bounds of Israel. On another level, it can be realized, but only through exile. In an interview with the *New York Times* after the novel's publication, Shammas notes that he has evolved to understand that his dual identities as a Palestinian Christian and as a Jewish state citizen are at odds with the reality that his Israel "cannot and will not grant me equal social and political rights," and that *Arabesques* is part of a project to be "blunt in asking the state to define itself and define me accordingly, freeing me from this schizophrenic identity"; he expresses his bewilderment that a Jewish American "has more shares in my state than I do. Is that normal? Is that what Zionism is all about? American Jews feel both American and Jewish. That's what I'm striving for, to reach that equation [. . .] I don't think the state of Israel will ever define itself in other terms [. . .] My case is hopeless" ("Family and Fable"). At variance to Shammas's confessed hopelessness is the hope that Anna Bernard reads in *Arabesques*, particularly with regard to the work it has the power to do. She argues that the novel exhibits "that an ethno-religious understanding of what it means to be an Israeli [. . .] need not, and indeed, already does not determine the demographic make-up of the state, Shammas makes it possible to replace that understanding of the nation with a more inclusive and horizontal definition based on political consent, not biological descent" (159). Bernard's is a reading that transcends the author's own dejected humor that casts doubt on this political definition's feasibility. His work, along with Handal's, denotes exile as the only safe space for mixed identity and the love that mobilizes it.

Handal's and Kornberg-Weiss's poetics frequently exploit the rhetoric of procreation, but their play remains chastely text-on-text, to put it coyly. The miscegenation theme emerges through playing and merging with difference, and it pervades their poetry as they borrow from biopolitical language; but they use it to the extent that they, ultimately, transcend it—either through linguistic

deferment or through dislocating love. Nor do they ever overtly historicize sexuality and writing, as does Michel Foucault. A sexual history of Israel-Palestine is not absent; rather, it is not directly confronted, as it is in Darwish's "Record! I am an Arab." Handal and Kornberg-Weiss remind readers that language and writing, like sex, is really about power. Foucault asserts that one of the components of sovereign power before the sixteenth century was the right to decide life and death, and this has since evolved into rhetorical systems of manipulation of the body in order to perform population control.[1] One sees this *patria potestas*[2] playing out in nationalism's phallocentric language, in that, in establishing their power and legacy, they take fanatical interest in their own form of population control. If language is a priori, then we experience sex through language. If language and sex are at the service of power and population imperatives (achieving immortality through one's progeny), then one gleans a kind of erotics of writing from Derrida's employment of the term *dissemination*, and also in Handal's and Kornberg-Weiss's use of the text to replace the hybrid's body.

Transformative women's roles in the Palestinian liberation project have a distinct place in both literature and cinema. *Wedding in Galilee* (Michel Khleifi, 1987), for instance, plots the nuptial preparations and culminating night of a politically tense Palestinian wedding. Having petitioned the Israeli government to relax curfew to enable the festivities, a Palestinian family deals with the dishonor of having the wedding chaperoned by Israeli officers. While the film does not deal with intermarriage, it does raise questions regarding the extent to which private love is compromised by national and public duty. Especially important to critics of this film is the consummation scene when the bridegroom's impotence signals the loss of sharaf/honor caused by the disempowering circumstances of the supervised wedding. The bride arrogates the power to deflower herself and produces the marriage sheet to ensure the conventions of the ritual are met. Ella Shohat argues that this scene is part of Khleifi's larger project to depict Palestinian women's agency and their crucial role in transforming a phallocentric Palestinian nationalism toward a more constructive model of liberation (44). For Anna Ball, "the bride's adoption of phallic authority can be read as an affront to these structures. Yet it can also be interpreted in relation to the extensive feminization of the land that occurs in colonial discourse, where territory, like woman, is penetrated, raped, and subjugated at the hands of the colonizer. In this sense, the bride's taking of her own virginity can be read as an internalization of

colonial violation within the female (and implicitly national) body" (9). In this way, the film can be interpreted as only partially a liberating representation for women, as the signifier of transformation still relies on what she does with her genitalia.

Handal and Morani-Kornberg Weiss, on the other hand, transcend the biopolitical burden to produce the hybrid (and the hybrid state) through the power in semiotics to make meaning beyond death. Derrida writes, "Every sign, linguistic or nonlinguistic, spoken or written (in the current sense of this opposition), in a small or large unit, can be *cited*, but between quotation marks; in so doing it can break with every given context, engendering an infinity of new contexts in a manner which is absolutely illimitable" (12). In Handal, especially, the process of decontextualizing writing—in her poetic efforts to free language from its referents, one reads a mutually beneficial relationship for the poet that is based on the erotic possibilities of text.

Postscripts

Throughout this study, I have traced the mixed relationship as a means toward refracting statist debates in Israel-Palestine. Beginning with Freyre's deployment of miscegenation tropes as a national narrative strategy, I then examined three sites of import in his work—the bedroom, the home, and industry—in terms of their relevance to Israeli-Palestinian writers Mahmoud Darwish (the bedroom), A. B. Yehoshua (the home), and Orly Castel-Bloom (industry). Again and again I have argued that Israeli and Palestinian literature that engages Arab-Jewish intimacy projects a desire to restructure the Israeli public sphere by entertaining a racially democratic future for Israel-Palestine. I have also cautioned, however, that the increasing emphasis on private affections between enemies represents disenchantment with legal resources, which could lead to a dangerous disavowal of the public sphere as a site for change. Thus, I have sought ways to identify the slippages between writers' investment in private desire and this investment's public efficacy.

Drawing from Freyre's brand of anthropology and critical race theory, supplemented by public sphere theory, Foucault's and Esposito's biopolitics, and Mercusean/Deleuzean notions of the role of desire in social formation, I have probed why Arab-Jewish intimacy is fictionally safe yet materially improbable given Israel's antimiscegenation laws, and I ask how these works can be mobilized against such circumstances. One of the formative questions

that has guided my research includes: how are Mahmoud Darwish's poems about his Jewish beloved, Rita, reenergized by recent events wherein Israeli forces condone renegade soldiers forcibly retrieving Jewish women from their Palestinian partners? Further, what is the relationship between Rita and the aborted Arab-Jewish child in *State of Siege*, considered his more political work? I answered this, in part, in chapter 3: there is a distinct, traceable trajectory between Darwish's early love aesthetics and his later politics, and that connection is biopolitical in nature. Rita represents more than just the lost land of Palestine, as critics have so argued in their attempts to disembody her; she represents a material threat to Israeli racial hegemonies, issuing from the Palestinian bedroom.

A. B. Yehoshua's application of ethnic instability to internal Jewish home life allowed me to examine how debates about racial democracy arising from the imposed binaries of the Occupation turn the Israeli Jew's gaze onto the self. I argued that Yehoshua's conceit of the Jew-Jew mixed romance engages with Israel's ethnic and racial politics—politics that preserves the area's earlier British colonial hierarchies and oppresses Arabs and North African Jews. I examined anxieties of miscegenation through the character of the half-Mizrahi/half-Ashkenazic madwoman in *A Late Divorce*. I located in Yehoshua's distortion of the Israeli home and family and in the novel's preoccupation with dark skin a legacy of the British Mandate, and I contextualized Yehoshua's orientalist depictions of the African Jew within Ashkenazic political and economic dominance in Israel.

The slippages I have located between the bedroom and the state in Darwish and between the home and the state in Yehoshua have proven to be dynamic also in the relationship between private industry and a statist future. In chapter 5, I applied Freyre's celebration of Brazil's movement from a slavery economy to the co-op labor system as a framework for examining the labor politics in Israel, and the way in which Israeli-Palestinian authors imagine a more racially mixed private sphere to contest hegemonic labor practices. As I discuss in that chapter, several anthologized Palestinian stories depict one of Israel's largest industries, construction, to explore the indentured conditions of work under Occupation. Muhammad 'Ali Taha's short story "Faris Rateeba" and Ghareeb 'Asqalani's "Hunger," for instance, narrate the personal struggles of Palestinian men exploited by the Israeli practice of ciphering cheap construction labor from Palestine and the Occupied Territories. These men are forced literally to manufacture

the nation that oppresses them. In another example, Orly Castel-Bloom's 2006 novel *Textile* invokes Israel's reputation of relying on exploitative textile capital and illegal operations in Palestinian lands. Israeli-owned textile companies contribute to the widening gap between affluent Israelis and the Arab poor, while—because of their skilled labor—Arab women become the primary victims of this type of economic exploitation. With male Jewish managers sometimes wielding their authority in psychosexually invasive ways, as one study has shown, this economic exploitation can easily turn personal in nature. However, new co-op initiatives in Israel-Palestine that advocate collaborations and egalitarian distribution of profits between Arabs and Jews reform the fiscal and psychological exploitations depicted by ʻAli Taha, Ghareeb, and Castel-Bloom. I have read the burgeoning investment in fair relations in the private sphere as a Freyrean progression from a slavery economy to a democratic one, and, through my examples of fabric conceits in Palestinian and Israeli poetry, I have attempted to highlight the semiotic powers of fabric in imagining more fluid borders between Palestinians and Israelis and more fair relations in industry.

Finally, much like Freyre's native women as the progenitors of Brazil, Israeli-Palestinian women have not been granted the privilege of a public/private divide, which authors like Rula Jebreal, Nathalie Handal, and Morani Kornberg-Weiss have critiqued through their disembodied poetics of intimacy. Perhaps that disprivilege constitutes a type of subalterity with which we can speak about both Palestinian and—perhaps to a surprising degree—Israeli women in the conflict zones.

Notes

1 Introduction to Israeli-Palestinian Literature and Postcolonial Studies: An Uneasy Relationship

1. For examples of how various colonial, high-profile actors in the period referred to Jews and Arabs as bifurcated "races," see Segev 30, 35, 38, 42, 49, 110, 111, 257, 331, and 479.
2. For the rise of the Ashkenazi warrior in Israeli culture, see Yagil Levy, *Israel's Materialist Militarism*. Plymouth, UK: Lexington, 2007; see also Gabriel Sheffer and Oren Barak, eds., *Militarism and Israeli Society*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2010.
3. In 1982, Israel attacked Muslim West Beirut with US-facilitated daily air strikes, killing and wounding thousands of civilians, with hundreds of thousands more starved and terrorized within a city placed on lockdown. Prime Minister Menachim Begin admitted to the siege being one of Israel's offensive wars of "choice" (Neff 73), the others being the 1956 Suez Crisis, in which Israel played a strategic ally to Western powers in controlling oil in the region and limiting Arab nationalism, and the Six-Day War of 1967, during which Israel defeated Egypt, Jordan, and Syria and occupied the Sinai Peninsula, the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, East Jerusalem, and the Golan Heights ("Milestones"). After the Six-Day War, Israel was accused of calculatedly firing on densest areas of civilians in the Suez (Walz 15), and the 1967 borders that drastically reduced Palestinian land have basically remained unchanged to this day. The year 1967 also initiated the "land-for-peace" foundations of subsequent peace negotiations ("Milestones"), which have consistently stopped short of a Palestinian advantage, especially with ongoing Israeli settlements in these areas. Since 1967, Israel has managed to skirt international pressures to withdraw aggression. For example, the United Nations Security Council voted 14–0 that Israel stop the siege of 1982, and when Israel refused they issued another unanimous vote to censure Israel. Having abstained in the first vote, the United States, under the Reagan administration, vetoed a council resolution to condemn Israel in order to shield its ally from international oversight (Neff 73). At the close of 2008, Israel conducted a military offensive, called Operation Cast Lead, in the Gaza Strip

that lasted three weeks. Over 2,360 air strikes, several ground assaults, 1,300 Palestinian deaths, and 5,000 wounded Palestinians later, an international Human Rights Council (HRC) and its UN Fact Finding Mission (aka the Goldstone Report) found Israel and Hamas guilty of war crimes (Sterio 229). Despite the commonplace that the early millennium saw significant aggression on account of both sides and that Israel's occasional strikes represented acts of defense to the increasingly incited Palestinians, a study in the *American Economic Review* found that, based on the timing and number of Palestinian versus Israeli casualties during the Second Intifada between 2000 and 2007, "the Israelis react in a significant and predictable way to Palestinian violence against them, but no evidence [exists] that the Palestinians react to Israeli violence," and further, "this stands in contrast to the popular notion that the Israelis and Palestinians are engaged in a 'tit-for-tat' cycle of violence" (Jaeger and Paserman 1598). See Donald Neff, "Middle East History: It Happened in August; Begin's Admission in 1982 That Israel Started Three of Its Wars," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* XIII.2 (1994): 73. See also "Milestones: 1961–1968. The 1967 Arab-Israeli War," *history.state.gov.* US Department of State, Office of the Historian. October 31, 2013. Web. February 2, 2014. See also Jay Walz, "ISRAELIS ACCUSED OF CIVILIAN DEATHS: Egyptian Reports Attack on Populated Area of Suez," *New York Times*, p. 15. September 9, 1967. Web. February 2, 2014. See also Milena Sterio, "The Gaza Strip: Israel, Its Foreign Policy, and the Goldstone Report," *Case Western Reserve Journal of International Law* 43.1–2 (2010): 229. Finally, see David A. Jaeger and M. Daniele Paserman, "The Cycle of Violence? An Empirical Analysis of Fatalities in the Palestinian-Israeli Conflict," *The American Economic Review* 98.4 (2008): 1591–1604.

4. The UN considers growing Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories to be "illegal under international law" and against the terms of the Geneva Convention that established the 1967 borders of Palestinian control, although the UN has also come under fire for sanctioning exports of Israeli goods from these settlement areas, and thereby undermining its own condemnation reports (Gee 22). See John Gee, "European Union Condemns Israeli Settlements—but Buys from Them," *Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 32.1 (2013): 22.
5. The siege straddled the years.
6. Here this term denotes critical resistance to the persistent politicization of Darwish and its resulting expression in readings of his work that attempt to disengage his aesthetics and form from the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.
7. See David C. Jacobson, "Intimate Relations between Israelis and Palestinians in Fiction by Israeli Women Writers," *Shofar: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Jewish Studies* 25.3 (2007): 32–46; and

Raz Yosef, *Beyond Flesh: Queer Masculinities and Nationalism in Israeli Cinema*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP, 2004.

8. While I do not believe in authenticity, a priori, its function in the world is quite real insofar as a representative's persuasive power only extends to the reach of her ethos; thus, I speak of a kind of rhetorical authenticity here, which I likely violate by my inability to translate Hebrew.
9. Within my confines, this phrase encompasses Arab-Jewish, Mizrahi-Ashkenazi, and Sephardic-Ashkenazi partnerships.
10. For Hassan's full discussion, see Salah D. Hassan, "Undertaking Partition: Palestine and Postcolonial Studies," *Journal X: A Journal in Culture and Criticism* 6.1 (2001): 19–45.
11. Interfaith marriages are prohibited in Israel; this applies to Jew-Christian, Muslim-Jew, and Christian-Muslim unions (Limore Racin and Simon Dein, "Jewish-Arab Couple Relationships in Israel: Underlying Motives for Entering and Engaging in Intermarriage," *Journal of Muslim Mental Health* 5.3 [2010]: 282). This strict marriage law originated during the dissolution of the British Mandate, as the British left civil law up to the Rabbinical courts, while other laws were left to be adjudicated by Israel's secular judiciary (see Lisa Fishbayn Joffe, "Gender, Colonialism and Rabbinical Courts in Mandate Palestine," *Religion and Gender* 2.1 [2012]: 101–127). This alone would be enough to deter a union between a Jew living within the Green Line and a Palestinian outside of it, but an additional complication arose after the 2003 passing of the Citizenship and Entry into Israel Law, which rejects citizenship to Palestinians from the Occupied Territories in circumstances of family reunification (Orna Cohen and Ronit D. Leichtentritt, "Invisible Palestinian Women: 'You're Not From Around Here,'" *International Sociology* 25.4 [2010]: 539–540). An extremely prohibitive appeals process exists, but most of the over 1,000 yearly requests are unsuccessful and render precarious the livelihoods of illegal immigrants waiting to be processed (539–540). However, while the law bans the Palestinian partner from citizenship, it does not seem to extend to children of such partnerships, as having at least one Israeli citizen as a parent determines the citizenship of the child. Thus, the very existence of these children, especially if born into non-Halakhically Jewish parentage (meaning, the mother is not Jewish), destabilizes the demographic considerations of the original law, calling into question what constitutes a Jewish majority.
12. Almost half of the non-Ashkenazi groups in Israel are significantly disadvantaged when it comes to proper housing, a chance for homeownership, and sustainable income (Rebhun 219). This is in part a result of the negative stereotyping of "Oriental Jews" from North Africa (240). While conditions may improve for second-generation immigrants and minority groups, it remains to be studied whether

the Israel-born children of immigrants and minorities will constitute a "blended" ethnic group still affected by ethnically based stratifications in mobility (241). See Uzi Rebhun, "Immigration, Ethnicity, and Housing—Success Hierarchies in Israel," *Research in Social Stratification and Mobility* 27 (2009): 219–243.

13. At the turn of the millennium, fears regarding the possibility of a waning Jewish majority led to Israel sanctioning Orthodox Jewish settlements in the Occupied West Bank. Due to their belief that the true Israel can be reestablished by a divine act alone, the Orthodox community in Israel historically has conflicted with the secular founding patronage of Israel; however, Israeli leaders saw an opening to expand the Jewish character of the state by capitalizing on Orthodox habitation in this area—the site of ancient Jewish kings—and exploiting the Talmudic concept of divine resettlement. The government supplied abundant financial and military support to both religious and secular Jews, couching their incentives in the rhetoric of messianic and radical nationalist tropes (Amon 48). Especially because Orthodox families abide strictly the biblical edict to "be fruitful and multiply," the campaign forms a component of Israel's demographic war. That Israeli demographics have become a military strategy is illustrated by the advice of senior researcher at Israel's Armament Development Authority, Yitzhak Ravid, which he gave at the 2003 Herzliya Conference: the government needs to develop programs to increase Jewish fertility in order to fight growing Muslim births (65, note 41). See Moshe Amon, "Can Israel Survive the West Bank Settlements?" *Terrorism and Political Violence* 16.1 (2004): 48–65.

2 Reading Freyre in the Holy Land

1. For a vivid example, a hotline operates in Israel that counsels Jewish women in relationships with Arab men, or friends who suspect someone they know might be entering into such a relationship, on the psychological and bodily dangers that await them. See Stuart Winer, "Hotline," timesofisrael.com. *The Times of Israel,* September 9, 2013. Web. February 9, 2014.
2. I use this term to denote literature issuing from or about this geopolitical milieu that features the ethnically and/or racially mixed relationship to articulate the nation.
3. There exists, interestingly, a new phenomenon now in Brazil, Argentina, and other sites in Latin America to study the Arab or Jewish diaspora.
4. Most often cited is the film adaptation of Amos Oz's *My Michael* (1976). The movie *Jaffa*, directed by Keren Yedaya in 2010, comes to mind as a contemporary example, one that actually departs from the norm in entertaining a nontragic ending. Also see Yosefa Loshitzky, "Forbidden Love in Israeli Cinema," *Theory and Criticism: An Israeli*

Forum 18 (2001): 207–214 (in Hebrew); and "From Orientalist Discourses to Woman's Melodrama: Oz and Volman's *My Michael*," *Edebiyat* 5 (1994): 99–123.

5. Foucault's definition, as cited by many: "the space in which we live, which draws us out of ourselves, in which the erosion of our lives, our time and our history occurs," in Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces," *Diacritics* 16.1 (1986): 22–27.
6. We could only define it by what it is not, and that would be a dominantly Ashkenazi, military-driven ruling block that continues to both advocate settler colonialism and ensure that Israeli families remain unmixed.
7. See Robin Truth Goodman, *Feminist Theory in Pursuit of the Public: Women and the "Re-privatization" of Labor*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.
8. Neoliberalism, in John Rapley's foundational discussion, refers to the idea that the free marketization of the globe, as advocated by economists and political scientists in the late twentieth century, would democratize the developing world. Rapley argues that the system actually disadvantages most people: "neoliberal policies have had the effect of raising aggregate income but skewing its distribution, thereby causing a rise in political instability and volatility, which, in turn, is undermining the viability of the neoliberal regime" (6). See John Rapley, *Globalization and Inequality: Neoliberalism's Downward Spiral*. Boulder, CO: Lynne Reinner Publishers, 2004.
9. An exception to this might be made if one considers American writer Miriam Cooke's Palestine-set *Hayati, My Life* to be a Palestinian novel. The novel depicts two married protagonists, a Palestinian woman and Jewish Israeli man, with children.

3 "The Synthetic Principle": Darwish's "Rita"

1. From this point onward, I refer to Arab-Jewish couplings as interethnic, but the reader should know that these unions are also exceedingly racially charged, and the interreligious/intercultural implications should also be assumed.
2. Said and Darwish—intellectual peers and also close friends—have consistently invoked each other in discussions of exile and return as the key defining features of Palestinian identity. In *The Question of Palestine* (1979), Said points out that Darwish's work was influential to transforming exilic identity into one of emergence (155–157). Darwish makes the same claim as Said in his poetic tribute to him upon his death, writing "He says," speaking of Said, "I am from there, I am from here, / but I am neither there nor here," and then, of the identity and place Said situates himself, "Here is a periphery advancing. / Or a center

receding" (trans. Joudah 41–42 and 79–80). Said's liminality, ironically, makes room for the marginalized identity of the Palestinians.

3. The biopolitical engagements of *State of Siege* is now known, after the publication of Tom Langley's 2012 article. See "EXCEPTIONAL STATES in Interventions," *International Journal of Postcolonial Studies* 14.1 (2012): 69–82. Langley's analysis is based largely on Agamben's tenets rather than on Esposito's, the latter of which constitutes my intervention.
4. Recall that for Foucault the central difference between biopower and biopolitics is that biopower refers more fundamentally to the regulation of individual bodies vis-à-vis t geospacial, bioclimatic, and so on technologies, while biopolitics forms larger systems to harness technologies in the process of regulating livelihoods.
5. For more information about the importance of the child in Palestinian rhetoric of the nation, see Julia Emberley's "A Child Is Testifying: Testimony and the Cultural Construction of Childhood in a Trans/National Frame," *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 45.4 (2009): 378–388.
6. Of Darwish's relationship to monolithic Israeli education and its tendency to censure discourse on the Palestinians, Maya Jaggi writes:

    In Mural (2000) a critically ill man contemplates death and the mortality of civilisations amid the al-Aqsa intifada. Mohammed al-Durra, the 12-year-old boy who was shot by Israeli soldiers and died in the arms of his father, appears as the young Christ. Darwish, whose poetry incorporates Biblical Christian and Judaic symbolism, claims a plural inheritance. I don't have a pure Arab cultural identity. I'm the result of a mixture of civilisations in Palestine's past. I don't monopolise history and memory and God, as Israelis want to do. They put the past on the battlefield." Yet "wiser and older" than when he first rose to that challenge, he says: "We shouldn't fight about the past. Let each one tell his narrative as he wants. Let the two narratives make a dialogue, and history will smile." [. . .] In March 2000 Darwish was embroiled in Israel's "culture wars," when the education minister, Yossi Sarid, announced that five of his poems would be an optional part of a multicultural school curriculum—in a country where 19% of Israelis are Palestinian, and many Jews or their parents grew up in the Arab world. There was uproar. The far-right Knesset member Benny Elon said, "Only a society that wants to commit suicide would put [Darwish's poetry] on its curriculum." [. . .] The then prime minister, Ehud Barak, survived a vote of no-confidence, saying Israel was "not ready" for this poetry. Darwish says, "they teach pupils the country was empty. When they teach Palestinian poets, this knowledge is broken: most of my poetry is about love for my country." Several volumes of his poetry have recently been translated into Hebrew, yet his standing in Israel remains hostage to the

political climate. Newspaper literary pages were increasingly asking for translations of his poems, "but everything stopped with the al-Aqsa intifada," says Sasson Sommekh (*sic*).

See "The Profile: Mahmoud Darwish. Poet of the Arab World," TheGuardian.com. *The Guardian*, June 7, 2002. Web. March 20, 2014.

7. The reason why I am not attending to the also profoundly burdensome experiences of Arab women counterparts and the way their bodies have been hijacked in articulating national legitimacy is because the present focus is on examining an Israeli public sphere. The two spheres—Palestinian and Israeli—are of course conversant and reactionary to each other, and a rich repository of writing on the Arab/Palestinian woman and nationalism continues to grow and enrich the field of postcolonial studies. It is outside the bounds of the present chapter, for now.

4 "Intimate Histories": Internal Miscegenation in A. B. Yehoshua's *A Late Divorce*

1. In 1967, following the Six-Day War, Israel captured from Arab forces the Sinai Peninsula, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, the West Bank, and the Golan Heights, establishing control and occupation in former Palestinian strongholds ("Six-Day War").
2. See Nehama Aschkenasi, "Yehoshua's 'Sound and Fury': A Late Divorce and Its Faulknerian Model," *Modern Language Studies* 21.2 (1991): 92–104. See also Harold Bloom, "Domestic Derangements," Rev. of *A Late Divorce*, by A. B. Yehoshua. *New York Times*, February 19, 1984.
3. In *Mythologies*, Roland Barthes famously writes: "The petit-bourgeois is a man unable to imagine the Other. If he comes face to face with him, he blinds himself, ignores and denies him, or else transforms him into himself" (152).
4. My interpretation of the "abject" derives from Julia Kristeva's context in "Powers of Horror." The abject connotes the threat of the alienation or irrelevance caused by the degeneration of the subject/object binary, or, for Kristeva, "The abject has only one quality of the object—that of being opposed to I. If the object, however, through its opposition, settles me within the fragile texture of a desire for meaning, which, as a matter of fact, makes me ceaselessly and infinitely homologous to it, what is *abject*, on the contrary, the jettisoned object, is radically excluded and draws me toward the place where meaning collapses. A certain "ego" that merged with its master, a superego, has flatly driven it away. It lies outside, beyond the set, and does not seem to agree to the latter's rules of the game. And yet, from its place of banishment, the abject does not cease challenging its master" (trans. Roudiez 10–11).

5. Tara Ghoshal Wallace, *Imperial Characters: Home and Periphery in Eighteenth Century Literature*. Lewisburg, PA: Bucknell University Press, 2010, 165.
6. See Ella Shohat, "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of its Jewish Victims," *Social Text*. 19.20 (1988): 1–35, and her several essays on the Sephardic experience that follow until 2003.
7. I will not rehearse the tempting comparison linking Israel's human rights violations and encampment of Palestinians to the Holocaust because it casts a misguiding and unconstructive light on a unique historical/geographical situation that still launches our gaze from the center. Joseph Massad notes that "the underlying axioms governing where Palestinians fit in [the Western critical] discourse are derived not from what Palestinians do or do not do, but from our discursive relation to European Jews" (94). Further, he notes that "Jews are always [viewed in terms of] refugees fleeing the holocaust when, in fact, they need to be viewed in the context of two separate histories and discourses" (98). To invoke the Holocaust even to reverse the perspective in favor of the Palestinians is still to rely on a Western model for evaluation.
8. Recall that Gayatri Spivak contends in *Other Asias* that she has trouble imagining Israel in Asia.
9. See Louis Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy, and Other Essays*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 2001.

5 "Mixed Syndicate": Poetics of Fabric under Occupation

1. I am using an antiquated, inalienable notion of the object that Anne Rosalind Jones and Peter Stallybrass refer to in their work on the Renaissance, wherein clothes are not just surfaces but affect form, shape, function, "depth." This notion of the dress or fabric object undoes contemporary materialist categories, in which subjects are prior to objects. Superfluity has the power to constitute an essence. The industrial idea of fashion-as-change is in tension with fashion as "deep" making. In the latter model, clothing is "transnaturing," Jones and Stallybrass argue; this dominant understanding of clothing begins to shift in the eighteenth century with the birth of the commodity. Industrialization gave culture another meaning, predicated on the fact that the "object" actually had to die; as per Marx, only if one empties out the objectness of the object can it become readily exchangeable on the market. See Rosalind Jones, Anne and Peter Stallybrass, *Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000.
2. See Madeleine Dobie's "Orientalism, Colonialism, and Furniture in Eighteenth-Century France," in *Furnishing the Eighteenth Century*,

ed. Kathryn Norberg and Dena Goodman. London: Taylor and Francis, 2006. 13–36.

3. See Mimi Hellman's "Interior Motives: Seduction by Decoration in Eighteenth-Century France," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Fashion and Furniture in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Harold Koda and Andrew Bolton. New York and New Haven: Metropolitan Museum of Art and Yale University Press, 2006. 417.
4. See Mimi Hellman's "The Nature of Artifice: French Porcelain Flowers and the Rhetoric of the Garnish," in *The Cultural Aesthetics of Eighteenth-Century Porcelain*, ed. Alden Cavanaugh and Michael E. Yonan. Farnham: Ashgate, 2010. 39.
5. Nicholas Thomas explains that while commodities have prices, gifts have rank—they are inalienable. Commodities are valued via the relationship between things while gifts are valued via the relationship between people. Annette B. Weiner writes, "Inalienable possessions are the representation of how social identities are reconstituted through time. The reproduction of kinship is legitimated in each generation through the transmission of inalienable possessions, be they land rights, material objects, or mythic knowledge" (11). Even Adam Smith recognizes the value of inalienable possessions, as he claims in *The Wealth of Nations* that a merchant should not give up his property, or kin, for baubles, aka transient consumables (Weiner, *Inalienable Possessions*, 35).
6. My use of this terminology denotes Freyre's concept of the cultural heterogeneity of objects accepted into a society and their correlative relationship to a mixed social sphere. It should not be confused with the language's pertinence to the philosopher Levi R. Bryant, who published in 2011 *The Democracy of Objects*. Though the two usages have much crossover significance, I do not directly build on Bryant's here. His attempt to explode the boundaries between subject and object in order to move philosophy toward an onticological (Bryant's coinage) view of experience would involve, for my purposes, seeing the Israeli-Palestinian from the view of the textile rather than vice versa. This chapter traces the latter.
7. Dan Rabinowitz critiques the peace negotiations at Oslo (1993) and the Wye River (1998) for failing to acknowledge borders as tenuous, complex entities. The Oslo-Wye process constructs the relations between Israel and Palestine as taking place between two fully fledged national movements, inscribed or soon to be inscribed in two separate nation states. This is directly informed by the conventional modernist vision of the nation, a vision to which both the Israeli and Palestinian mainstreams wholeheartedly subscribe. It is premised on an image of the globe as a series of clearly delineated, homogenous, and highly stable territorial hyperunits. Each such unit ostensibly displays a perfect, primordial, and seldom problematized overlap between territory (the

"homeland"), society (the "people"), culture, a sense of common destiny, and, ultimately, the fabrication of them all into state machinery (759).

8. At different points, Israel has been featured in the news for bulldozing Palestinian cultural sites, including graveyards.
9. Male spiders only weave their initial web in their youth before they leave to find a female.
10. In *African Textiles*, John Gillow notes that the exodus of the Jews to the newly formed Israel contributed markedly to the decline of dyeing, tablet weaving, and textile distribution in North Africa (111).

6 Reading Past Freyre: Disembodied Miscegenation

1. See *The History of Sexuality, An Introduction*. New York: Vintage, 1978.
2. Foucault writes, "For a long time, one of the characteristic privileges of sovereign power was the right to decide life and death. In a formal sense, it derived no doubt from the ancient *patria potestas* that granted the father of the Roman family the right to 'dispose' of the life of his children and his slaves; just as he had given life, so he could take it away" (135).

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