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To Michal and Shmuel Kaplan

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More than a decade ago I was invited by Graham Good and Linda Siegel to attend a workshop at the Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies at the University of British Columbia that examined the legacies of postmodernism and sought to speculate what might be the new intellectual paradigm at the dawn of the twenty-first century. It was a singular intellectual experience, and it was then that I began to think about Israel and the study of Israel beyond post-Zionism. I want to thank my colleagues, in alphabetical order, Allan Arkush, Avi Bareli, Doron Navot, Yaron Peleg, and Derek Penslar, who read earlier parts of this work, for their wise comments. I am grateful to the Israel Institute for their generous grant. I also want to thank Michael Rinella and the staff at SUNY Press for supporting and believing in this project. An earlier version of chapter 2 appeared in *Jewish Social Studies* 14.1 (2007): 119–43. I am grateful to Indiana University Press for granting me the right to use this material.

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INTRODUCTION

The camp at night, buzzing with words, laughter, curses; Up in a flurry, here it is
Like a rising city is the face of the killing fields
As the camp spreads, destined to be the spiller of the blood of man and its shield as well.

—Natan Alterman, "The Camp at Night"

The competition is a color TV
We're on still pause with the video machine
That keep you slave to the H. P. until the unity is threatened by
Those who have and who have not—Those who are with and those who are without …
Are you gonna realize the class war's real and not mythologized
And like Jericho—You see walls can come tumbling down!

—Paul Weller, "Walls Come Tumbling Down"

Sometime in the late 1990s, in Tel Aviv, I saw an advertisement on a bus for Tel Hai College—a small regional college in northern Israel, which opened in 1993 and was accredited three years later—that left me utterly startled. The text of the ad was so outrageous that it took me several moments to comprehend it. It read, "*Gam Trumpeldor gamar po!*" which can be loosely translated as "Trumpeldor finished here too!" The verb *gamar*, finished, can have two meanings here: "to graduate," but also "to die." Trumpeldor was a legendary Zionist figure who was killed in Tel Hai in 1920 while commanding a small Jewish outpost there. The college that was established on the site of that historical battle sought in the ad to allude to the past but also, with a wink, to look to the future: Trumpeldor died here; you will graduate here. The ad drew on a collective Israeli myth to sell its product. But more important, it was a rather vulgar example of a broader process of the demythologizing of the Zionist past that Israeli society had been undergoing since the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s—Tel Hai being one of the constituent Zionist myths.

After World War I and the dissolution of the Ottoman Empire, the northeastern corner of the Galilee, home to several Jewish settlements including Tel Hai, lay beyond the boundaries of either British or French control. Yet despite the dangers posed by this situation and internal debates among the Zionist leadership as to the viability of Jewish settlement in the region, the communities were determined to hold on to their lands. Joseph Trumpeldor, a charismatic former officer in the Russian army who lost his left arm in the Russo-Japanese War, commanded them. Trumpeldor had been instrumental in the creation of the Zion Mule Corps in 1915, which as part of the British army saw battle in Gallipoli, and in 1917 in the formation of the Jewish Legion, which took part in some of the final battles against the Turks in Palestine. On March 1 1920, a battle broke out between the Jewish settlers and Arabs who attempted to enter Tel Hai. In the battle, Trumpeldor and five other settlers were killed. The surviving settlers abandoned Tel Hai,

but in December 1920, the upper Galilee was placed within the borders of the British Mandate for Palestine, and the Jewish settlements there were eventually reconstituted. Tel Hai, which was absorbed by Kibbutz Kfar Giladi, became a symbol of Zionist resolve and sacrifice and home to a notable monument—a roaring lion, a site of pilgrimage for many Israeli school children. Trumpeldor, the one-armed military hero whose putative last words were *tov lamut be'ad artzenu* (It is good to die for our country), became the first martyr of the Zionist revolution. And the day commemorating the fall of Tel Hai (the 11th of Adar on the Hebrew calendar) became the first Zionist Memorial Day. As Yael Zerubavel, who analyzed Zionism's and Israel's constituting myths, put it,

> To the *yishuv*, the Jewish community in Palestine, the battle of Tel Hai symbolized a major transformation of Jewish national character and the emergence of a new spirit of heroism and self-sacrifice. The commemoration of Tel Hai marked the beginning of a new era of Zionist settlement and defense of the land that led to the establishment of the state of Israel.[1]

The Tel Hai College website offers the following mission statement that draws on Tel Hai's mythic past:

> Tel Hai College is located north of Kiryat Shmona, at the site of one of Israel's legendary pioneering settlements of the early 20th century. Within a verdant landscape of mountains, rivers, and valleys, the pioneers of Tel Hai laid the stakes that mark the country's northernmost border. In an equally far-reaching act of nation building, Tel Hai College was established. Its goal—to create a dynamic resource for quality academic and continuing education that will serve as an agent for social and economic development in the Galilee.

Although the past and the legacy of Trumpeldor and his fellow pioneers are integral to present-day Tel Hai, so was the changing economic and social landscape in Israel in the 1990s when the College opened. In the last decade of the previous century, Israeli higher education underwent a revolution. If for decades higher education in Israel was limited to a select group of research institutions, by the 1990s, as more and more Israelis were looking for professional degrees in an economic climate that favored deregulation and privatization, the academic market radically transformed. Several regional colleges (including Tel Hai) were opened, accompanied by private academic institutions, some in co-operation with foreign universities. In a country that for decades celebrated a collectivist, austere ethos that called on individuals to sacrifice for the communal good—in the manner exemplified by Trumpeldor's deeds and words—the 1990s ushered in a new era of individualism, and the academic market reflected those changes. And in this market, the role of myths was no longer to cultivate a collectivist identity but rather to sell a product. Trumpeldor was now the Marlboro Man: Like the rugged American of the Wild West whose image (and the yearning for a pure and virtuous past) was used to sell a product, the Zionist pioneer became a symbol in an ad campaign. The Americanization of Israeli society and culture that, among other things, impacted Israeli higher education also brought on American-like marketing tools. And where the sale of commodities is concerned, there are no sacred cows: For art directors and copywriters, anything goes.

The dismantling and unraveling of myths, though, was not restricted to the selling and

advertising of academic institutions; it was also happening within the walls of academia. The 1990s saw the emergence in Israeli and also in foreign universities of the post-Zionist debates: one of the most concentrated attacks on the ideological and political tenets of the Zionist movement. Since its emergence in the late nineteenth century, Zionism has been subjected to comprehensive criticism and opposition from within the Jewish world. Ultra-orthodox Jews viewed Zionism—a secular movement that sought to reconstitute a Jewish independence in the Holy Land—as undermining the messianic redemption of the Jewish people (Zionism, to them, was *dehikat he-ketz*, the postponement of the end of times); Jewish communists and socialists derided Zionism as a nationalist, chauvinist movement; while many liberal Jews in the West feared that movements like Zionism would interfere with their attempts to assimilate into mainstream Western society. If they supported a Jewish national movement, they feared, it would call into question their allegiance to the nation states of which they were loyal citizens.

Post-Zionism, though, was different from these earlier manifestations of anti-Zionism. Post-Zionism, as the antecedent in this two-word term indicates, emerged when a growing number of people inside and outside academia felt that Zionism, as a political ideology, had outlived its usefulness. From this perspective, the modern State of Israel, the realization of Zionist ideology, was a fait accompli; therefore, the post-Zionist critical arsenal was not aimed at an opposing ideology for political supremacy (as communists, assimilationists, and traditional Jews had) but at what was assumed to be a political relic.

Already in 1968, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Uri Avinery, one of the "founding fathers" of the Israeli peace camp, used the term *post-Zionism* in an article in which he articulated his vision for a Semitic Confederacy in the Middle East. Avinery's political journey was singular in its trajectory. Unlike many in the Israeli left, Avinery was a member of the right-wing paramilitary organization the Irgun in the late 1940s; and throughout the 1950s and 60s, as the editor of the journal *Ha-Olam ha-Zeh*, he was keen on exposing the corruption and limitations of Labor's political establishment, many times in cooperation with the Israeli right. Avinery came to the Israeli peace camp not with the legacy of international socialism, but with a liberal commitment to civil society: To him, occupation and militarism ran contrary to normalcy. To Avinery, Israel's victory in 1967 was proof that the country was strong and stable enough to shed its Zionist, collectivist ethos and embrace a normal course of action, one that is motivated by progress and harmony rather than by existential fears. And to him, the way to achieve this course of action was to renounce war and conflict as a political course of action and instead join, as a sovereign state, other Arab states in the region (including a Palestinian state) in a union that would help foster closer relations among the people of the region and enhance their economic and social prospects. As he put it, "Joining a Semitic confederacy would mean, for Israel, putting an end to the Zionist chapter in its history and starting a new one—the chapter of Israel as a state integrated in its Region, playing a part in the region's struggle for progress and unity. For the Arabs, it would mean recognition of a post-Zionist Israel as part of the region."[2] To Avinery, then, post-Zionism was a position that recognized Israel as an existing fact, but which called upon Israelis to leave their founding ideology behind and embrace new possibilities to understand and shape their political position in the region.

In 1985, Menachem Brinker, a Hebrew University philosopher and literary scholar, claimed that, "The task of Zionism is very nearly completed. That is to say, the problem that Zionism set out to address is just about solved. Soon we will be living in a post-Zionist era, and there will no longer be a good reason for a Zionist movement to exist alongside the State of Israel."[3] And this task, according to Brinker, was the normalization of the Jewish condition in history. To both

Avinery and Brinker, then, Zionism was an ideology of necessity in the face of persecution and marginalization, while post-Zionism was the path of the strong and the secure in search of normalcy.

The sociologist Uri Ram was the first to employ the term *post-Zionism* in a systematically theoretical sense in 1993.[4] The choice of the prefix "post" by Ram to articulate a new approach to Zionism was not unintentional; it makes a direct link to the prevailing academic critical theories of the 1990s—postmodernism, poststructuralism, postcolonialism—and it indicates a desire to employ these theories in the study of Israel and its founding ideology, Zionism. (This serves as yet another indication of the Americanization of Israeli academia at the time—a desire to keep up to date with current academic trends.)

When Ram used the term *post-Zionism* as designating an academic position, it was already half a decade after the emergence of the (self-proclaimed) New Israeli History, a collection of studies by the historians Benny Morris, Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pappe, and others that were published in the late 1980s and that questioned some of the fundamental Israeli assumptions, or in their words, myths, about the 1948 War and the establishment of the State. If for decades the perception among most Israelis was that the 1948 War was a battle between an Israeli David and an Arab Goliath, between a peace-seeking, weak community and a menacing enemy out to destroy it, the historical reality the New Historians suggested was far more complex. As Ilan Pappe described the impact of the New History in a lecture delivered in 2007,

> It was a kind of David and Goliath mythology, the Jews being the David, the Arab armies being the Goliath, and again it must be a miracle if David wins against the Goliath. So this is the picture. What we found challenged most of this mythology. First of all, we found out that the Zionist leadership, the Israeli leadership, regardless of the peace plans of the United Nations, contemplated long before 1948 the dispossession of the Palestinians, the expulsion of the Palestinians. So it was not as a result of the war that the Palestinians lost their homes. It was as a result of a Jewish, Zionist, Israeli—call it what you want—plan that Palestine was ethnically cleansed in 1948 of its original indigenous population.[5]

Radical in their conclusions and harsh indictments of the Zionist movement and the State of Israel (accusing Zionists of, among other things, ethnic cleansing, in the case of Pappe), the New Historians were rather traditional in their methodological approach. They wrote military and diplomatic histories based on the analysis of official documents. In fact, even many of their more controversial findings were part of the culture for decades. All that Hebrew readers had to do was go back to the short stories that S. Yizhar wrote in the immediate aftermath of the 1948 War, *The Prisoner* and *Hirbet Hizeh*, stories that became part of the Israeli literary canon, to find painfully realistic description of Jewish atrocities during that War. But what arguably made the New History revolutionary was the type of social, political, and cultural climate in which it was produced. Yizhar participated in the 1948 War and later served as a member of the Israeli Knesset, representing the dominant Labor party and supporting Israel's prime minister at the time, David Ben-Gurion. Yizhar wrote his stories as a member of a society that perceived itself as caught in an existential battle for survival. Israel, in its early years, faced incredible challenges: potential all-out war with its Arab neighbors and the need to absorb hundreds of thousands of new immigrants in a country with limited infrastructure and no major natural resources. This was a society busy cultivating myths and heroic figures—like Trumpeldor and

the battle of Tel Hai—not a society ready for introspection and self-flagellation.

By the late 1980s, however, Israel was a dramatically different country. It was a regional power, both militarily and economically. The austerity and collectivism of Israel's early decades gave way to individualism and the free market. Israelis consumed electronic goods, owned cars, and traveled abroad—they worried about their stock portfolios more than they did about the national well-being. Shlomo Ben-Ami, the Tel Aviv University historian and former Israeli foreign minister, recalled a conversation he had with Yitzhak Rabin in 1993, in which the late Israeli leader told him that, "Israeli society … was no longer the pioneering society it used to be; it had lost its fighting spirit."[6] In 1979, Israel signed a peace treaty with its most daunting enemy: Egypt. And by the 1990s, Israel was engaged in peace talks with the Palestinians and Syrians; it normalized relations with Jordan; and it cultivated lower-level contacts with several other Arab countries. In this atmosphere of peace and prosperity, Israelis were ready, it seemed, to tackle the past head on.

And this is precisely what the post-Zionist critique attempted to do, to expose the core tenets of Zionist ideology (the binary oppositions that provided meaning to the Zionist project, to use the language of the time) and the means by which this ideology was used to justify a series of violent or unjust actions and policies by the Zionist movement and the State of Israel: the expulsion of the Palestinians; the maltreatment of Palestinian Arabs by the Zionists before the creation of the State and the maltreatment of the State's Arab citizens after 1948;[7] the policies of the veteran Ashkenazi establishment vis-à-vis Jewish immigrants from Arab and Muslim countries, which was informed, the post-Zionist critics claimed, by an orientalist worldview;[8] the manipulation of the memory of the Holocaust to justify Israeli militarism, and more.[9] This was a concentrated attack on the core components of Israeli collective identity—accompanied by a celebration and promotion of a multicultural ethos of manifold identities, narratives, languages, and histories. And although initially it drew heated and emotionally charged criticism, many of the post-Zionist findings and arguments, with time, became part of the mainstream academic and general discussion. (Most Israelis are now familiar with the Arabic word *naqba* [catastrophe], which is what Palestinians and other Arabs call the 1948 War; so aware that some right-wing Israeli politicians have been trying to outlaw its use in Israel.)

Post-Zionism has been very much an "end-of-history" position: Zionism had fulfilled its historical mission—through wars and massive social programs (and engineering), it delivered a viable and relatively prosperous state, armed with a nuclear arsenal and a growing, advanced economy. And in the midst of the optimism of the 1990s, deconstructing, dismantling, or exposing mechanisms of power dominated much of the intellectual and academic agenda. In the 1990s, pluralism and choice were identified with democracy and freedom—collectivism and uniformity, on the other hand, were associated with power and oppression. And because power was already established (and everywhere), all that was left to do was expose its hidden structures. Myths were useful only as a source of analysis or to sell products. Any notions of teleological progress seemed like part of a distant and perilous past of wars and conflict. Instead of the myths of the powerful and established, the stories and symbols of the oppressed "other" were to be commemorated and championed. As Pnina Motzafi-Haller, from a distinct post-Zionist perspective, put it in 1998, "The way to a post-Zionist society must begin not with the cancellation of all differences (as the melting pot ideology has it) but rather with acknowledgment of distinctions."[10]

These were the "happy 90s," when everything seemed permissible: no taboos or menacing

(collectivist) superego with their myths of creation to deter us. In the spirit of Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus,* post-Zionism was the anti-Trumpeldor, against the normative, founding myth. And the ad for Tel Hai College perfectly captured the post-Zionist ethos: Fueled by the forces of the marketplace, it reduced an iconic image to an exchangeable commodity, depriving it of any transcendent meaning.

But since the second *Intifada* that erupted in 2000 and brought the Arab-Israeli peace process to a screeching halt, the attacks of 9/11 and the "global" war on terrorism, the repeated global economic crises that characterized the beginning of the twenty-first century and also impacted Israel, it no longer seems as if history ended by any means. And as the sense of personal and economic security among a growing number of Israelis has been dramatically eroded, the optimism of the 1990s has begun to look like a distant, naive memory. So does this mean that post-Zionism both as an ethos and as a critical position came to an end? This is one of the chief issues that concerns the present study. Or, to put it differently, one of the questions that this book confronts is whether we should understand post-Zionism as a historical phenomenon that emerged and thrived under certain (postmodern) historical conditions (peace and prosperity and a culture of individualism and consumption), or whether post-Zionism, as an idea, as a critical position and a cultural condition, denotes a more profound paradigm shift in our perception of Zionism and the Jewish State.

As indicated before, since its emergence, post-Zionism has been subjected to massive criticism—so much so that soon the term *post-Zionism* lost all distinctive or critical meaning and was used variously to describe leftists, anti-Semites, or simply one's political or ideological rival. But in reality, only a select number of academics and writers were engaged in formulating post-Zionist texts and critiques. Much of the post-Zionist activity in Israel has concentrated in and around the journal *Teoria u-vikoret* (Theory and Criticism), which was launched in 1991 and soon emerged as the primary forum for postmodern and other critical analyses of Israeli society and history. Several other journals, most notably *Israel Studies*, provided smaller forums for debate among post-Zionists and their critics. The post-Zionist canon, then, is a rather slim one. And although the academic old guard warned that postmodern relativists were taking over the humanities and social science departments of Israeli universities, a detailed head count would reveal that, in fact, very few of them were able to secure tenured posts. The Israeli novelist Aharon Meged did not mince his words when he offered the following explanation for what he believes were the real motives behind the emergence of post-Zionism:

> Whoever researches the dimensions of this pathological phenomenon, possibly rooted in the diaspora proclivity for self-abasement and sycophancy toward Jew-haters, would have to go through enormous quantities of material. … Cumulatively, these phenomena constitute a monstrous indictment of Israel, much more venomous and sophisticated than all the primitive Palestinian propaganda disseminated throughout the world.[11]

But if we ignore the histrionics of some of its more vocal critics, post-Zionism did have an impact that far exceeded the actual number of its practitioners or texts. Post-Zionism touched a nerve because it gave an intellectual voice to deep changes that Israeli society as a whole underwent in the 1980s and 1990s. And it is this relationship between the changes that Israeli society and culture as a whole have undergone and the rise (and fall?) of an intellectual and ideological paradigm that, to a large degree, this study focuses on.

There have been some excellent studies of post-Zionism both in English and Hebrew. Laurence Silberstein's *The Postzionism Debates* from 1999 is an outstanding intellectual history of post-Zionism, tracing its evolution from earlier criticisms of Zionism. And Uri Ram has offered several studies that, from a post-Zionist position, explained the emergence of the critique and its various intellectual components.[12] Anita Shapira's and Derek Penslar's edited volume *Israeli Historical Revisionism* from 2003 offered a comprehensive collection of articles by both post-Zionists and their intellectual opponents. And *Teshuva le-Amit Post Zioni* (An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague), edited by Tuvia Friling in 2003, featured a wide array of reactions to post-Zionism from the left and the right, by older as well as younger academics. The aim of this work, however, is somewhat different.

One of the assumptions underlying this work is that post-Zionism was, for a while, the dominant intellectual paradigm in the study and analysis of Jewish nationalism. I am not particularly interested in assessing whether post-Zionist claims and assertions were true or whether they distorted the historical record, which is what most of the polemical writings on the post-Zionist debates have tended to do. The book does not attempt to come up with an exhaustive definition of post-Zionism (presumably, one would have to be a post-Zionist like Ram or a sympathizer of post-Zionism like Silberstein to do it), but rather to understand it within the historical context from which it sprang, or what I refer to throughout the book as the post-Zionist condition in Israel—the social, political, and cultural changes that Israeli society as a whole underwent in the last two decades of the twentieth century. Indeed, one of the main concerns of this book is the impact of the post-Zionist condition—the transition from collectivism to free-market individualism, the rise of identity politics, and more—on key aspects of Israeli culture.

Beyond the contextualization of the post-Zionist debates, however, this study has another, more ambitious goal. This book will offer a critical analysis of key post-Zionist arguments, such as the association of Zionism with European colonialism and orientalism and the debates over the real ideological nature of Labor Zionist ideology. And it is the aim of this critical analysis to explore what kind of (alternative) intellectual approach to Zionist and Israeli history might develop in the wake of the post-Zionist debates. If the 1980s and 1990s were characterized by growing individualism and the dismantling of old collectivist social structures that were fueled by the economic boom and sense of end of conflict, how then may the developments in the first decade of the twenty-first century lead us to reexamine our perceptions of the past and our ideological formulations for the future?

In 2010, Asaf Likhovski suggested that several studies that were published in the first decade of the current century are, perhaps, pointing at a new direction in the field of Israel and Zionist studies.[13] Likhovski described these studies as a "third wave" in Israeli historiography and described the scholars who produced these studies as "post-post-Zionists." If older historians of Israel and the *Yishuv*, as well as their post-Zionist critics, were interested in the grand political themes of the Zionist era, Likhovski has identified a series of studies that, as he put it, "are interested in mentalities, rituals, mannerisms, emotions; the trivial, private, mundane; the body and soul and their social construction; in disgust and desire; in attitudes to garbage and hair; in views of food and consumption; in statistics and vaccinations; in the ideas of housewives, but also lawyers, statisticians, psychoanalysts, and nurses (but not the politician, the soldier, the general)."[14] The first two generations of Israeli historiography were consumed by ideological questions and their realization in the political realm; the third wave of Zionist historiography, Likhovski seems to indicate—including such works as Anat Helman's on the early history of Tel

Aviv;[15] Orit Rozin's analysis of the reaction of ordinary Israelis to the austerity regime of the young State of Israel;[16] and works by various scholars on public health in Palestine and later on in Israel[17]—is turning away from grand, national themes and instead focuses on the lives of ordinary individuals and their daily experiences.

This book does not fall within the parameters set by Likhovsky for the third wave of Israeli historiography. In fact, it aims to deal head on with the "grand" ideological questions that have consumed older studies of Zionism and the State of Israel. It does, however, share one key characteristic with the recent studies that tend to focus on the quotidian aspects of Israeli life. If post-Zionists sought to expose the shortcoming of Zionist myths and unravel the bonds that kept Israelis together, the post-post-Zionist scholars—as Likhovsky describes them—seem to wonder what it was that brought those Zionists and Israelis together in the first place, and how they were able to overcome daunting odds and create a functioning state that provided its citizens with a general social safety net. What connects these works are a keen interest in how modern Israeli society came to be: What were the mechanisms and ideological forces that allowed individuals to live together and develop social bonds? *Beyond Post-Zionism* also seeks to explore how, in an era of repeated emergencies, ideology can play a constructive (in the most literal sense) role in building social and political bonds.

More specifically, the book's first chapter examines the rise and decline of post-Zionism in light of some key social and cultural changes that Israel underwent from its inception to the beginning of the twenty-first century. The chapter is divided into two parts. The first offers a broad historical overview and seeks to examine what unique conditions in the 1980s and 1990s facilitated the emergence of a post-Zionist culture in Israel. The second part examines post-Zionism as a theoretical phenomenon and explores how the reality in the new century, or more accurately our perceptions of this reality, may force us to consider other models by which to understand Zionism and its historical legacy.

Chapter 2 focuses on Amos Oz, the Israeli novelist and public intellectual. Since he emerged onto the Israeli (and later the international) public scene, he has symbolized a certain idealized version of the *Sabra*, the native-born Israeli. At the core of this chapter is an examination of Oz's autobiographical book *A Tale of Love and Darkness* from 2002, in which Oz the *Sabra*, the quintessential Zionist subject—the *kibbutznik* who is a fighter and a writer, a peacenik and a patriot—becomes undone and, instead, a different image of Oz emerges: the son of right-wing Zionist immigrants who grew up in a Jerusalem that is portrayed as a kind of diasporic *shtetl*. And the reason for this turn against the mythical, universal Zionist subject, the chapter contends, is partly the rise of identity politics that swept Israel in the 1990s and that, after the second *Intifada*, turned into a tribalist political position that views society as an arena of core civilizational conflicts, both among Jews and between Jews and Arabs.

Chapter 3 addresses the question of the relationship between Zionism and orientalism, a common argument in the post-Zionist critical arsenal, through the lens of Israeli cinema. At the heart of the chapter is a critical assessment of Ella Shohat's argument in her 1989 book *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*—one of the first and most influential post-Zionist texts—that Israeli films, like other Israeli cultural products, reflect an "orientalist" position, by which the "Westerner" (the Ashkenazi secular Jew) engages with the "oriental" (Arab, Mizrahi Jew) while maintaining and reinforcing the Westerner's upper hand. The chapter looks at three Israeli films that focus on ethnicity and ethnic relations in Israeli society—*Sallah Shabati* (1964), *Sh'hur* (1994), and *Late Marriage* (2001)—and claims that although tensions between the hegemonic Ashkenazi establishment and subaltern ethnic groups are critical to all

those films, there are deeper ideological forces that account for the representation of ethnicity in these films: the transition from collectivism to multiculturalism and the unraveling of the multicultural utopia of the 1990s in the twenty-first century.

Chapter 4 turns to the origins of the Zionist movement, to Theodor Herzl's—the founding father of political Zionism—utopian novel *Altneuland* (Old New Land). In the post-Zionist canon, Herzl has been described variously as a colonialist, a misogynist, and an orientalist, and his image of the future utopian Jewish society in Palestine, which he outlined in *Altneuland*, has been portrayed in the works of Michael Gluzman, Daniel Boyarin, and others as a European colonialist fantasy—as an attempt by a Jew to reinvent himself and his community as a cultural outpost of Europe in the Orient. By focusing on Herzl's choice to frame his Zionist vision as a utopian novel, yet at the same time to reject utopianism as an ideological position, the chapter seeks to retrace the revolutionary aspects of Herzl's Zionism and assess their relevance today.

Chapter 5 deals with the socialist nature of historical mainstream Zionism. The chapter begins with a critical analysis of Ze'ev Sternhell's 1995 book *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*, in which the eminent Hebrew University scholar claimed that Labor Zionists were first and foremost nationalists and that their socialism was, at best, a veneer that gave an ideological or moral cover for their chauvinist predilections. Furthermore, the chapter examines what kind of role the commitment of early Labor Zionists to such notions as *avodah ivrit* (Hebrew labor) may yet play in an Israel that has shed its collectivist values and has embraced free-market individualism. The chapter also explores to what extent the other early Labor Zionist notion, that of *kibush ha-adamah* (the conquest of the land)—especially in light of the Israeli settlements in the West Bank—relates to such ideas as collectivism and the state and whether it undermines the universal (or socialist claims) of Labor Zionism.

In the book's Epilogue, an analysis of a short story by Etgar Keret, "Breaking the Pig"—first published in 1994, when it seemed Israel was ready to enter a new era of peace and prosperity and renounce the old Zionist ideals for a post-Zionist, postmodern ethos of self-realization and enjoyment—tries to show that already at the height of the "post-Zionist condition" there were signals of what may perhaps lie beyond post-Zionism: namely, the rejection of the logic and promises of the market (and the reduction of politics to cultural practices) in favor of more tangible human bonds.

One of the underlying assumptions in this book is that in the 1990s, such notions as collectivism, universalism, or the state were deemed anachronistic, as relics of regimes of power that violently suppressed individual and group identities. Instead of traditional politics, which was concerned with controlling and regulating social organizations, in the 1990s culture was viewed as the ultimate political arena, as the place where true freedom can be attained. Indeed, in an atmosphere of peace and prosperity, such institutions as the state and its agencies may have appeared to be artificial barriers imposed on individuals or groups by some old (and outdated) white and male establishment (or, in the Zionist case, male and secular Ashkenazim) that has mistaken, if not outright manipulated, claims of universalism for its own particular interests. But in the new century, when insecurity affects not only the forgotten underdeveloped world but also the affluent West, or in the Israeli case, not only Gaza and Sderot but also Tel Aviv, do such notions as universalism, collectivism, and the state regain some of their ideological credibility? This question, in the Israeli but also in the broader context, is what this book ultimately seeks to explore.

ONE

POST-ZIONISM IN HISTORY

> On the whole, I am inclined to dismiss the "condition of postmodernity" as not so much a historical condition corresponding to a period of capitalism but as a psychological condition corresponding to a period in the biography of the western Left intelligentsia.
>
> —Ellen Meiksins Wood, "Modernity, Postmodernity or Capitalism?"

In his 2000 book, *Localization a Global Manifesto*, the economist Colin Hines wrote, "localization is a process which reverses the trend of globalization by discriminating in favor of the local. Depending on the context, the 'local' is predominantly defined as part of the nation state."[1] To Hines, the adverse effects of globalization, namely the manner in which transnational corporations and international capital have become—with the aid of the WTO, the World Bank, and the IMF—de facto the new world government, could only be countered by a local government that has the interests and welfare of its citizens in mind.

For Hines, the world at the turn of the twenty-first century was defined by a basic struggle between a dominant global empire and peoples whose lives and well-being are determined by the interests of that empire. The modern empire, in Hines's conceptual scheme, does not rely on direct political rule to satisfy its economic and political needs; it is very much a late capitalist, or as some would argue a postmodern, entity. It does not rely on steam engines, the assembly line, or the combustible engine to assert its power; the Internet, the satellite, and the jet constitute its infrastructure. This empire is, in many ways, a virtual entity, operating everywhere and nowhere. It has no traditional center of power, and most of its operations are carried out in cyberspace, by entities identified by their login name or their ticker symbol.

Over the past three decades, postmodernist critics have proclaimed that what Hines and other critics have identified as the forces of the modern-day empire was, in fact, a new cultural condition or epoch that offered a new and exciting horizon for human interaction. To the postmodernists, by the 1970s the Age of Aquarius, of anti-war struggles, gave way to the age of the floating signifier; difference became *différance*, and the weak and the dispossessed came to be known as the silenced other. In the West, as traditional modes of production were taken over by information technologies, consumerism, and the culture industry, the new intellectual battlefield was over signs, symbols, and means of expression. Power, we were constantly reminded, was everywhere, irrational and erratic, and it could not be harnessed or overcome; all that the radical activist was left with was the attempt to subvert the symbolic order and expose its

limitations. And if there is no well-defined center, if there is no universal vantage point, then, as some critics have argued, there is no longer a system—perhaps we indeed entered, at least in the West, a truly post-ideological age.[2] Theory was no longer viewed as transformative; it became an end of itself.[3] Critics accepted the totality of the new world order and its technologies of power as traditional class and national politics were replaced by identity politics. And, as Lyotard and others have proclaimed, this new era also signified the end of the nation-state (the very symbol of an ideological apparatus) and ushered in a post-national age of globalization—the transnational, border-crossing empire.[4]

But by the close of the twentieth century, the veil of the virtual had begun to lift, exposing some of the real forces and powers that continue to govern our historical reality and bringing the politics of the real back to the forefront. The anti-globalization movement; the failure of neo-liberal policies in developing nations; the growing problems with foreign workers; and, of course, terrorism have brought the West back to, borrowing the image of the Wachowski brothers' *Matrix* via Slavoj Žižek, "the desert of the real," and have shown that fundamental differences and power struggles are still at the very core of civilization. And in this new political reality, the infinite possibilities of (virtual) wandering in the boundless expanses of the new empire—between the high-tech centers of Herzelia in Israel and Palo Alto or between Cambridge, England and Cambridge, Massachusetts—began, perhaps, to lose their luster. Instead, people have become more aware of other forms of travel in the late-capitalist empire: of immigrants cramped in cargo ships trying to make it safely to Europe or North America; of Mexicans trying to cross the border north to the U.S.; of Sudanese refugees trying to enter Israel; the long lines at security checkpoints at airports. Whereas in the happy 1990s the nation-state and the notion of the exercising of sovereignty were seen as relics of a bygone era, in the twenty-first century they are again being regarded, much as they were by nationalists in the nineteenth century, as a viable framework to resist the globalizing forces of empire and their attendant violence, giving people a concrete sphere in which to exercise their basic political and social rights.

In a 2000 article, Adi Ophir, arguably the most comprehensive postmodern critic in Israel, has claimed that "the Zionist epoch, an epoch in which the Zionist project held center stage, has come to an end. The major political, social, and cultural problems faced by Israeli and Diaspora Jews today should no longer be formulated within the framework of a Zionist discourse."[5] In "The End of History?" written in 1989, just as the Berlin Wall was about to come down and with it the rest of the Soviet Empire, Francis Fukuyama predicted that in the period after the end of history, when the great ideological contradictions have been resolved, "there will be neither art nor philosophy, just the perpetual caretaking of the museum of human history."[6] In his article, published a year before the attacks of 9/11 and just before the second *Intifada* brought the Oslo peace process between Israelis and Palestinians to a violent end, Ophir similarly predicted that "in a few years, Zionism will become a relic, an object for museums and history departments only. Post-Zionism will be remembered as the name for the moment in which Israeli Jews became fully aware of the passing of the Zionist epoch in the history of the Jews."[7] For Ophir, the age of Zionism—a modernist, national ideology—has passed, ushering in a post-Zionist epoch, which embodies the sensitivities of the postmodern world. Writing in a time when the Oslo process was still thought of as viable, when a plurality of Israelis still believed that peace was attainable and that the prosperity generated by massive immigration from the former Soviet Union and the high-tech boom of the 1990s would continue unhindered, one can understand Ophir's sense of historical certainty—a revolutionary national movement with a collectivist,

socialist ethos might seem like a relic, indeed. (As Terry Eagleton has argued, late-capitalism is fueled by a [Lyotardean] belief in infinity as opposed to socialism and its inherent sense of human limitations: "Capital accumulation goes on forever, in love with a dream of infinity. The myth of eternal progress is just a horizontalised form of heaven. Socialism, by contrast, is not about reaching for the stars but returning us to earth. It is about building a politics on a recognition of human frailty and finitude."[8]) But a decade or so later, with the peace process all but dead, and with the growing economic uncertainty that has characterized the first decade of the new millennium, couldn't it be argued that what Ophir was accurately describing in 2000 were changes that took place in Israel in the 1970s and 1980s, changes that brought about the transformation of Israel into an advanced late-capitalist society and the emergence of an Israeli postmodern (or post-Zionist) culture, but that by the time Ophir was declaring the death of Zionism, post-Zionism itself was waning? Or, to put it differently, isn't the fundamental question that Ophir's argument raises, "What were the historical conditions that gave rise to post-Zionism in Israel?" And is post-Zionism still relevant today in the twenty-first century? This chapter sets out to explore the historical conditions that brought about the "post-Zionist condition" in Israel; to examine how this social and cultural condition facilitated the emergence of post-Zionism as an intellectual and ideological platform; and to explore how the historical changes of the twenty-first century may impact our understanding of post-Zionism and what may lie ahead beyond it.

THE POST-ZIONIST CONDITION

From its inception, Zionism was an ideology predicated on internal contradictions: torn between its universalist claims and its obligation to a particular group of people, trying to be a modern secular movement that is committed to the preservation and maintenance of an ancient religious tradition; but it remained viable, in the early years of statehood, and provided a unifying framework to a highly divided and fractured society, as long as Israeli Jews felt that they were facing extraordinary challenges. In the aftermath of the 1948 War, in which nearly 1% of the new state's Jewish population perished, and facing the challenge of absorbing new immigrants who would, in a matter of a decade, more than double the small country's population, collectivism was the order of the day in Israel.[9]

The early years of Israeli independence comprised the era of *mamlachtiyut*, a concept associated primarily with the country's first prime minister, David Ben-Gurion, that has been variously translated as "statism," "nationalism," or "republicanism."[10] In that period, ideological and social tensions were relegated to the margins of the public debate, and expressions of individuality were regarded as a hedonistic challenge to the collectivist ethos of self-sacrifice and patriotism. As the political scientist Yaron Ezrahi has described it, "In the atmosphere of nation-building, the absorption of mass immigration (mostly from poor countries), and the state of almost permanent war with the Arabs, liberal individualism could not be attractive or a feasible practice. It was identified with negative values that appeared opposed to Israeli communal idealism."[11] The sociologist and social anthropologist Haim Hazan has argued, "From Zionist thinkers to Israeli citizens, collectivism has been long perceived not as threatening the autonomy of the individual but rather as an emancipatory force. Collectivism became the 'civil religion' of Israel."[12]

This was the period of *tzena* (austerity), a government program that rationed food, clothes, furniture, and other consumer goods (the program officially lasted from 1949 to 1959, and though there were several changes in its scope and limitations, it defined the social and economic

contours of Israel's first decade of existence).[13] The daily routine of Israelis at that period included long expeditions in search of basic necessities and standing in long lines to receive their meager rations (and, of course, a thriving black market).[14] Tom Segev has noted that the poet and Knesset member Uri Zvi Greenberg proposed to call the *tzena* program "pioneer poverty" and wanted the program to become the country's life-long constitution.[15]

Already in the 1950s, some changes began a long process of economic expansion that would ultimately lead Israel from the Spartan collectivism that marked its first decade to the unbridled consumerism of the 1990s. The reparations agreement with West Germany that was signed in 1952 provided Israel with 3 billion DMs (Israel received this sum over the period 1953–1965), and the opening of the Gulf of Aqaba to Israeli ships after the 1956 War against Egypt offered the burgeoning Israeli economy new trading markets in Africa and Asia. But it was in the 1960s that Israel began its rapid transition from a heavily state-controlled economy to a more free-market economy.

The 1962 economic reforms launched a process of dismantling protective economic policies and loosening restrictions on imports (the Israeli currency was devalued by some 50% and the Israeli market was exposed to greater competition from foreign markets).[16] In the 1960s, the government made substantial investments in defense and construction projects (both civilian and military) that were also sourced out to private contractors (between 1961 and 1972, Israel's GDP grew annually by an average of 9.7%). And all these processes were dramatically intensified by the 1967 War.

Today, we tend to focus on the political implications of what Israelis call the Six-Day War: the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza Strip and the Golan and Sinai and its impact on Arab-Israeli relations and international politics more broadly. But the economic impact of the war on Israeli society was profound and mostly overlooked. Initially it was the euphoria that engulfed Israelis after their stunning victory that helped lead the country out of a prolonged recession. But soon thereafter, some of the more tangible outcomes of the war helped expand the Israeli economy: the vast new territories and abundant cheap, unregulated labor. Israelis, who lived for nearly two decades in a sense of claustrophobic fear, were suddenly the masters of a regional power. And two of the regions that Israel captured, the West Bank and the Gaza Strip, were densely populated, but unlike in 1948, Israel did not annex these territories (excluding East Jerusalem), thus potentially making the local Palestinians Israeli citizens, nor did it expel a large number of the local residents. Rather, Israel imposed military rule on the newly conquered territories: hundreds of thousands of people now lived under Israeli control, without the protection of Israeli labor and civil laws, and in a matter of few years they would become an integral part of the Israeli work force, dominating the construction, textile, farming, and service industries (by 1973, roughly 60,000 Palestinians who were not Israeli citizens worked in Israel; Israel's population then was slightly more than three million).[17]

If the 1950s in Israel was a decade of incredible national challenges that called for collective sacrifice, the 1960s was a decade of expansion and development. Israelis ceased to view the world from the perspective of a society caught in an existential battle for survival (in the period that preceded the 1967 War, when IDF reserve units were mobilized and as Nasser closed off the Gulf of Aqaba, ordered UN troops out of the Sinai, and advanced his military towards the Israeli border, Israelis began to use Holocaust imagery to describe their perceived state of siege—several weeks later, they regarded themselves as invincible).[18] Even Hannah Arendt, not the most ardent supporter of Israel to say the least, couldn't hide her joy with the outcome of the

war. In a letter to Gertrud and Karl Jaspers dated June 10, 1967, the last day of the war, she wrote, "The Israelis did a wonderful job, even though Nasser was a paper Tiger."[19]

After the 1967 War, personal pursuits began to erode the overwhelming grip of a collectivist, Zionist ideology on the daily experiences of Israelis. As Gershon Shafir and Yoav Peled put it,

> Labor's hegemony had been eroding … ever since, in the wake of the 1967 Arab-Israeli war, it became paralyzed by conflicting pulls. As against the lure of the past—the state-building project of piecemeal colonial expansion and settlement over which it had presided almost since the beginning of the century—stood the "New Israel"—an emergent civil society whose key actors sought to scale back the state-building efforts, pursue vigorous economic development.[20]

And these social and economic changes had some important cultural implications: They brought some of the characteristics of the rebellious spirit of the 1960s from the West to Israel.

Writing on the relationship between abundance and creativity, and suggesting that it is in fact abundance, not necessity, that is the mother of invention, Adam Gopnik has offered the following metaphor: "The early bird races to the worm and, worn out, croaks the same few flat notes as his fathers; the songbird that wakes at ten and ambles to the worm of his choice in a land where worms are cheap has time and energy to get up on a branch and improvise a new song."[21] Moving away, ever gradually, from the all-encompassing austerity of a Soviet-like statist ethos, Israelis began to discover the (hitherto all but forbidden) attractions of consumerism and individualism. To draw on Gopnik's imagery, they ceased to be Spartan early birds that dressed, ate, celebrated like their fathers and began to act more and more like proud songbirds. Or as Arendt wrote in another letter to the Jaspers dated October 1, 1967, "Israel: In many respects, in most actually, very encouraging. It's really quite wonderful that an entire nation reacts to a victory like that not by bellowing hurrah but with a real orgy of tourism—everybody has to go have a look at the newly conquered territory."[22] As Arendt so acutely observed, for Israelis, after the war, collectivist mobilization gave way to tourism, the activity of affluence and leisure par excellence.

One of the principle characteristics of the 1960s culture in the West, and also in Israel, was the popular revolt against the "establishment" and the conservative values that it stood for. In some important ways, this revolt was not all that different from the modernist explosion of the turn of the previous century that challenged the accepted means of representation of Western culture. Artists looked for new ways to experience and describe the world. They sought to uncover the complexity of human consciousness and release it, artistically, from strict representational conventions. Some of the leading writers who emerged onto the Israeli cultural scene in the 1960s explored ways to represent reality while liberating the individual experience and point of view. A. B. Yehoshua and Amos Oz, for example, experimented with new narrative forms that challenged the old authoritative voice of the Zionist novel while offering a critical look at some of the core values of Israeli society.[23] And Ya'acov Shabtai, in the quintessentially high modernist *Zichron Devarim* (*Past Continuous*, 1977), stretched the limits of modern Hebrew syntactical forms while depicting the disintegration of the Zionist collectivist ethos.

Another, and perhaps the more important, aspect of the 1960s "modernist" outburst were new technologies and the artistic options that they created. New visual technologies allowed

artists and movie directors to compose and decompose visual images that went well beyond the spatial and temporal boundaries that the Cubists or Dadaists had to contend with. In Israel, several movie directors reacted directly to this avant-gardiste spirit: The movies of Uri Zohar (*A Hole in the Moon*, 1965; *Peeping Toms*, 1972) and Jacques Katmor (*A Woman's Case*, 1969), influenced by Fellini's carnavalesque collages and Michelangelo Antonioni's probing into the essence of representation, offered both idiosyncratic narratives and a portrayal of an Israeli equivalent of 1960s counter-culture. But what characterized the counter-culture of that period was not necessarily high art (early twentieth century avant-garde rarely broke the limits of the museum or the literary salon) but rather its dissemination into popular culture.

The demographic and economic "boom" that followed the Second World War created by the 1960s a young and affluent society that turned culture into a central consumer product. Radio, television, and cinema rendered culture more accessible and allowed the cultural codes of the counter-culture to penetrate a larger proportion of the population. As opposed to earlier popular protest movements, the 1960s counter-culture was motivated by abundance of resources and free time that also enabled the masses to consume more cultural products. Or as Terry Eagleton phrased it, "The post-war economic boom may have been on its last legs by the late 1960s, but it was still setting the political pace. Many of the problems which preoccupied militant students and radical theorists in the West were ones bred by progress, not poverty."[24] This was a cultural movement that did not speak in the name of universal redemption; rather, it represented a revolt against institutional stagnation in the name of individual expression. It was the kind of movement that allowed a generation to define itself as culturally different from the previous generation. Hair, clothes, drugs, and music became the rebellious symbols of the era. And from the sounds of the electric guitar of Aris San—the Greek musician who became the godfather of Israeli rock n' roll in the 1960s with his unique synthesis of traditional Greek music and Anglo-American electric rock—in the clubs in Jaffa, to Arik Einstein singing about the rebellion in Prague, to the protagonists of Uri Zohar's *Peeping Toms*, who, like the young characters in Antonioni's *Zabriskie Point*, were seeking alternative lifestyles outside the warm yet stifling embrace of the establishment, this spirit of rebellion, against the perceived stifling uniformity and conformity of the previous decades, also reached the shores of Israel (albeit in a somewhat more muted form than in the West).

Gilberto Tofano's movie *Siege* from 1969 might be the most pronounced artistic expression of the kind of social and cultural changes that Israel was experiencing at the time. The movie follows the attempts of Tamar, a war widow with a young son, whose husband died in the 1967 War, to come to terms with her personal loss while negotiating societal expectations. Tamar is expected by her neighbors and by her husband's fellow soldiers to dress and behave in a certain, restrained manner; any manifestation of individuality becomes the source of rumors and innuendos. In one scene in the movie, Tofano juxtaposes images of Tamar in Dizingoff Street, then the main commercial street in Tel Aviv, that are themselves interspersed with pictures of swinging London, and images of Tamar, dressed in black, at an official memorial ceremony. On the street Tamer sees televisions that have just arrived in Israel that year; she observes the latest fashions; she buys a pop record (that image is followed by the picture of a Beatles album), a mini skirt, and a wig. This scene is constructed like some psychedelic collage in which consumer goods, in a very Warholian manner, become the source of individualistic rebellion—commodities allow Tamar an escape from the rigid demands that society imposes on her and allow her (if only for a fleeting moment) to unleash her deepest wants and desires. And this was the kind of rebellion that was only possible in a post-1967 Israel: a rebellion fueled by newly

found abundance.

The social and economic changes in the West also had a deep impact on the politics of the left—the camp from which the 1960s counter-culture emerged (and which had dominated the Zionist movement and later the State of Israel since the 1920s). If, until the 1960s, the socialist left in the West was still closely identified and affiliated with labor unions and the struggle for workers' rights, then by that decade the working class, the historical subject of the left, ceased to be the driving political force in the West.[25] If the historical image of the left consisted of a white, working-class male who lived in a rough urban environment (or in the Zionist case, as we will discuss in chapter 5 of this book, the pioneering laborer)—a kind of antithesis to the refinement and cleanliness of the bourgeoisie—then starting in the 1960s, students (mostly from the middle classes), professionals, and women came to be associated with the political subjects of the left.[26]

As Perry Anderson has convincingly shown, post–World War II Western Marxism, which in many ways provided the intellectual backbone for the student movements of the 1960s, all but abandoned the economic and materialist analysis of society. Thinkers like Adorno and Marcuse ultimately accepted the hegemony of the market economy and turned their critical gaze toward the cultural realm: to the way the culture industry sustains the market and its logic.[27] In an era of prosperity and consumerism, the classical lexicon of Marxism seemed anachronistic, as some relic of an industrial past that had all but vanished from the West; in a society in which culture is a dominant commodity, cultural producers, not assembly-line workers, are the new (leftist) heroes. If the more traditional socialist left believed in revolutionary violence, the rallying cause of the new left was to become the peace movement. In the 1960s, *The Internationale* gave way to institutions like Bertrand Russell's International War Crimes Tribunal (together with Sartre) as defining the spirit of the age. In the early 1960s, the Beatles were working-class lads from a dreary port city who challenged the puritan ethos of the previous generation—by the end of that decade, they sang peace songs and were photographed naked in fancy hotel rooms protesting the Vietnam War. For the left, freedom—from occupation, tradition, silencing—that at its core is a liberal concept, substituted equality as an ideological banner. The left, it seemed, was motivated more by a fear of totalitarianism and violence than by the desire to alter society; the pursuit of individual expression that promises total freedom came to define the left.

Also in Israel, especially after the 1967 War, the left, which had dominated Zionist and Israeli politics since the 1920s, ceased to be associated with the workers and their interests (or with the early Zionist pioneering ethos). The 1967 War created Greater Israel and with it the Israeli peace camp. Until 1967, by and large, the main division between left and right in Zionist and later in Israeli politics had more to do with social and economic issues and less, as counterintuitive as it may seem now, with Arab-Jewish relations or territorial concerns. Private, as opposed to collective, ownership of land and factories; debates about government's role in the market; and questions of Hebrew labor tended to be the lines of demarcation in the political arena. Post-1967, however, it was almost exclusively questions related to territories and the Arab-Israeli conflict that defined Israeli politics.

In 1993, the Israeli writer S. Yizhar (the penname of Yizhar Smilansky), arguably the greatest writer of the 1948 generation, whose realistic prose, as we discussed earlier, provided the most painstaking portrayal of the 1948 War and its profound implications for both Jews and Arabs, addressed a conference in honor of Martin Buber. In that address, Yizhar talked about his two uncles: the writer Moshe Smilansky and the Labor activist Yoseph Weitz. The former, a member of the first Aliya (the first wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine, 1882–1903) was a farmer who owned his plot of land and hired (cheaper) Arab workers. Weitz was a member of

the second Aliya (1904–1914), a champion of Hebrew labor and fighter for workers' rights. Smilansky at the time was considered a rightist while Weitz, according to those categories. was a leftist. However, Yizhar continued,

> Moshe Smilansky employed Jewish and Arab workers in his orchard according to the principle that two peoples would always live here, and both should have equal opportunity for work and an equal basis for co-existence. He spoke Arabic, intermingled with them, and wrote stories and romances under the pseudonym "Hawaja Musa." … [A]nd at the end of his life he was also a member of Brith Shalom, along with Buber, Magnes, and others who desired to come to a common understanding with the Arabs. … In short, he was a complete "leftist," according to our contemporary categories. My second uncle, Yoseph Weitz, a laborer, a vineyard watchman, and a vineyard planter … was the largest among the land purchasers, and in the language of those days was among the "redeemers of the land" from Arabs. … In today's idiom, he came to be a "rightist."[28]

Although it is true that the Zionist Revisionists (the main right-wing Zionist faction) in the pre-State era and after 1948 were the champions of Greater Israel (on both banks of the Jordan River) as well as free market economics, there were members of the leftist flank of the Labor movement, like Yoseph Weitz, who too were territorial maximalists. (In fact, after the 1967 War, *Ha-Tnuah lema'an Eretz Israel ha-Shelemah* [the movement for Greater Israel], a group of artists, politicians, and intellectuals that called for Israel to make the conquests of 1967 permanent, included several prominent members of the [previously] leftist establishment, including Nathan Alterman, for years the poetic voice of Labor Zionism; the writer Moshe Shamir, previously a member of the left-wing Mapam party; as well as the Labor leader Yitzhak Tabenkin). In the late 1920s and early 1930s, when Revisionists and Laborites clashed, at times violently, it was predominantly over labor disputes, not partition plans. And when Ephraim Kishon, the great right-wing Israeli satirist, wanted to mock the Labor party in movies such as *Sallah Shabati* from 1964, he did not focus on its leaders' foreign policy or their dovish inclinations, but rather on the perceived corrupt nature of their state apparatus (more on that film in chapter 3 of this book). After 1967, the dividing line between left and right in Israel was the Green Line (the June 4 borders between Israel and its Arab neighbors).

The emergence of the Israeli peace camp also left an immediate mark on the Israeli cultural scene. In 1969, Ya'akov Rotblit wrote *Shir la-Shalom* (Song for Peace), which called on people to focus their eyes on hope, not have them gaze through the sights of rifles, and to sing a song for love, not for wars. Hanoch Levin, then an up-and-coming playwright, in a series of satirical revues—"You, I and the Next War," "Ketchup," and "The Queen of the Bathtub"—that were produced between 1968 and 1970, used macabre humor to debunk the Israeli militaristic ethos and sense of national grandeur. In those shows, soldiers sang from their graves, from captivity, and from the afterlife—confronting the audience with the dark reality of war. One soldier sang about losing both his hands and informing his wife that he would no longer be able to zip his pants or caress her white breasts,[29] while in the skit titled "The Queen of the Bathtub," a petit-bourgeois family goes to war against a relative who lives with them in the same apartment. First they deny him access to the bathroom, then they take over the toilets, and later the mother declares herself queen of the greater bath kingdom[30]—the references to a post-1967 Greater Israel could not be clearer.

Levin's satirical revues were highly controversial, but they had a limited run and very few people actually watched them in person.[31] Yet Levin was able to reach a much broader audience when the group *Ha-Halonot ha-Gevohim* (The High Windows), in one of the first Israeli pop albums that was released in 1967, sang his *Bo Hayal shel Shokolad* (Come Here Chocolate Soldier)—a clever play on the famous Bialik children's poem, "Come To Me Nice Butterfly," which included the following stanza:

> The cook hands meat to the master cook
> The master cook serves fodder for the cannons
> The graves unite all people
> Cannons roar, children weep[32]

Although the political implications of Levin's writings in that period were fairly obvious, they were not only directed at Israeli militarism. They seemed also to attack the core of what was starting to be perceived as the suffocating collectivist ethos. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Levin's shows and songs were received as forceful political satire, but with greater historical perspective they can also be seen as an attempt to upend the very principles of the Israeli experience, which was predicated to such a large degree on the idea of sacrificing the individual at the alter of the collective. Levin's was one of the more pronounced instances of the radical spirit of the 1960s entering Israeli culture—but it was also indicative of the broader changes that Israel was undergoing.[33] Levin's satire was a prime example of the radicalization of culture in the name of individual expression at a time when more and more Israelis began to prefer fulfilling their individual pursuits rather than sacrificing in the name of a collective destiny. This does not mean that Levin's radical leftist (in the post-1967 context) politics became the norm in Israel; it only suggests that Levin's (and others') new radicalism was a reflection of broader social changes that placed the individual before the collective.

This, as we have seen before, was the notion of post-Zionism promoted by Uri Avinery, one of the leaders of the Israeli peace camp. To him, until the 1967 War, Israel faced such daunting challenges that it needed a collectivist identity to carry it through those trying times. But the great victory was proof that Israel had reached a certain level of maturity that rendered that collectivist ethos a relic of bygone era. To him, 1967 meant that Israeli society had moved beyond its early, existentialist condition (when it faced that real possibility of physical destruction) and into a new phase when the rights of individuals (all individuals, Jews and Arabs) came before the concerns of the collective.

A more nuanced (politically) artistic expression of the new attitudes in Israeli society toward collectivism and individualism can be gleaned from a comparison of two poems: Nathan Alterman's "The Silver Platter" from 1947 and Nathan Zach's "The Seven" that was published in 1979. Alterman, for decades perceived as the poetic voice of Labor Zionism and the Ben-Gurion administration—he wrote a weekly column in *Davar*, Mapai's official newspaper, called "The Seventh Column" that, as Almog Oz put it, "served as a kind of a barometer of the public mood"[34]—wrote "The Silver Platter" a month into the Arab-Israeli War that followed the UN partition resolution. This is the poem's dramatic climax:

> Weary without end, deprived beyond rest,
> Young Hebrew curls dripping—

Silently come forward
And stand without moving.
No sign if they're alive or shot through

Then the people, spellbound, steeped in tears,
Say, Who are you? And the two
Answer in silence: We are the silver platter
Upon which you will have the State of the Jews.[35]

Youth making the ultimate sacrifice in the name of the national cause. This poem quickly assumed an iconic status in Israel, symbolizing the courage of the Zionist youth for the sake of the collective ethos.

Nathan Zach began publishing poems in the 1950s. His early poetry featured some of the collectivist, socialist themes that were still very much within Alterman's poetic and political mold.[36] But by the end of that decade, he published an article in which he attacked Alterman's poetics and, inspired by Bergsonian philosophy and Anglo-Saxon modernist poetry (Pound, Eliot), called for new poetic forms that avoided what he described as Alterman's static conception of time in favor of more liberated forms of expression, which serve the individual "I" rather than the collective "we."[37] "The Seven" (*Ha-Shiv'ah* in Hebrew, which also denotes the Jewish ritual of mourning the dead) is composed of seven short monologues by different Israelis who describe, from the grave, their very ordinary and decidedly unheroic lives and deaths. The aspirations of the different characters are middle class (they wanted a nice car, a good family, trips abroad), and their deaths were either natural, accidental, or in a war that they did not want to take part in. As they declare in the poems concluding stanza,

We're seven
Buried on the hill on the outskirts of town.
A flock will not graze the grass over our graves
A thorn will not pierce our flesh.
The cycle of life, as they say, opens and shuts.
We were, as they say, a door to a wide world, really wide
We walked, gave birth, suffered.
We were a corridor
that leads to nowhere
We realize this now.[38]

Unlike the heroes of the "Silver Platter," whose deaths ushered in the new state, the characters (and their deaths) in "The Seven" serve no higher purpose; they lead nowhere. One of the speakers in "The Seven," which was composed two years after the 1973 Yom Kippur War, a reservist soldier who was waiting for his discharge papers as war broke, said, "I used to say if you go to one war you're a patriot. If you go to two you're just out of luck. If you go to three you're an idiot, pal."

Zach was able in this poem to capture a vivid Israeli voice that valued individual pursuits and goals before nationalistic ones. His characters are not leftist radicals, pacifists, or detached

intellectuals; in fact, they are the embodiment of an imagined Israeli "center" (as one of the poem's characters' declared, "It's the politicians and the media who are to blame, on both sides; Something should have been done; To make plans, draw maps, to give back land—but not Jerusalem."). Their withdrawal from the collective is not motivated by some political awakening; it is driven by simple, mundane concerns that are emblematic of the profound changes that Israeli society as a whole underwent. Zach's embrace of modernist poetics that challenged the authoritative poetic voice of "statist" Zionism has been harnessed here into a series of first-person narratives that speak ordinary Hebrew in the name of simple, bourgeois ideals that are competing against the cult of collectivism and sacrifice that typified the early Israeli experience.

The process by which cultural currents from the West began to impact Israel in the 1960s, though, was slowed down by the deep-structured legacies of Israeli statism and collectivism. Both the market and its cultural representatives found it hard, initially, to fully impact the Israeli experience. An example is the case of Ya'akov Ori, a concert promoter and entrepreneur, who tried to bring the Beatles to Israel in 1965. As Alon Gan has shown, the Israeli authorities at the time were alarmed by the potential devastating effects that the British pop group might have on Israeli youth—and ultimately prevented them from performing in Israel.[39] Similarly, the Israeli authorities were able to delay television broadcasting in Israel until 1968, again associating television with individualistic cultural decadence.[40] But these processes were sped dramatically after 1977, when the conservative Likud party dethroned the Labor party after nearly seven decades of dominating Zionist and then Israeli politics.

When Menachem Begin led Likud to victory in May 1977, one may have had reason to assume that the champion of Greater Israel and the former commander of the Irgun—the right-wing underground movement in the pre-State era that launched attacks on both British and Arab targets in Palestine—would lead Israel into a violent confrontation with the Arab world. Instead, in his first few months in office Begin instigated peace negotiations with Egypt that concluded two years later with a land for peace deal in which Israel withdrew, completely, from the Sinai Peninsula in return for peace with the Egyptians. But this was not the only dramatic change brought about by the new Likud administration. In the economic realm, Begin and his finance minister, Simcha Ehrlich, introduced new economic programs, informed by the teachings of Milton Friedman, which afforded Israelis open access to foreign currency and dramatically reduced tariffs on imported goods (automobiles and electronics).

In that regard, Begin was a true disciple of Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the "founding father" and chief ideologue of the Zionist right, despite some deep personal tensions between the two men. Jabotinsky, who played a key role in the formation of the Jewish Legion that fought as part of the British army in the later stages of the battle against the Ottomans in Palestine, was the herald of Zionist militarism and Jewish power. In 1931, he wrote that, "For the generation that grows before our eyes and who will be responsible, probably, for the greatest change in our history, the Aleph Bet has a very simple sound: young people learn how to shoot."[41] But as fervent as he was in his advocacy of Jewish military power, Jabotinsky preached with equal zeal the virtues of the free market and his opposition to socialism. In an article titled "Class," he argued that, "If it were possible to build the Hebrew majority in Palestine on the basis of 'national funds,' we were all very happy; but it is impossible, and the success of our enterprise depends, as we all know, on private property."[42] Begin, despite his penchant for populist rhetoric, began implementing free-market reforms and setting a new course for the Israeli economy that would see the gradual dismantling of the Israeli welfare state and the deregulation and privatization of the market.

With this new economic and social outlook that was ultimately embraced by most of the

political parties, Israel caught up with the rest of Western world, becoming a consumer-oriented society. However, this transformation did encounter some challenges: The initial liberalization program brought about hyperinflation, which led to the emergency economic stabilization plan of 1985, in which the government forcefully intervened in the market to curb the spiraling consumer index.[43] By the late 1980s, Israel was on its way to becoming a capitalist powerhouse.[44] Between 1989 and 1995, the GDP grew by an annual average of 5.6%, while private consumption grew by an average of 7% annually.[45] In 1997, the IMF added Israel to the list of industrial nations.

In a matter of two decades, Israel all but leapfrogged the era of assembly-line capitalism, becoming an integral part of the international order of late capitalism—a society whose main products are knowledge and technology. If, in the 1960s, the idea of a car for every worker propelled the government to invest in car-manufacturing plants, it was in the 1980s and 1990s, with the massive decrease in import tariffs, that this became a reality as the conquest of consumerism replaced the idea of the conquest of labor, a staple of second-*aliya* Labor Zionism that continued to inform the Israeli collectivist ethos into the 1960s and beyond, as the defining ideological platform in Israel.[46] Or as the sociologist Oz Almog termed it, Israel has entered a "supercapitalist" era.[47]

These transformations were not unique to Israel. In the 1970s and 1980s, Thatcherism in Britain and Reaganism in the U.S. also implemented economic plans that privatized state agencies and services and dismantled welfare programs, which were critical tools in the West's long road to recovery from the economic crisis of the 1930s and World War II. From this perspective, the 1960s counterculture and student movements were the left's "swan song" as a relevant social force as a wave of new conservatism overtook the West, presenting itself as the only true alternative to the totalitarianism of communism and the left more generally. And in the name of this alternative, most of the social and economic barriers that may have contained the spread of unchecked global late-capitalism were lifted. As Shlomo Ben-Ami has noted,

> Today, the leftist elites follow the rightist formulations in all areas: the free market, global economy, privatization and popular capitalism. Two stubborn and unimaginative leaders—Ronald Reagan and Margaret Thatcher—contributed more to the definition of the West's ideological framework than any other leader over the past quarter of the century. The left could only offer in opposition to them minor amendments.[48]

(One is tempted here to add two more leaders to this equation: Clinton and Blair, as the two "leftist" architects of third-way socialism/liberalism, which in many ways cemented the hegemony of the free market in the 1990s.) And in this new politico-economic order, under this new ideological regime, a new culture that was postmodern, seemingly post-ideological, and in the Israeli case post-Zionist, began to establish itself, dominating wide swaths of the Israeli experience in the last two decades of the previous century.

If the cultural outburst of the 1960s, which was grounded in modernist traditions, was rebellious at its core, in Israel (as it did elsewhere in the West) with the rise of global late-capitalism, to follow the Jamesonian paradigm, it gave way to postmodernism—mass culture was no longer an arena of resistance but an expression of the totalizing qualities of the market (its ability to penetrate and dominate every aspect of our lives) and its consumerist ethos. In a

society powered by telephone lines, jets, and ultimately the Internet, traditional borders no longer restrict (certain) people. Government and its various agencies, which tend to be less relevant in a globalizing market, gradually lose their centrality in the daily lives of individuals (the post office is rivaled by private carriers; private insurers supplement government-provided healthcare; private security forces offer alternatives to the police; private military companies supply the military, train it, and in some cases fight in its stead). The world—at least the Western component of it—was becoming, as Marshall McLuhan quite presciently predicted in the mid-1960s, a global village unified by knowledge and media technologies. Traditional divisions into center and periphery, high and low cultures, reality and representation began to lose their meaning, clearing the way to the totalizing democracy of the floating signifier that eludes all firm definitions or lines of demarcation, to the postmodern condition.

While in the 1960s we witnessed the rise of the "culture industry," culture still maintained its critical aspects, representing reality and striving to shape or change it. The philosophers of the New Left gave up on the economic sphere as an arena of political change—but they looked to avant-garde art as a radical alternative to the "dumbing" down of the masses by cheap consumerist cultural products. As Louis Menand has argued, "For the Frankfurters, too, had made a marriage between anti-capitalist politics and modernist aesthetics."[49] By the 1980s, culture, or at least the idea of culture, became synonymous with reality itself. And the abundance of consumerist society became the trademark of the new cultural age. In this regard, McLuhan was not forceful enough in his predictions regarding the electronic-dominated future: The medium is no longer the message; it is everything: it is (virtually) reality.

Alain Badiou has offered the following, piercing description of the late-capitalist world:

> Our world is no way complex as those who wish to ensure its perpetuation claim. It is even, in its broad outline, perfectly simple. On the one hand, there is an extension of the automatisms of capital, fulfilling one of Marx's inspired predictions: the world finally *configured*, but as a market, as a world-market. This configuration imposes the rule of an abstract homogenization. Everything that circulates falls under the unity of a count, while inversely, only what lets itself be counted in this way can circulate. … On the other side, there is a process of fragmentation into closed identities, and the culturalist and relativist ideology that accompanies this fragmentation. … What inexhaustible potential for mercantile investments in this upsurge—taking the form of communities demanding recognition and so-called cultural singularities—of women, homosexuals, the disabled, Arabs! And these infinite combinations of predictive traits, what godsend! Black homosexuals, disabled Serbs, Catholic pedophiles, moderate Muslims, married priests, ecologist yuppies. … Each time a social image authorizes new products, specialized magazines, improved shopping malls. … Capital demands a permanent creation of subjective and territorial identities in order for its principle of movement to homogenize its space of action; identities, moreover, that never demand anything but the right to be exposed in the same way as others to the uniform prerogatives of the market. The capitalist logic of the general equivalent and the identitarian and cultural logic of communities or minorities form an articulated whole.[50]

In late capitalism, as Badiou has described it so forcefully, politics is no longer the arena for economic or social battles. In the late-capitalist framework the market has already won—all that

remains (for the radical intellectual) is to endow it with a veneer of subversiveness or change. Instead of politics that rearranges social relations, we have identity politics. Freedom is no longer a question of material conditions (bondage as material, physical restrictions) but rather the ability or right to become a voice in the public sphere. The ability of a group to tell its story, to add to or undermine the "grand" narrative, has been regarded as a prime political act. When the dominant logic is that of the market and its attendant values—competition, choice—it seemed that all that was left to do was not to challenge the dominant system but rather to join it, to accept its very rationale: to compete. In a market where culture is simultaneously the representation of reality and reality itself, all that is left to do as an activist gesture is to extend the boundaries of cultural expression: If you are represented, you exist. And struggles, it seemed, were no longer over control of the means of representation (ownership of media outlets or studios seemed, for a while, an anachronistic idea—the new technologies were supposed to dismantle the old media conglomerates and democratize the means to spread information) but over the production of the symbols themselves. And in this type of world, the elite, not the upper class that controls the means of production of the information technology, the one that produces symbols (or symbolic capital, as Bourdieu might have put it), becomes both the agent of production and criticism of the public discourse—a kind of postmodern, self-referential cultural universe.

The old leftist insistence on the necessary relationship between theory and praxis was no longer relevant. Praxis and theory were one and the same: all part of the new culture industry that became the platform for political action. (When Benjamin Netanyahu ran for prime minster in 1996, one of his main lines of arguments, refined by his American political consultant at the time, the conservative Arthur Finkelstein, was to attack the leftist elites in Israel. He was referring to members of the media, academics, and artists, not the owners of media outlets who were supporting him and his ideological commitment to deregulate the markets, including the media markets.) Thus, ostensibly, new democratic options emerged in this advanced technological age. There is no need for the labor-intensive process of altering real, material conditions. All that you have to do is add more voices to the marketplace of voices and to undermine the perceived control of the old elites over the symbolic realm. And a variety of voices and identities indeed became one of the major characteristics of the postmodern and post-Zionist culture.

A prime example of these changes in Israel is what happened to the media market. In the area of electronic media, from a market dominated by one government-controlled broadcasting authority that operated one television channel (since 1968) and several radio stations (there was also an army-operated radio station and a "pirate" radio station: Abie Nathan's—the pilot, entrepreneur, and peace activist—"The Voice of Peace," which broadcasted, starting in 1973, from a boat in the Mediterranean), by the early 1990s Israelis witnessed the start of a privately owned second Israeli television channel and a variety of other television channels (From MTV and CNN to ESPN and Discovery) that had been available to a growing number of Israelis since the 1980s, first through satellite dishes and then also by cable providers, as well as a variety of regional radio stations (and a growing number of pirate radio stations).[51] Israelis who grew up listening to "The Voice of Israel" were suddenly exposed to soap operas, game shows, and talk shows from all over the world. Like the scene in Gianni Amelio's 1994 cinematic masterpiece *Lamerica*, one of the more piercing looks at globalization and its social consequences, in which Albanian kids recite skits from Italian television shows without understanding their meaning (neither the language nor the cultural significance of the shows), so could Israeli kids in the 1990s conduct basic conversations in the Argentinean dialect of their favorite *telenovelas*.

As the media scholar Tamar Liebes has argued, in Israel's first two decades of existence, in a highly collectivist society, radio provided a voice for that spirit of collectivism—reflecting it but also enhancing it. In the post-1967 period, when individualism and skepticism were on the rise, the single television channel provided a kind of communal bonfire that could unite the "tribe" around shows and special events that were shared by a plurality of Israelis. By the 1980s and 1990s, however, the growing choices in entertainment channels helped depoliticize a (perceived) consensual Israeli center (by bombarding the Israeli public with mind-numbing programming), and instead reinforced the growing breakdown of Israeli culture into separatist, cultural enclaves that now had their own radio stations (official or pirate) and later on even their own television outlets.[52]

Similar developments that reflect the growing age of consumerism in a competitive market have also impacted print media in Israel. The leading national dailies became (in their weekday editions) tabloids, which are competing for customers with colorful, sensationalist cover pages. Gossip columns, which in the 1960s in such publications as Uri Avinery's *Ha-Olam ha-Zeh* were a means to challenge the conservative values of the Israeli journalistic establishment, occupied prime printed real estate, as profile pieces on major and minor celebrities became the bedrock of the weekend supplements of the leading newspapers. Sport sections, in the meantime, expanded (becoming more and more like gossip columns), while literary supplements have shrunk. The number of national papers that were identified with a certain party or ideology has decreased dramatically over the past thirty years, while the number of local papers, many of which do little news reporting on local politics but rather focus on reviewing restaurants, clubs, music, and movies, has grown. As Gal Ochovsky, the former editor of *Ha-Ir*, Tel Aviv's leading local newspaper which began appearing in 1980, wrote in a 1997 column, "In order to normalize life one is encouraged to bring out of the closet an appetite for good time, shopping, stuff, sweets. … It is worthwhile to interview culture makers, not only in the fluffy sections and not only when they reach the age of eighty. And most importantly to place our engagement with culture as a kind of center."[53] Or as Yaron Peleg, in his study of Israeli culture in the 1990s, has observed, "The new civic agenda the weekly promoted, and especially its celebration of consumerism, were eagerly seized by a public tired of an oppressive siege mentality and thirsty for better times, for a compensation for years of sacrifice and abstention."[54] (In the case of the local papers, the basic paradox of [late] capitalism and postmodern culture that Badiou addressed has manifested itself quite bluntly: There is an appearance of plurality of voices and decrease in the centrality of "dominant" or "national" voices, but most of these local papers are published and distributed by Israel's leading newspapers in an attempt to further stratify the market and increase their potential readership.) Israel, in the 1980s and 1990s, became a Western society with a media market that is driven by a consumerist agenda, and to paraphrase Ochovsky, a market where the coverage of culture by the agents of culture became a kind of self-referential cycle.

Another aspect of the emerging postmodern culture in Israel, and arguably its most conspicuous, was the transformation of Israeli culture from a culture dominated by the image, and voice, of an Ashkenazi, secular (and predominantly Laborite) native Israeli *Sabra* into a multi-faceted culture that features a variety of voices—women, Mizrahi Jews, orthodox Jews, Arabs—a kind of cacophony of identities.

Dana International (born Yaron Cohen), a transsexual singer who represented Israel at the 1998 Eurovision song contest with her winning song "Diva," represents the multicultural spirit of the era in arguably the most pronounced way. This is how Amalia Ziv described Dana

International: “A singer, transsexual, queen of Hebrew Dance, a youth icon, hated by the religious, the first lady of Israel’s gay community, Yemenite, feminist, a tranny who “made it.” … She battled religious oppression yet at the same time professed her allegiance to Jewish values; she undermines the Zionist male ideal, but expresses patriotic sentiments and is proud to represent her country.”[55]

And someone who used the logic of culture as a commodity market to make an immediate and startling mark was Haim Tzinovich, a mainstream actor and singer, who in order to emerge from a perceived dead-end career reinvented himself in 2000 as *Ha-Saruf* (the burnt one)—a Mizrahi singer wrapped in bandages (a real carnival of identities), while hiding his true identity (he created a cover story according to which he was injured in a gas explosion and used music as a way to deal with his pain). This stunt lasted several weeks and included television appearances (covered in bandages) and a cover story in *Yedioth Ahronot*’s weekend supplement. *Ha-Saruf* became an instant celebrity in a market that, as Badiou has suggested, demands constant change and transformation. After several weeks, on a popular television talk show Tzinovich finally revealed his “true” identity by taking off his bandages on air.

By the year 2000, Haim Tzinovich realized that traditional (Ashkenazi) music was becoming part of an ethnic enclave, and he used Mizrahi, or what was previously seen as minority, music to break out of that enclave (if only for a fleeting moment). Israeli culture by the 1990s was a multicultural arena; a variety of voices and tastes were competing for dominance in an ever-expanding marketplace in which terms such as center and periphery, high and low, have lost their traditional definitions: a postmodern condition, indeed.

Another manifestation of postmodernist culture in Israel was the emergence of a new generation of writers known collectively as the “thin language” writers. The preferred format among these writers was the (very American) short story. The landscape and imagery preferred by them was distinctly urban and Tel Avivian. Yaron Peleg has suggested that writers like Etgar Keret, Gafi Amir, Gadi Taub, and Uzi Weil rejected a collectivized Zionist “we” as well as the individual “I” of the 1960s that rebelled against it, and adopted, instead, an unaffiliated “Me and You,” an alternative romantic narrative, which thrives in lonely, detached urban spaces and that privileges personal love and pursuits over national or collective relations.[56]

For example, in the stories of Gafi Amir, who was also a gossip columnist for a local Tel Aviv paper, the catalogues of credit card companies, cocktails, and coffee shops are the materials that sustain the life of her protagonists, who try to fashion their lives after some American movie. In one of her stories the narrator says, “It jangles my nerves when I think about all my dreams that land right in the junk heap. How I would become a top model. Crossing Sheinkin Street on Friday afternoon, hanging on John Travolta’s arm, while everyone’s eyes just pop. How I would lose ten pounds, win a Nobel Prize, and walk on stage in a tight black mini with a plunging neckline.”[57] In this story, the two main characters, who have just turned thirty, reflect on a life of missed opportunities, looking for love (or a child) as a refuge from the ennui born of a lonely, consumerist world.

In some of the stories of Etgar Keret, politics and history (the *Intifada*, the Rabin assassination) with their attendant violence become the background for vulgar and children’s games. In “Cocked and Locked,” a short story that describes an encounter between an Israeli soldier in an elite unit and a member of Hamas, the entire encounter is reduced to an exchange of curses and taunts—like two kids in the schoolyard—an encounter devoid of any political or historical references. It’s a machoistic, *mano-a-mano* encounter—like a scene from western movies (which are referenced in the story) or an urban gangster rap song. At one point the Arab

tells the Israeli soldier, “You’re never going to shoot, you fucking coward. Maybe if you shoot the cross-eyed sergeant won’t go shoving it up your ass anymore, eh?”[58] The story does not criticize or even comment on the political situation—it uses it as a cultural background, against which a kind of existential angst plays out.

To sum this generational transformation (even if one risks here oversimplification), Israeli culture and society were consumed by the national narrative in the early years, and the artists who emerged in the 1960s sought to liberate the individual from the collectivist grasp by declaring that the emperor (the Israeli establishment) had no clothes—but the emperor (criticizing him, exposing his shortcomings) was still their main point of reference. For the generation that arrived on the cultural scene in the late 1980s, the emperor was already gone (in fact, he was dethroned in 1977) and all that were left were the clothes: an endless collage of symbols, identities, markers where the political and historical became one with the sensationalist (tabloid headlines, gossip columns) and consumerist—the total democratization of the marketplace.

The classical thinkers already understood that theory appears at the twilight of an era, and the rise of the postmodern critique in Israel (and elsewhere) fits this pattern. If the postmodern world is, or at least seems to be, random, unstable, and in constant flux, a world in which traditional concepts of time and space collapse (video conferencing has made what in the 1960s seemed like a sci-fi fantasy an everyday reality; in even small supermarkets one has access to foods from all over the globe), and postmodern culture, as Terry Eagleton rather succinctly described it, tends to be pluralistic, restless, depthless, and lack a coherent center, then the postmodern critique seeks to overcome traditional enlightenment categories that aim to understand and organize reality according to fixed, general parameters and categories such as truth, rationality, universalism, and progress.[59] True to Eagleton’s formulation, and also from a pluralistic, restless, and centerless Israel, from a post-Zionist Israel, the most comprehensive theoretical attack on Zionism has emerged.

THE POST-ZIONIST DEBATES REVISITED

At its core, the postmodern critique regards reality as an infinite array of signs and symbols that are not a stable representational system. The world, in the postmodern mindset, is driven by random forces: History does not have a definite, linear course; certainly, it is not motivated by some teleological notion of progress. All we have are disintegrated systems that operate in their own discursive universe—but every discursive regime is autonomous without a necessary link to other systems. And in postmodern thought there is no room for master narratives that can account for general historical developments (Marxism being a prime example)—all that can be tolerated is a kind of free market of identities, a constant battle to be represented, without the possibility to discern clear victors.

Postmodernists, by and large, prefer a cacophony of voices and stories—endless options that deprive any one narrative of a hegemonic position. According to Lyotard, narrative provides power and authority; it creates a sense of an unbreakable we, beyond which only the “other,” the excluded, exists.[60]

And the task before postmodernist theorists has been to uncover these mechanisms of power and representation that allow one group to present its story as true and push others to the margins of the dominant discourse—to reveal that there is no necessity (truth, rationality) in privileging one story over another. Likewise, there is no one subject (white European male, American,

Zionist) that puts historical processes in motion—subjectivity is the product of arbitrary historical forces. Theory, therefore, does not have to expose the relations between subject and object (reality), but the means by which a certain discourse manufactures an image, or concept of reality, and the subject that holds a privileged position at its core. Or as Fredric Jameson put it, in postmodern thought the individual subject is a myth—it is nothing more than a philosophical construct or cultural mystification.[61] Or if we look at the Internet and its ability to create new identities (I can create new login names at will), it would indeed appear that old assumptions about identity structure have become obsolete (though whenever you use your credit card online, your identity has to be real). All that one can do, it would seem, is to realize that our world lacks any sort of fixed hierarchy and order. Theory, in its postmodern guise, then, does not critically expose the relationships between reality and culture, history or politics; it is itself caught in the only approachable realm—that of the signifiers. Theory ultimately enhances the very logic already imposed by late capitalism on the symbolic order: to continue to increase and diversify.

In the case of the postmodern critique in Israel, its object was the Zionist narrative and its historical subject the new Jew. As we have discussed earlier, the beginning of a concentrated academic criticism on the Zionist narrative dates back to the late 1980s, when a group of Israeli historians, working both in Israel and abroad and employing rather traditional historiographical tools, challenged some of the basic assumptions held by most Israelis (in and outside academia) about the 1948 War, or Israel's myth of creation. In the works of Avi Shlaim, Ilan Pape, and most prominently Benny Morris, Israel was not depicted as a weak David fighting a menacing Goliath (the Arab world); rather, Israel was described as a powerful agent, better equipped, trained, and organized than the Palestinian Arabs and even the invading Arab armies. These historians analyzed Israel's culpability in creating the Palestinian refugee problem: Some three-quarters of a million Palestinians fled what would become the State of Israel, in times under direct orders of Israeli leaders or as the result of atrocities committed by Israeli soldiers. And they also revealed that contrary to the perception among many Israelis that their country always sought peace with its Arab neighbors, this was not the case when such opportunities presented themselves following the 1948 War. In these new historical narratives, Zionism was no longer the ideology of the weak and persecuted, and the Zionist subject (the pioneer, Israeli soldier) was no longer a virtuous fighter: A stark sense of realism now clouded the romantic image Israelis had of their own past.

This is how Benny Morris, in 1990, described the essence of the New History: "By and large, the New Historians feel untrammeled by considerations of propaganda and image, considerations that so clearly figure in the writings of the Old Historians."[62] And to further advance the claim that this new school of historians was committed to objective methodology, devoid of personal or national slants, Morris also tied the emergence of the New Historians to the opening up in the 1980s of new archival resources on the 1948 War and the availability of objective source material. Or, to put it more acutely: The Old Historians were writing narratives aimed at advancing the national cause; the New Historians were writing the truth.

Although certainly not postmodern in its methodological (and ideological) aspirations, the emergence of the New History was still a critical turning point. Collectivism had given way to individual commitment to the (self-perceived) pursuit of truth. What Israelis were experiencing in their individual lives since the 1960s was now matched by the theoretical approach to Zionist and Israeli history—though still under a traditional positivist guise. But just as the waves of change from the West were impacting Israel with greater ferocity in the 1980s and 1990s, so did the theoretical discourse in Israel soon catch up with the dominant trends in Western (especially

American) academic institutions. By the last two decades of the last century, Israelis were consuming culture like their Western counterparts—now came the time for theory; or, as Laurence Silberstein has observed, by the 1990s a growing number of post-Zionist academics and critics, using postmodern analytical tools, began to explore and expose the means and ways a certain Zionist discourse became, in a process lasting no more than a century, the dominant factor in determining the contours of Jewish identity in Israel.[63]

The architectural critic Charles Jencks argued that modernist architecture came to an end on March 16, 1972 (at 3:00 PM, for even greater accuracy) when one of the buildings in the Pruitt-Igoe housing project in St. Louis, a notorious housing project that expressed the spirit of the New Deal and the belief that government projects and programs can solve social ills, was demolished (the Israeli equivalent of Pruitt-Igoe were the housing projects and development towns that were built in Israel in the 1950s and 1960s to provide a quick solution to the problem of housing the massive wave of immigration from predominantly Arab and Muslim countries, and which will be described in greater detail in chapter 3).[64] According to Jencks, Pruitt-Igoe conveyed the modernist sentiment that you can create a rational, enlightened environment that would improve the quality of life of its inhabitants—and the destruction of that project symbolized the failure of the modernist approach that sought to impose on people a certain, normative framework. For the post-Zionist critics who emerged in the 1990s, the Zionist project was tantamount to Pruitt-Igoe, a political project that tried to assert itself (falsely) as a historical and social necessity and which sought to impose on its members a uniform set of values and beliefs.

Postmodernism, by and large, declared the death of the rational subject. Instead of an epistemological structure with a rational subject at its core, postmodernists tend to look at reality as a series of texts, and theoretically, they seek to expose the power mechanism that give texts their meaning and afford their authors, rather than their intended subjects (historians, politicians, ideologues who produce texts rather than Israelis, Palestinians, Americans, Jihadists, the subjects of these texts) a position of power. And if one of the main characteristics of Zionism was to celebrate the New Jew, the Zionist pioneer, as the negation of the passive, weak Diaspora Jew (more on that in the next chapter), then post-Zionists, drawing on the postmodern theoretical arsenal, sought to reveal the systems of oppositions (meaning) that sustained and gave meaning to this ideological framework. To Adi Ophir, post-Zionism is a kind of looking glass that exposes the internal contradictions of Zionism and allows for an open representational space in which a multiplicity of voices can coexist.[65]

One of the core ideological premises of Zionism has been that Exile, a condition which was forced on the Jews but which shaped their social, cultural, and political experiences for centuries, has created an anomalous condition for the Jews, which prevented them from joining the general course of human history. Jews, according to this historical perception, were forced to the margins of European society politically, socially, and economically. They were prevented from having "normal," productive jobs and excluded from social and political institutions. Jews were persecuted and discriminated against, and in return, they chose to shut themselves off from the rest of Gentile society. When finally, following the French Revolution, they were gradually granted civil rights, modern anti-Semitism reared its menacing head and proved that assimilation was all but impossible for the Jews. In return, Zionists argued, only a political solution that would grant Jews political independence would enable them to reverse the horrible consequences of Exile and allow Jews a normal existence in which they could become a self-sufficient society that relies on its own labor for its survival. Zionists wanted a society of New, independent Jews imbued with a pioneering spirit that would embrace physical labor and the ethos of self-defense;

they sought to create a society that no longer relied on the kindness of others—a negation of the Diaspora mentality.[66] Or, as Gabriel Piterberg, from a critical position, summarized this Zionist mindset, "The return of the Jewish nation to the land of Israel, overcoming its docile passivity in exile, could alone allow it to rejoin the history of civilized peoples."[67]

From the post-Zionist vantage point, this "negation of Exile" idea was an ideological construct that was meant to provide moral cover to the Jewish attempt to reclaim a certain territory for European Jews, while denying the indigenous population its rights. Zionists devalued the Diaspora Jewish experience in order to present Jews as the ultimate victims who merit the right to dispossess other people to attain their own political, colonial goals. And from that same post-Zionist perspective, the notion of the return to the general course of history was an attempt to present Jews as white Europeans, members of the dominant historical force, thus allowing Jews in the Middle East to act like their European counterparts and marginalize their oriental "other" (first Arabs and then also Jews from Arab and Muslim countries). This is how Adi Ophir and Ariella Azoulay described Zionism and its legacy in what is arguably the closest thing to a post-Zionist manifesto, an article titled "100 Years of Zionism, 50 Years of a Jewish State," published in *Tikkun* in 1998 (exactly a decade after Benny Morris published on the pages of *Tikkun* his own manifesto-like account of the New Israeli History):

> We are the last place in Europe where the Nazi past is still profitable. … We are the last frontier of the military colonialism that Europe abandoned in shame decades ago. … We are an emblem of Europe's Orientalism that shamelessly shines in the Orient. … Now we have an "inner Orient" and an "outer Orient," and a clear hierarchy of a master relationship between the "White Jew" and his two "Oriental Others."[68]

According to Jencks, postmodern architecture, which arrived on the scene after the failure of modernist architecture and its grand social mission, refused to accept the boundaries of a strict set of laws and regulations, nor did it try to create something ex-nihilo, as was the credo of most modernist schools. Instead, postmodern architects turned their gaze to the past—to an array of symbols and ornaments—and tried to reassemble them not on the basis of rational, linear logic but as an untamed and unregulated carnival of shapes and frills. (The dirty little secret, of course, is that it was modern technology that enabled architects to engage in these wild aesthetic games—it provided the foundation upon which these frivolous games could be carried out.) For the post-Zionists, criticism had a similar goal: to open up the Israeli landscape to a variety of voices and stories, to create the type of democratic cultural space in which no hierarchy or regulatory body can privilege one narrative or voice over another. They envisioned a totally liberated space in which Jew and Arab, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi, man and woman all have the same access to means of representation; a postmodern utopia, indeed.

This is what Ophir and Azoulay imagined as the (idealized) post-Zionist and post-national substitute to Israel as the Jewish State:

> Like Switzerland, which has four official languages, this new state would have Hebrew and Arabic, and perhaps English and Russian, as its official languages. The borders would be open and naturalization would be regulated on a universal, not national basis. … The state we envision would strive to be no more that this: a guardian of the societies and cultures under its jurisdiction. It would work hard to refrain from thinking of the ensemble of its citizens as comprising one society or as sharing one culture.[69]

Elsewhere, Ophir and Azoulay wrote that in that post-Zionist state there would be "Arabs who speak Hebrew, Jews who speak Arabic alongside Jews who speak Russian and Arabs and Jews who speak English. All these linguistic subcultures would be cultivated in order to promote maximum access to as many and varied cultural sources."[70] The traditional nation-state in this scenario would disappear. Instead of firm limits of sovereignty and borders, a new open space would be created in which the main activity would be the free exchange of symbolic capital—the state would become a kind of bank or bourse that deals in cultural currency. And instead of a collectivist (and highly mobilized) society, as Israel was in its early days, post-Zionists cling to a multicultural vision as an ideological framework for a pluralistic and heterogeneous culture and society (as Israel had, in fact, become by the 1990s). In this type of multicultural society, as Yossi Yona formulated it, there would remain only a minimal ethos, but "beyond this minimal threshold, each community would be entitled to preserve its way of life and cultural characteristics."[71] Or, as Uri Ram put it, "Post Zionism is a liberating tendency of opening up; it aspires to lower the barriers of self-identity and include the 'others.' "[72] Instead of a state that uses force to brutally achieve its aims, a new open space of cultural exchange would dominate the political landscape.

But is the postmodern and multicultural model espoused by post-Zionists still relevant in the twenty-first century? Postmodernism, as an expression of late capitalism, flourished as long as the West enjoyed a period of "peace and prosperity." As Uri Ram, quite perceptively, claimed, post-Zionism benefited from a combination of a decrease in the intensity of the regional conflict between Israel and the Arab world and a higher degree of global integration.[73] Or, as Daniel Gutwein phrased it, "Post-Zionism contributed to the legitimization of the ethos of privatization by undermining the collectivist principles of Zionism, while the advancement of the privatization revolution provided legitimacy to post-Zionist ideas."[74] Sami Shalom Chetrit, an activist, poet, and scholar, has argued that new Mizrahi politics that emphasize a Mizrahi identity that is not dependent on an Ashkenazi ethos to define it could have only emerged in the 1980s, and in greater ferocity in the 1990s, because of the (then) easing tensions in the Arab-Israeli conflict and the decline of the Zionist collectivist ethos.[75]

Postmodernism has tended to flourish in the typical spaces of late or advanced capitalism—the shopping mall, multi-channel television, the Internet—spaces where the notion of the death of the subject become quite comprehensible: You are what you watch or what you consume, a passive entity that is constructed from an endless array of symbols and commodities. But when it came to the contradictions of contemporary capitalism, postmodernism was rather silent.[76] Even at the height of late capitalism not everybody shared in its bounty (or "trickle down" effect). Although in the developed West more and more people became part of the knowledge industry (a world of global corporations fueled by jet engines and broadband connections that seemed to transcend the older limitations of time and space), millions of illegal workers in the West (a rather postmodern category—people living outside the law, without a definite and fixed identity) and manufacturing laborers outside the West continued to work, in the more traditional sense of the word. And when the West began to experience economic crises, these workers became a political issue as anti-immigration and isolationism re-entered the Western political lexicon. Also, as national and ethnic tensions continued to flare up throughout the 1990s and in great ferocity in the twenty-first century, postmodernists seemed to offer very few concrete proposals, beyond continuing to insist that minorities have greater ability to express themselves and blaming the colonialist past for current ills.

One popular trope among postmodern thinkers has been to suggest that we should no longer treat the human body as a natural entity but rather as the product of discursive practices—sickness and pain as a cultural performance,[77] or as Meira Weiss, in her study of the politics of the body in Israeli society put it, "Following Foucault, the body now came to be seen within a political context, as an object whose meaning is contingent on processes of knowledge and power."[78] Stephen Frears, in his movie *Dirty Pretty Things* from 2002, has limned, with chilling brutality, an entire (hidden) world in which foreign workers in tolerant and multicultural London are forced to give up parts of their bodies (sell their kidneys) in order to obtain fake forms of identification to avoid real (not discursive) borders that are an integral part of their daily experiences.

Terry Eagleton, from a somewhat revolutionary yet romantic point of view, has maintained that the very contradictions of contemporary capitalism, "In a powerfully estranging gesture … expose postmodernism as the ideology of a peculiarly jaded, defeatist wing of the liberal-capitalist intelligentsia, which has mistaken its own very local difficulties for a universal human condition in exactly the manner of the universalist ideologies it denounces."[79] When chinks in the armor of the Pax Americana began to appear, postmodernism began to lose its hegemonic position in the theoretical field. Postmodernism provides an air of cultural subversiveness that allows people to appear as radical in the midst of affluence and the complex options it presents (Mac or PC; window or aisle; organic food or locally grown food), but when conflicts and issues become more and more fundamental in nature, when real pain and suffering are involved, postmodernism seems detached if not paternalistic.

Israel in the 1990s enjoyed its own, admittedly limited, period of Pax Israelianna. The growth and expansion of Israel's economy and its integration into the global economy—Israeli companies were traded on the floors of international exchanges, and Israel received high ratings from international credit agencies[80]—was accompanied, and to some extent fueled, by the peace process between Israel and the PLO, the signing of a peace agreement with Jordan, and more limited political and economic relations with other countries in the region. As noted before, the economic expansion experienced by Israel after the 1967 War was facilitated to an important degree by the availability of abundant cheap and unregulated labor from the West Bank and Gaza. Following the first *Intifada* that broke out in 1987, but more intensely after the signing of the Oslo agreements, Israel began to cut itself off from the territories, by limiting and regulating the Palestinian workforce inside Israel. In return, foreign workers from all over the world replaced the Palestinians in the construction, agricultural, and service sectors—many of them soon (after their work permits expired) becoming illegal workers.[81] In Tel Aviv in the 1990s, Israelis were able to see all the latest pop acts or dance performances from around the world; Israeli soccer clubs, which for years could not find a continental body to compete in, were now playing against other European clubs; and in southern Tel Aviv, foreign workers dominated entire neighborhoods—a typical outpost of the global village.

But the second *Intifada* that erupted after the failure of the Camp David peace summit in the summer of 2000, which brought about terror attacks and the loss of personal security, led the majority of Israelis to conclude that the Arab-Israeli conflict was far from over and burst the optimistic bubble of the previous decade. Israel was again an internationally isolated country that appears on the travel danger lists of foreign ministries. If the idealized postmodern world was borderless, the post-2001 world became (for Westerners—for others, nothing really changed) filled with checkpoints, security lines in airports, and terror alerts. In Israel, this manifested itself most prominently in the "security walls"—the one that separated Gaza from Israel and that

already separates large parts of the West Bank from Israel—and in the hundreds of security checkpoints inside the West Bank as well as in Israel. At the same time, certain aspects of the Israeli economy, the darling of rating agencies and investment bankers, began to unravel: The gaps between the haves and have-nots increased, and unemployment and greater economic insecurity turned to populist anger against foreign workers and for the creation of an immigration police. Israel still has many foreign workers, but while in the 1990s they were visible, adding another element to the multicultural spirit of the time, in the twenty-first century they went underground, occupying the shaded territories (not all that different from Guantanamo Bay, extraordinary renditions) on the fringes of society—the new spaces that seem to define the start of the current millennium.

In the heyday of late capitalism, when, as Perry Anderson put it, the West witnessed the complete extinction of the communist alternative and the relentless advance of neo-liberalism throughout the Third World, eliminating one remnant of economic autonomy after another, postmodernists (as well as neo-conservatives) declared the end of history.[82] The human experience was no longer a political battle among major ideological forces; rather, as Lyotard put it, "Let us wage war on totality."[83] This is, in fact, a war with no clear objective or end but an endless clash of identities and symbols (in order to avoid the possibility of a fixed identity, which is for Lyotard the root cause of the terror experienced in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries), what most of us can experience daily on television or computer screens—the ultimate video game (an all-out war without any real casualties). Similarly, as the Arab-Israeli conflict seemed (if only briefly) to be entering its final stages, and in the midst of unprecedented economic expansion, post-Zionism declared the end of Zionism, the death of the attempt to return the Jews to history. Adam Tennenbaum made the following observation as to the differences between Zionism and post-Zionism: "This is not a struggle about peace. This is a struggle between different perceptions of violence, violence that nullifies the other and violence that accepts the other. … Thought itself, when it negates everything that has to be negated, becomes a supreme kind of violence. This violence is not dialectic because it leaves behind no memory; it is wasteful."[84] This is the violence of the market—not political or revolutionary violence that seeks to alter reality in a fundamental way; this is virtual, or imagined violence, of the infinity of commodities in the shopping mall, violence of abundance.

Benny Morris argued in 1988 that besides the abundance of new archival resources that were available to historians in the 1980s, the reason for the emergence of the New Historians was generational: the New Historians were born after 1948 (or were too young to remember the War) and grew up in an increasingly skeptical society that was no longer personally committed to the national struggle.[85] Morris's observation is important, but it may yet point at a broader argument, though perhaps not what Morris had in mind. What is true about the post-1948 generation in general—in Israel but also outside Israel—is that by the 1980s, most people had forgotten the power and promise of the struggle for national liberation. By that time, the memory of the wave of post-World War II national revolutions that came to an end by the 1960s was already fading away; it was washed by the disappointments of its outcome—states that mostly became oppressive dictatorships. The case par excellence is the Cuban revolution. In the late 1950s and throughout the 1960s, Castro's revolution became the poster child of the struggle for liberation from an oppressive regime supported by colonial and imperial forces (Batista as an agent of American interests). But over the years, Castro's regime became a parody of its own image: a megalomaniac, oppressive regime that stifles any form of dissent. From the inspirational ideals from which the Cuban revolution sprang, all that's left today are the posters

and T-shirts of Che Guevara—the ultimate privatization and commodification of the revolutionary idea. In the era of advanced capitalism, the state, as a collectivist entity of political action, has been perceived as a bureaucratic thicket of institutions, regulations, administrators, and corruption that stands in opposition to the forces of the free market. Instead of the state as a protector of the interests of its citizens, privatization of public institutions became the ideal: transferring public services from the state to transnational companies unburdened by regulations, taxes, borders. From a postmodern position, the national struggle (or any fierce struggle for political change) was doomed from the start; it held no liberating potential because the state, by its very nature (from a late-capitalist position), cannot but lead to oppression.

An analogy to the food industry might be useful here. Over the past twenty years, we have been bombarded by articles, books, and movies that expose how our bodies are poisoned by the products of the food industry (and, by extension, by the food revolution, which industrialized food production by introducing different chemical and biological agents into the mass-production of food). Organic and locally grown food (or "slow food"), we were told, was the answer—industrialized food, it seems, can only be tolerated in pop art (Campbell's Soup cans or Coke bottles). I do not want to address the infinite new marketing possibilities here (the ideal market: health conscious yuppies with disposable income looking for "meaningful" products that would enhance their self-regard), but rather the "health" question. Despite the growing "awareness" in the West of the hazards contained in industrialized food, still many people around the globe rely on organic, locally grown food—and their life expectancy is shorter than that of people who rely primarily on "contaminated" processed food. A friend once told me in amazement of a roadside advertisement in India for an orange drink: It declared in bold letters that the product was 100% artificial. In many countries around the world, natural foods are dangerous—they can kill you. When people in Brooklyn, San Francisco, or Tel Aviv buy organic food, they feel like they are returning to nature, to a healthy condition free from the poisons imposed on our bodies by modern technology and science. But this is a virtual state of "nature." They purchase fruits and vegetables grown in special farms under strict supervision and care for a price that very few can afford. (It is like being on an African Safari driving in a Land Rover with armed guides—you are in nature, but comfortably protected from it). The food revolution doubled our life expectancy. Yes, processed foods are packed with dangerous agents and have created new diseases. But is the answer to reverse course and forget all the achievements of modern technology, or rather to continue and find solutions that would address the need of the plurality of people: a true universal solution? The state, as a protector of people from the "state of nature" is riddled with problems, if not outright contradictions. Is the solution, though, abandoning politics all together? From a comfortable post-conflict position, the state may, indeed, seem anachronistic. For multinational corporations, high-tech companies, investment banks, a world without local, national governments might be useful. But is that true for those who are laboring under the yoke of daily oppression? Is it true for the dispossessed that rely on the state for the basic necessities? They cannot afford to go to the local organic market—they need massive, problematic organizations to feed them, to protect them, to care for them. (And in the great economic meltdown of 2009, didn't the major banks ask for government handouts to save them?) Perhaps in the 1990s, from the point of view of Tel Aviv and the high-tech boom, a state for the Jews was no longer deemed necessary—but does that mean that such a state was not needed in 1882 or 1939?

The historian Anita Shapira, in an article that compared the different reactions of Hannah Arendt and the Israeli poet Haim Guri to the Eichmann trial that took place in Jerusalem in 1961,

offered the following hypothesis as to why Arendt's writing on the Eichmann trial found fervent admirers both at the time of the trial[86] but also later among postmodern and post-Zionist critics:

> Arendt placed herself in opposition to a political-ideological-national system; and from this critical position vis-à-vis everything and everybody, she planted seeds of criticism about the system, which were warmly received by all those who opposed the "Ben-Gurion regime," a regime which enjoyed a period of grace during the trial. Beyond the critical-negative position of the political system there was the moral ambivalence. The moral ambivalence is what makes Arendt interesting in the eyes of postmodernists: nothing is as it seems. There is no true or false, victim and murderer, guilty and innocent, no hierarchy of values, and no absolute values.[87]

To Shapira, in the 1960s, Arendt was popular among those who opposed Ben-Gurion and the all but total control of the Labor government in Israeli life; by the 1990s, Arendt became the hero of postmodern relativists. Conflating postmodernism with moral relativism is a common trope among critics (especially of the older guard) of postmodernism.[88] But it is not necessarily postmodernism's most distinguished quality. Relativism in Western thought is not a new phenomenon. What is unique about postmodernism is its *modernity*—its relationship to the modern project and its historical products. Postmodernists reject the modern state as an oppressive institution not because of a commitment to relativism (moral or otherwise), but because of a commitment to a view of the world that is free of barriers and restrictions, to a free flowing condition. What ultimately makes Arendt the darling of post-Zionist critics is not her moral relativism but her opposition to the Jewish state as a political entity.[89] Arendt in her various writings cultivated the idea of the Jew as a moral pariah who eschews the temptation of statehood and political power, of ideology, which, for Arendt, inevitably leads to totalitarianism and terror.[90] As historian Idith Zertal—a critic of Zionism and an admirer of Arendt—has pointed out, for Arendt the role of the Jew, as a conscious pariah, was to remain outside the ranks, to become, consciously, an outcast; Jews, Arendt warned, should not accept the Gentile rules of society for fear that they would lose their uniqueness.[91] To Arendt, to combat the dictatorship of modern ideology one had to employ utilitarian common sense—to react to the logic of the time in a critical manner, but *not* to engage in efforts to transform it (which, to her, was the essence of totalitarianism—to change human nature): This is what has endeared her to postmodernists and post-Zionists.

National revolutions—and Zionism among them—that were informed by the spirit of the French Revolution began as a struggle against oppressive, global forces, against abusive empires. Zionism in its infancy was not a military, imperial power that oppressed Palestinian nationalism. Zionism was a movement of an oppressed minority in Europe that faced existential threats (threats that were realized in a violent crescendo in the Holocaust) and sought self-determination in order to escape a vicious cycle of hate and violence. The Jewish State was founded, first and foremost, to provide security through independence and sovereignty. In the post-Zionist imagination, Zionism from the very start was an oppressive European movement. To them, what motivated Zionists was not the historical condition of the Jews in Europe, rather the desire of Jews to become fully Europeanized. Post-Zionism has deprived Zionism of its liberating, revolutionary dimension and has described it, by its very nature, as part of the European system of oppression of all non-Europeans.[92]

The post-Zionist critique can be seen, then, as part of a larger postmodern criticism that treats any mechanism or organized form of power as a limitation on freedom. And despite their disdain for monopolies of force, if postmodernists do have a political stance, then it is placing freedom as the alternative to totalitarianism (very much in the tradition of Hannah Arendt). The postmodern condition liberates the intellectual from historical necessity; it frees man from the order of the natural and rational order of the world. The converse to any totalitarian system—the state, science—is absolute freedom that is not subjected to a hierarchical order. Not equality that is propelled by notions of justice and that requires mechanisms to enforce that vision of justice, but freedom from force and its obscene double: oppression. And the place where this kind of absolute freedom exists, the utopian space for postmodernist thinkers, is the text, culture—the infinite places where signifiers, unbound by the reality of the signified, can be exchanged freely like a Las Vegas casino, virtual reality. (The notion of reducing political thought to the quest for freedom is not unique to postmodernism among contemporary intellectual movements. Neo-conservatism, which emerged as a liberal critique of communist totalitarianism and evolved into a quasi-messianic doctrine that calls for spreading democracy and market economy throughout the world, has also placed freedom at the core of its utopian horizon. As Francis Fukuyama described the core principles of neo-conservatism in an article from 2006 in which he distanced himself from the movement:

> If there was a single overarching theme to the domestic social policy critiques issued by those who wrote for the neoconservative journal *The Public Interest*. … [It was] that ambitious efforts to seek social justice often left societies worse off than before because they either required massive state intervention that disrupted pre-existing social relations [for example, forced busing] or else produced unanticipated consequences like an increase in single-parent families as a result of welfare.[93]

Instead, neo-conservatives advocated the spread of freedom and democracy based on free-market models. This is the intellectual movement that informed much of Benjamin Netanyahu's worldview, removing all barriers that might hinder market forces, and in an interesting twist brings the Israeli right and the post-Zionist intellectuals together.)

The quest for freedom from oppression, for unbounded openness that rejects any preconceived rational order (or social engineering), has manifested itself in the postmodern and post-structuralist fascination, if not outright fetishization, with the idea of the wandering, Diasporic Jew. As Max Silverman has observed, "The Jew simply becomes the figure employed to define a new universalism, the reified marker of all resistance to rootedness, and closure—the nomad *par excellence*."[94] This was an inversion and sublimation of sorts of anti-Semitic characteristics of the Jew, elevating them into a model for rejecting Western conventions. From a postmodern position, the very traits that Jews were persecuted for—constant wandering, not having a centralized political system, living on the margins of society—are presented as a subversive alternative to the universalist aspirations (or pretensions) of Western civilization. And this fascination with the wandering Jew, with the ethos (and ethics) of the Diaspora, has also penetrated the post-Zionist landscape.

In a two-part article titled "Exile within Sovereignty," Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin has argued that the Zionist attempt to negate the Jewish past, the legacy and memory of the Diaspora, and instead only focus on the present as the messianic fulfillment of Jewish history has enabled the Zionist reluctance to acknowledge the Palestinian past and thereby exclude Palestinian Arabs

from the Israeli/Zionist collective. Raz-Krakotzkin's article is perhaps the most intellectually provocative element within the post-Zionist corpus. It combines insights gleaned from Jewish thought, Walter Benjamin's *Theses on the Philosophy of History*, and modern Hebrew literature, and it challenges some of the core principles of Zionist thought, namely the dichotomy that has been drawn by Zionist ideologues between the Jewish past and the Zionist present. Raz-Krakotzkin's alternative is to replace the Zionist mindset that rejects the past with a sense of triumphalism with an exilic one that accepts weakness and vulnerability:

> Exile here refers to "de-colonization" of the Jewish-Israeli entity; it is a concept that in this context means not only an end to the occupation, the colonial rule in the territories, but altering the basic colonial consciousness that is embedded in the concept of the negation of the exile and allows the colonialist condition. … De-colonization in this instance is a kind of deterritorialization, which here does not mean leaving the space but a kind of memory work that opens up space for the memory of the defeated.[95]

Memory and discourse as agents of political change. In another article on the pages of *Teoria u-Vikoret*, titled "Israel Has No Homeland," the brothers Jonathan and Daniel Boyarin claimed that by creating a Jewish state, in which Jews are the majority that controls and carries out the use of organized force, Zionism has deprived Jews of their unique characteristic, their moral outlook that can only be articulated from the position of the marginal and the persecuted. Or as they put it,

> Our claim is that the confinement of Judaism inside of a [political] state creates such as a radical transformation in the lives and social relations of the Jews. First and foremost, it must be pointed again, the idea of focusing solely on the Jews changes from a justified cultural-survivalist pattern under the conditions of exile into state-sponsored discrimination and it is wrong both morally and politically. The patterns of injustice and inequality that characterize the political, social and economic practices in Israel are not some unfortunate anomalies but the inevitable outcome of the unfortunate importation of discursive forms from one historic context to another, from a condition under which the Jews were a stubborn, oppressed minority to a condition in which they are the oppressive majority.[96]

So what is the political solution? How can the moral compass of the Jewish exile be reconstituted? As Yoav Peled, in a response to these two articles, has suggested, a real existing Jewish, social alternative to Zionism and the state of Israel, inside of the state, already exists: in the ultra-Orthodox enclaves. But this is not precisely what the articles in *Teoria u-Vikoret* aimed for (one would doubt that the status of women, for example, in the ultra-Orthodox communities is what these writers had in mind).[97] Raz-Krakotzkin was fully aware of the political limitations of his argument. As he formulated it, "One cannot ignore the thing that lacks in this article—that there is no sufficient reply to the necessary question of how to produce 'politics of exile,' how does one place within everyday practices the memory of exile. … Exile in this instance is not a program, but aspirations and values—the negation of these values is what our current culture is based on."[98] For Raz-Krakotzkin, this very ideal, this "aspiration," is a slippery and in some way indefinable path. It opens up questions, but it does not offer any closed framework. But perhaps the problem is not one of philosophical formulations and the problematic relations between

signifiers and signified. Perhaps the issue goes well beyond a fetishization of an exilic past as a pure moral space. Because what both Raz-Krakotzkin and the Boyarins call for is the end of political sovereignty for the Jews—and therefore there cannot be a programmatic, political alternative. All that can be offered is a cultural alternative that accepts the social and political reality and seeks to imbue it with moral values, in the way that the romanticized persecuted Jew of the ghetto found refuge in the text.

What does not figure prominently in the analyses offered by Raz-Krakotzkin and the Boyarins are the violent consequences of the marginalization and persecution of the Jew and the historical need to solve the real Jewish problem. In fact, in reading some of the post-Zionist literature, one might assume that the only historical lesson one can draw from the Holocaust, for example, is how the State of Israel manipulated the memory of the *shoah* for its political ends.[99] The thought that a political state was a viable solution to a real problem of persecution seems, from a post-Zionist perspective, anachronistic. In modern-day America, where Jews are fully integrated and relatively prosperous (where the Boyarins live and write), and in Israel (where Raz-Krakotzkin is) where they are in control of a strong military, the persecuted Jew seems like a distant memory, and a romanticized one. Jews are strong and influential; they cannot be conceived as real hapless victims. In the 1990s, the real enemy was the state, and the past can be re-imagined to conjure up an idealized Diasporic Jew who wanders in a secluded moral universe in order to justify its dismantling. Fredric Jameson has observed that one of the chief aspects of postmodernism has been replacing the economic with the cultural (while reducing every cultural product to its worth in the box office or the auction house).[100] And Richard Rorty, in a moment of (self) irony, acknowledged that globalization created a cosmopolitan economy that, in turn, created a cosmopolitan culture that allows intellectuals (Rorty, of course, among them) to be overtaken by a world of trans-Atlantic flights and multi-discipline conferences: to experience the political, social, and economic reality solely through a cultural prism.[101] As a postmodern phenomenon, post-Zionism similarly has reduced the Zionist quest for a political solution to a cultural pursuit of a new (Western) identity for the Jews, and within this realm of cultural, identity politics, the idea of the wandering Jew, as a cultural symbol, could appear to be an actual political solution.

One of the only post-Zionist thinkers to address the relationship between economic and social developments and the postmodern, post-Zionist condition in Israel has been the sociologist Uri Ram. In 1996, Ram wrote,

> This new politics involves, also, renouncing the ethos of class and social solidarity, with their socialist and social-democratic expressions. Thusly, in the U.S., the country that heralded multiculturalism, the variety of styles and versions is nothing but a thin cover (not to say decorative) for the process of capitalist unification, that cheered on by business corporations, dismantles all remnants of social and class solidarity that were features of the welfare state.[102]

Yet despite this admission, Ram's choice at the time was clear:

> The possibility of the forced pseudo-homogeneity of the national melting pot and of the forced pseudo-science of the academic establishment is not wanted and not possible any longer. All in all we have to see the beginning of cultural heterogeneity in Israel as a process of democratic maturation, that in the good case would actually allow

different groups to compete more vigorously for their rights and status, while they are re-interpreting their past and cultivating their cultural identity.[103]

Instead of resisting the socioeconomic reality, Ram has offered the marginal members of society, or the subaltern groups in the post-colonial jargon, to join society's costume party—a party that, as he acknowledges, ultimately serves the interests of what he calls the business-professional elite.

In his *Prison Notebooks*, Antonio Gramsci famously described the relationship between intellectuals and social groups: "Every social group, coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields."[104] Post-Zionist critics use a complex academic jargon; they engage in unraveling ideological myths and claim to be outsiders, battling an oppressive establishment. But at the end, what they offer is the appearance of subversion while accepting (almost uncritically) the dictates of the marketplace—organic intellectuals in the deepest sense, and not of the subaltern kind (intellectuals of the proletariat, to use Gramsci's terminology) but of the hegemonic group in Israeli society: the new (or late) capitalists. One of Gramsci's key intellectual endeavors was to examine the relationship between theory and practice, to understand their dialectical relations and explore how theory (consciousness) can be tied to the revolutionary cause rather than supply the hegemonic powers with ideological ammunition. For Gramsci, "The starting point of critical elaboration is the consciousness of what one really is, and is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date."[105] Postmodernism operated under the assumption that we are living in a post-ideological and post-class world; therefore, only a few postmodern (and post-Zionist) thinkers occupied themselves with this Gramscian question: What is their role in the social order? If global capitalism has already won, your place in the social hierarchy is meaningless, and you can assume a presumed objective vantage point (unburdened by class interests) from which to deconstruct the structures of power. Postmodern and post-Zionist intellectuals no longer concern themselves with the dialectical relationship between ideology (as consciousness) and social reality, between theory and practice. All that's left is theory (not surprising, then, that the name of the chief post-Zionist organ was *Theory and Criticism*) as a field unto itself. And in the true spirit of the time, theory becomes an industry, developing its own subfields and genres and its own opaque vocabulary that seeks not to appeal to the masses in order to generate change (as Gramsci so romantically pined for) but rather to be a self-contained field. Perhaps the greatest irony is that Zionism, in its early days, *was* a revolutionary movement. It sought, and succeeded in, revolutionizing the social, economic, and political lives of millions of Jews—and it achieved these goals (through its intellectuals) by using simple and straightforward language. Post-Zionism is, at its core, anti-revolutionary, but its use of opaque and self-referential language gives it a revolutionary veneer.

Post-Zionist intellectuals provided historical meaning and ideological currency to a long process by which Israeli society moved toward greater individual liberty and toward peace and prosperity. As Uri Ram put it, the legacy of post-Zionism is "the decline of nationalism, the rise of individualism, the spread of pluralism, and the overarching of neo-liberalism."[106] The post-Zionist criticism was born out the great optimism of the late 1980s and the 1990s, when (whether warranted by the reality on the ground or not) more and more Israelis believed that Zionism, as a revolutionary movement, had outlived its usefulness and a more "normal" epoch, which is more

suitable for a time of peace and that embraces and celebrates middle-class values and interests, had finally arrived. But does this still hold true in the twenty-first century, in a time of growing insecurity?

One way in which the post-Zionist debates have been reformulated in the aftermath of the second *Intifada* is to describe them (from a post-Zionist perspective) as a battle between post-Zionism and neo-Zionism, between the forces of normalcy and enlightenment that would like to see Israel renounce its chauvinist, nationalist aspirations and join the global(ized) community as a peaceful, democratic partner, and the forces (associated mainly with the West Bank settlers and their supporters) who want Israel to embrace an exclusivist Jewish ethos. From this vantage point, the battle lines of the twenty-first century are those (to borrow Tom Friedman's terms) between the Lexus and the olive tree: between joining the global economy or immersing oneself in localized, tribal wars; between ethno-nationalism and a post-national civic society.[107]

Žižk's observation about the umbilical relationship between Fukuyama's "End of History" argument and Huntington's "Clash of Civilization" theory is pertinent here:

> Huntington's dark vision of the "clash of civilizations" may appear to be the very opposite of Francis Fukuyama's bright prospect of the End of History in the guise of a world-wide liberal democracy: what can be more different from Fukuyama's pseudo-Hegelian idea of the "end of history" (the final Formula of the best possible social order was found in capitalist liberal democracy, there is now no space for further conceptual progress, there are just empirical obstacles to be overcome), than Huntington's "clash of civilizations" as the main political struggle in the twenty-first century? The "clash of civilizations" IS politics at the "end of history."[108]

When culture is the only realm for political engagement (from a postmodern perspective/condition), then the two options for political action are to enjoy culture (consume in the globalized market) or fight for it (ethno-cultural nationalism).

There is a growing tendency among "centrist" Israeli pundits to use post-Zionism and neo-Zionism as slogans or markers in analyzing Israeli politics in the twenty-first century. Arguing in favor of an Israel that is both Jewish and democratic, they regard post-Zionism and neo-Zionism as a threat to this idealized synthesis from the left and right, respectively. From this point of view, post-Zionism is associated with the demand to abolish Israel as a Jewish state and instead create in historic Palestine a democratic state in which Jews and Arabs would have equal political and civic rights. Neo-Zionism, from this vantage point, which calls for the expansion of Jewish settlements, would lead to the de facto annexation of the West Bank by Israel and, in twenty or thirty years, to an Arab majority in Greater Israel west of the Jordan River. The "centrist" solution in the twenty-first century: Continue to hold on to the West Bank (and allow for the natural growth of existing settlements) until the conditions of peace will have materialized in some undefined future when the West Bank, in one form or another, could become part or all of an Arab Palestinian State.[109]

What these analyses of the nature of Israeli politics have in common is a profound sense of gloom, which was captured in an op-ed piece that Benny Morris published in 2008, in which he argued that in the face of the external dangers posed by fundamentalist Muslim regimes and organizations (Iran, Hezbollah, Hamas) and the growing internal demographic threat, "Many Israelis feel that the walls—and history—are closing in on their 60-year-old state, much as they felt in early June 1967. … Israelis, or rather, Israeli Jews, are beginning to feel much the way

their parents did in those apocalyptic days."[110] And the reason that this conflict transcends clear-cut political divisions and claims that could be ultimately negotiated and resolved is that this conflict, according to Morris, is between cultures and civilizations. Or as he put it,

> The mindset and basic values of Israeli Jewish society and Palestinian Muslim society are so different and mutually exclusive. … The value placed on human life and the rule of (secular) law is completely different—as exhibited in Israel itself, in the vast hiatus between Jewish and Arab perpetration of crimes and lethal road violations. … In large measure, this is a function of different value systems (such as the respect accorded to human life and the rule of law).[111]

Anita Shapira also predicted, in 2001, that the new century would be defined by struggles over cultural identities, or as she put it,

> The old Israeli identity chief characteristic was its collectivist identity; even those who did not belong to it felt that it represented it. Is there today an "Israeli identity"? Who is an Israeli? A settler in the West Bank … an ultra-Orthodox Jew from Benei Brak … an immigrant from Russia who is proud of his language and culture … an Ashkenazi who prefers classical music or a Mizrahi who likes Mizrahi music? … The optimists would maintain that we are in a transitional phase, that from the frictions and collisions among sub-identities a new Israeli identity will emerge, that this is a normal process. The pessimists would contend that we are witnessing the disintegration of Israeli identity. It seems that the question of identity would dominate the twenty-first century. But does that provide any comfort?[112]

It is rather surprising that both Morris and Shapira, who throughout the late 1980s and 1990s were on opposite sides of the historiographical divide, appear to succumb to the same sense of malaise, which is based on the assumption that in the twenty-first century, politics is battled, ultimately, in the cultural arena. But are culture wars or "clashes of civilizations" the only political horizon left (for Israel and others) in the new century? Can there be a political vision beyond civilizational clashes?

The end of the "happy 1990s" and their unbounded optimism also meant the growing criticism of global capitalism and its advocacy of lifting all barriers and restrictions (and most important, dismantling state agencies and regulations) before the flow of capital. As noted before, the first decade of the new century has been characterized by the erection of new walls and barriers: the separation wall between Israel and the West Bank, the calls for a wall between the U.S. and Mexico, the inability to ratify a European constitution. These walls might, indeed, represent a resurgent ethno-nationalism, a clash of civilizations, but it could indicate a more optimistic path just as well. One of the seemingly contradictory aspects of such revolutions as the French, even the American, was that they advocated implementing universal principles, but within a closed political entity. The laws that are based on universal principles would have jurisdiction within specific borders.

This was also one of the principles that informed the Zionist movement in its early days: The Jew could become a concrete historical subject who enjoys universal rights only within a state that can guarantee and enforce those legal and political rights. Within a global (empire) system, the weak, the marginal, the "other" cannot exercise his or her rights—that was the

Jewish experience in exile. Only in a closed, bounded territory, the assumption was, could these rights be attained. As is the case with most political entities that have institutions that regulate and exercise force, there are many cases when the rights of one group come at the expense of others, in some cases with great violence. The question, though, is does that mean that political entities, with all their great liberating potential, should be abolished, or could the very revolutionary spirit that led to their establishment be harnessed again in an attempt to improve them and have them live up to their universal promise? Was the only remedy to slavery in the U.S. breaking up the union (precisely what the South wanted), or rather the fight to impose the universal values of certain elements of the union? Should the many wrongs committed by the Jewish State mean that it should be dismantled—or could the idea of granting the Jews universal rights be transformed into an effort to expand universal rights to everybody (Jew, Arab, foreign worker) living under Israeli sovereignty?

Susannah Heschel, in answering the question, Should Jews relinquish the right of return? (in effect, renounce Zionism as the governing principle of the Jewish State) has offered a resounding answer: no. Heschel has argued that, "Those of us who grew up in the Diaspora as children of survivors or of refugees from Europe looked to Zionism as our safety net. … We Jews cannot walk away from Israeli policies and simply say we abjure the country. Ours is the duty to revolutionize the State of Israel and its Diaspora supporters. This is a moral obligation that will haunt us for generations to come."[113] To Heschel, from a Jewish Diasporic perspective, the chief focus of this revolutionary urge should be bringing an end to the oppressive treatment of Palestinians by Israel. From an Israeli perspective, one might want to add here the need to reconstruct social networks in Israel and the commitment to collective rights and equality.

Since 1967, Israel has acted as a small imperial power. It enjoyed regional supremacy both militarily and economically—and like most imperial powers, there existed in Israel a distinction between its citizens and people who lived under its control without civic and political rights (Palestinians in the territories occupied by Israel in the 1967 War). In this setting, from this position of power, Israel was able to expand economically and its (Jewish) citizens were able to enjoy the individual fruits of this growth. And as Israel expanded and integrated itself into the global order, Israelis also felt secure enough to question the necessity of the very institution—the state—that provided them with the security and power to enjoy that period of prosperity. But as the long process of expansion seems to have come to end, and as Israel (willingly or by international pressure) is returning to borders within which the majority of the population has full citizenship rights, perhaps the opportunity has presented itself to revive some of the universal principles that guided early Zionists and re-apply them to the contemporary situation. Alluding to a formula commonly used by dialecticians and certain Marxists, there is a possibility here for a negation of the negation. Post-Zionism was the negation of Zionism. It sought to replace Zionism as a way to understand Jewish history in Israel/Palestine by pointing to culture as a means to transcend politics and its contradictions. And arguably, post-Zionism's most important contribution has been to uncover the historical consequences of Zionism and the pain Zionists and Israelis inflicted, especially on Palestinians; or as Laurence Silberstein has put it, the critical approach of the post-Zionists has shifted the focus from the (noble) intentions of the Zionists (this was the focus of the old scholarly guard) to the actual consequences of their actions.[114] Few, in the aftermath of the post-Zionist debates, can hold to a naive view of Zionist and Israeli history in which Jews are portrayed as virtuous victims. But as culture gives way again to politics, the time has also come perhaps for the negation of the negation, for the period beyond post-Zionism, which will maintain some core critical aspects of post-Zionism but seek to achieve

them in the real political and historical arena. Zionism sought to return Jews to history. Post-Zionists decried this process and, in postmodern fashion, wanted to put teleological notions of historical progress behind. In this negation of the negation there can again be the potential to return to history, to the arena where universal values can be attained. In the subsequent chapters of this work, both visions of the political prospects in the new century will be explored by focusing on specific aspects of Israeli culture and Zionist history: the vision of politics as the clash of cultural forces and the critical position that seeks to locate and identify the revolutionary, redeeming, and universal aspects of Zionism.

TWO

AMOS OZ AND THE ZIONIST INTELLECTUAL

> Intellectual, noun, masculine gender, a social and cultural category born in Paris at the end of the 19th century; apparently was not able to survive the decline of belief in Universals.
>
> —Bernard Henri Levy, *Eloge des Intellectuels*
> (translated by David L. Schalk)

When he emerged on the Israeli literary scene in the 1960s, Amos Oz typified an ideal and idealized *Sabra*. His piercing blue eyes, mane of blond hair, his ease with Israeli Hebrew (he made it seem as if it had been around for centuries) made him everything that the Jewish state wanted to be—the very antithesis of the Diaspora Jew. Oz, the *kibbutznik*, like the Jaffa Orange or the soldiers crying at the Western Wall in 1967, was the image that Israel sought to show the rest of the world—the sum of everything that the Zionist project stood for: strength, vitality, and resolve that is also contemplative and open to self-doubt.

Thomas Lask in *The New York Times* wrote in 1978, "When he is not writing, Mr. Oz teaches at the *kibbutz* school. He farms and he has regular duties such as being a waiter in the dining room."[1] *The Jewish News* told its readers that Oz, a committed *kibbutz* member, studied in Jerusalem and Oxford, fought in Israel's 1967 and 1973 Wars, and is a dedicated Peacenik.[2] Nicholas De Lange, Oz's English translator, told the Israeli daily *Yedioth Aharonot* in 1972 that his first encounter with Israel embarrassed him. Israelis rejected him because he seemed foreign to them, and he spent his time in Israel among Arab friends in the Old City. But when he met Oz, in England, he underwent a profound transformation. He became attached to the Israeli, the *kibbutznik*, the Zionist, and the socialist.[3] Victoria Radin, in the *Jewish Chronicle*, wrote that "Oz … is articulate, serious and charming. Rugged, blue-eyed, and carefully polo-necked, he also has a sexual magnetism like Redford, Fonda, or even Redgrave."[4] The sociologist Oz Almog has suggested that in the Zionist imagination, the ideal *Sabra* was seen as the "Jewish Gentile," as possessing European features and devoid of traditional Jewish physical characteristics:[5] Amos Oz fit this image perfectly.

In recent years, the *Sabra*, or the New Hebrew, the male, Ashkenazi, secular, labor-Zionist who was the hero of the early years of Israeli statehood, has come under increasing criticism. As we have seen, with the emergence of the post-Zionist critique, the creation of the image of the secular, Ashkenazi *Sabra* as the representative of the Zionist and Israeli ethos was described as a

brutal process of social engineering by which alternative Israeli and Jewish identities were marginalized and silenced. As Ella Shoaht, in the provocatively titled article "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims," described it, "Sephardim in Israel were made to feel ashamed of their dark olive skin, of their guttural language, of the winding quarter tones of their music, and even their traditions of hospitality. Children, trying desperately to conform to an elusive *Sabra* norm, were made to feel ashamed of their parents and their Arab countries of origin."[6]

Amos Oz's autobiographic book *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, published in 2003, more than a decade after the emergence of the post-Zionist debates into the Israeli public sphere, signals in some important ways a shift in the public image of the person who captured in the public imagination, both in and out of Israel, the essence of the classic *Sabra*. The book is at once the personal and private account of a family tragedy, yet at the same time it is a vivid and rich historical account of the emergence of the new State and the new society and culture—as such, it reveals both Oz's personal history and the history of his generation. Oz, as he emerges from *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, is a native-born Israeli whose environment and cultural background were shaped as much by Jerusalem of the 1930s and 1940s as by Europe of the previous century; he is not a self-assured *kibbutznik*, but a frail, pale child who, with his father, fails miserably in an attempt to grow plants in his backyard and who finds comfort in books. In fact, the protagonist of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is not Amos Oz but Amos Klausner: the son of Zionist Revisionist immigrants who despised Labor Zionism and its pioneering vision. So do Oz and his novel add more ammunition to the post-Zionist arsenal: the ideal *Sabra* deconstructing the very image of the *Sabra?*

Cognizant of the potential ideological implications of the novel, of its demythologizing potential, Anita Shapira and Gershon Shaked have set out to proclaim Oz's and the novel's Zionist credentials, pre-empting, perhaps, future attempts to claim it as a post-Zionist text. Although it is quite evident that the Oz of *Love and Darkness* is not Moshe Shamir's Elik who was born from the sea;[7] that as opposed to the old Zionist maxim, Oz as he emerges from this novel does not negate the Jewish past but rather embraces it with all its neuroses and complexities, both Shaked and Shapira maintain that politically, focusing on the Arab-Israeli conflict, Oz and the novel are still comfortably ensconced in the warmth of the Zionist and Israeli consensus. As Shaked put it,

> The boy [Oz] grows up in the 1940s and 50s of the 20th century, and the formative years of his life are 1947–9, the War of Independence and the years that precede it. … His historical depiction is close to what has been labeled the Zionist narrative. He realizes that the root of all evils in the Jewish-Arab conflict is not only the occupation … but the Jewish presence in the Land of Israel. Today, when a large portion of the intellectual elite is becoming more and more post-Zionist or a-Zionist, this Zionist statement sounds more subversive than the post-Zionist dogma.[8]

Or, as Shapira has claimed, "Consciously or unconsciously, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* comes to respond to the post-Zionist arguments while re-affirming the classic Zionist narrative."[9] And like Shaked, focusing on the 1948 War, Shapira has written,

> The description of the War of Independence in the book is a mirror image of the disappointment, the disillusionment, and the defiance against the Palestinians,

> following the failure of the Oslo agreements and the second Intifada. As opposed to the post-Zionist tendency to depict the Palestinians as hapless innocents, being expelled by Jewish soldiers for no fault of their own, Oz describes the horror of the reality of those crazy days, when the Arabs started the war.[10]

Shaked and Shapira made a convincing argument that politically, Oz and his novel are still well within the boundaries of the traditional Zionist tale—this is not a portrayal of 1948 informed by the sensitivities of the New Historians. Oz certainly does not meet the conventional political definition of a post-Zionist as someone who calls for the end of Jewish nationalism and the transformation of Israel/Palestine into the state of all its citizens.[11] Yet, while Oz unquestionably is not a post-Zionist critic and his text does not lead to post-Zionist political positions, in some important ways, it could be argued that *A Tale of Love and Darkness* denotes an important shift in Oz's position as a public intellectual: a shift that could very well be attributed to the emergence of a post-Zionist condition in Israeli society and culture. It is a condition the sociologist Uri Ram has described as a transition from a society dominated by a single "Voice of Israel"—the official voice of classic Zionism (and Oz, possibly more than any other Israeli, epitomized that public voice)—to a society and culture with many different and varied voices.[12] Or, as the Israeli anthropologist Pnina Motzafi-Haller put it,

> In fact, the heightened social and political struggles in Israel in the 1990s suggest that the claims to knowledge and historical truth by the dominant secular Zionist sectors have been under growing attack. Contemporary, assertive Mizrahi voices … are participating in a process of *breaking the center*, a process that involves other ethnic categories (Soviet Jews, Palestinian citizens of the State) and groups defined along gender and religious lines.[13]

The critical sociologist Baruch Kimmerling described it as the end of Ashkenazi hegemony in Israel. Employing the acronym "AHUSALIM" (Ashkenazi, secular, veteran, socialist, national or Zionist), Kimmerling argued that the AHUSALIM built Israeli society and state institutions, won the 1948 War, and absorbed a substantial number of immigrants, putting them into a melting pot. And they dominated the country, almost unchallenged, for its first three decades of independence. But by the dawn of the twenty-first century, their hegemonic position came to a crashing end as the Labor party, the party of the AHUSALIM, was reduced to a minor position in the Israeli parliament, becoming a junior member in a Likud-led coalition.[14] *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is arguably a product of a society that no longer accepts a single hegemonic group or set of images as the only representatives of its collective identity; instead, different groups and symbols compete for a place in an ever-expanding cultural market. In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Oz no longer provides the public voice and image of a perceived Zionist consensus; instead, he has become the voice of a specific group—secular, middle-class Ashkenazim—that in today's Israel can only look nostalgically at a period, the 1940s and 1950s, when its ideas and values dominated every aspect of Israeli life and culture.

It must be noted that when examining *A Tale of Love and Darkness* from the perspective of the evolution of Oz's fictional work, it could be argued that the character of Amos Oz as it emerges in the book is the inevitable outcome of the literary revolution that Oz and his contemporaries—A. B. Yehoshua, Yehoshua Kenaz, Ya'acov Shabtai—launched in the 1960s, and to some degree it reflects even earlier developments in Israeli literature. From *Where the*

Jackals Howl to his latest novels, Oz, like some of his contemporaries, brought into question the very existence of a unified image of the ideal Israeli or the mere possibility of a unified ideological platform that would support such an image.[15] Already in the short story "The Way of the Wind," (1962) Oz offered an almost satirical description of the prototypical Zionist hero: "Shimshon Sheinbaum has made a mark on the Hebrew Labor Movement that can never be erased. Old age is still far off. At seventy-five he still has hair as thick as ever, and his muscles are firm and powerful. His eyes are alert, his mind attentive. His strong, dry, slightly cracked voice still works wonders on women of all ages. … Needless to say, he is deeply rooted in the soil of Nof Harish."[16] And as the literary critic Yair Mazor has observed, throughout the story Oz undermines this image of the national hero; it is ultimately only through the sacrifice of his son Gideon, the less-than-brave and brilliant son, that Sheinbaum achieves his martyr-like image as a national hero—a true representative of the Hebrew Labor Movement.[17]

The critic Avraham Balaban has keenly noted that the characters of Oz's fictional works are torn "between the different psychic forces as well as between the flat, secured, and lifeless existence within societal borders and the intensive, vital, alluring experiences beyond these borders." And they find expression "in the protagonists' struggles between light and darkness, God and Satan, spirit and body, man and woman, Jews and Arabs."[18] If the very idea of the *Sabra* projected resolve, certainty, physical as well as emotional strength, and an absolute commitment to the cause, different fictional characters that have populated Oz's stories and novels defied these very conditions. Or, as Michael Gonen in Oz's novel *My Michael* tells his wife, "I had a gym teacher called Yehiam Peled who always called me 'Goofy Ganz' because my reflexes were rather slow. I was very good at English and math, but in P.T. [physical training] I was Goofy Ganz."[19]

However, although Oz's fictional characters have explored the limits of the Zionist imagery, Oz as a public figure continued for decades to cultivate and project a certain ideological framework (Labor Zionism), and he was viewed and continues to be viewed as the quintessential representative of that ideology. As David Remnick of *The New Yorker* succinctly put it, "When he first became famous, nearly forty years ago, reviewers and readers routinely commented on his rugged, emblematic looks: the light hair and light eyes, the deep tan, the spidery wrinkles near his eyes and the corners of his mouth. Dressed in rumpled chinos and a work shirt, Oz became part of the mid-century Zionist iconography: the novelist-*kibbutznik*, the *Sabra* of political conscience."[20] In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, based explicitly on Oz's own life experiences and his family's history (because the book treads gingerly among different literary styles it cannot be easily categorized as an autobiography), it is the very image of Amos Oz himself that comes into question. This chapter explores the evolution of Amos Oz as a public figure using primarily (but not exclusively) his nonfiction writings, newspaper interviews, and his most comprehensive autobiographical work, *A Tale of Love and Darkness.* It also explores how the image of the *Sabra*—the Ashkenazi, Laborite, Israeli-born male—which he was so instrumental in cultivating and exporting to the world comes undone in his autobiography, and how in the post-Zionist condition, a time when culture has morphed into a marketplace of contesting identities, even the image of a collective Zionist/Israeli subject has become all but an impossibility.

In 1988, Gayatri Spivak asked, Can the subaltern speak? The all-but-consensus postcolonial and postmodernist answer has been a resounding, No! Speech, or more precisely the ability to tell a story, has been, according to the postcolonial position, the exclusive domain of first world,

white males, of the so-called universal, hegemonic subject. In the case of the Zionist movement, the postmodern, post-Zionist critics have suggested that Zionist discourse has created a subject, the New Hebrew, the Laborite, pioneering Ashkenazi male that came to represent Zionist ideology, while silencing other subjects and groups such as Mizrahi (Eastern) Jews and Arabs. The post-Zionists have argued that Zionist ideology has represented the narrative of the interests of the old Israeli establishment vis-à-vis the "others" who were dispossessed of their land and rights, or were socially, culturally, and politically marginalized. As Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ofir succinctly formulated the post-Zionist argument: Zionism has created a clear hierarchy of a master relationship between the "White Jew" and his "Oriental Other."[21]

Modernity, the postmodern critics claim, reduces representation to its bare minimum, to a logical formulation, that manifests itself as a universal truth and rejects any possible competition. In the Zionist case, the post-Zionists have claimed, this economizing of representation led, among other things, to the basic formula of the "Negation of the Diaspora," which captures the core of the Zionist historical rationale: an attempt to manufacture a historical narrative that would claim to be the necessary course of Jewish history, while excluding all other historical and cultural options.[22] Yael Zerubavel, from a critical (though not necessarily post-Zionist) perspective, has claimed, "In its reconstruction of Jewish history, the Zionist commemorative narrative accentuated the perception of a 'great divide' between Antiquity and Exile. … By grouping eighteen centuries of Exile into one period, the Zionist commemorative narrative overlooked the considerable cultural, economic, social, and political differences in the development of various Jewish communities."[23] From the Zionist perspective, in the Diaspora, without political independence, Jews developed an ethos of passivity, of relying on others for their material well-being. To the Zionists, the typical Diaspora Jew was a dweller of the ghetto, of cramped, insalubrious spaces removed from nature and the land. In fact, the Diasporic Jew was a person of learning, language, and culture. The Zionists sought to negate this legacy, to erase it from the collective, national memory; instead of the yeshiva scholar, they wanted a new generation of Jewish farmers and fighters, of New Hebrews, who were men of action not of words. And the New Hebrew, the Zionist pioneer, became the main subject of the counter-Zionist narrative, capturing the revolutionary aspect of the movement.

But if the mission of the hegemonic is to reduce representation to a minimum, to achieve Abbe de Condillac's ideal of mathematical poetry,[24] then perhaps the answer to Spivak's question should be an emphatic yes—the subaltern can, indeed, speak, while it is the hegemonic who searches for silence. Terry Eagleton compellingly observed that we are all born into language with its great abundance[25]—it offers us endless resources; it is conceivably the only resource that all of us, regardless of class or gender, have equal access to. What science, history, or ideology attempt to do is to provide an end to language, to make it teleological, to put limits on speech. The subaltern can speak as much as he or she would like; in fact, many times that is all that the subaltern is reduced to: folklore, to supply culture with tales, sounds, and smells. The hegemonic, on the other hand, attempts to economize, to seek a universal narrative or truth, to bring history down to a simple dialectical equation—or in the Zionist case, as Zionism's critics have pointed out, to a negation of the exilic past.

For much of his career as a public intellectual, Oz exemplified the Zionist quest to create a universal subject and to condense the past (the national as well as the personal) to its purest form. Following the dominant Zionist paradigm, he distilled his personal history to a basic narrative that at once negated the past (and the legacy of his parents' generation) and affirmed the present. In a 1965 interview, Oz said, "I was born in Jerusalem, in 1939. I was a member of a youth

movement—the Scouts. I preceded my friends and left for [*kibbutz*] Hulda when I was 14. I've been there for 11 years."[26] Three years later he revealed more about his past: "I was born in Jerusalem, in Kerem Avraham, not far from where Hannah and Michael live [the protagonists of Oz's novel *My Michael*]. I studied for several years in a religious school for boys—Tach'kemoni. … I come from a veteran Revisionist family, and I believe that the sharp transition to Hulda makes me a sort of foreign agent."[27]

In 1975, he wrote a terse autobiographical essay in which he revealed the basic facts about his childhood:

> My father obtained the post of a librarian, which allowed him to eke out a living. … He married the middle daughter of a former mill-owner from Rovno in Ukraine … My parents made themselves a simple but book-filled home in Jerusalem. … They told each other that some day Hebrew Jerusalem would develop into a real city. I was born in 1939, shortly before the outbreak of war, when it became clear to my parents that there was no going back. … The War of Independence culminated in a great victory. … After the sound and fury came the "morning after." Jerusalem did not turn into a "real" European city. … Some continued to wait. … Only my mother, Fania, could not bear her life: she took her own life in 1952, out of disappointment or nostalgia. Something had gone wrong. Two years later, when I was fourteen, I left home, walked out on the good manners and the scholarship, changed my surname from Klausner to Oz, and went to work and study in Kibbutz Hulda.[28]

But even in this revealing text, the basic formula that Oz adopted to discuss the past prevailed: Ultimately, the reason that led him to the *kibbutz* and the heart of the Zionist, pioneering ethos was the idea of the negation of the past. Or, as he later told the *Australian Israel Review*, "I became a socialist because my parents were right-wingers, and I became a *kibbutznik* because my parents were town-dwellers."[29]

And the product of this rebellion against the previous generation—like the members of the second Aliya some fifty years earlier—came to symbolize the Zionist consensus: a Zionism that, like other revolutionary movements that were motivated by an idealistic, in some cases utopian, vision of the future, celebrated the idea of a new Hebrew society while rejecting the past as a sign of social and cultural decay.[30]

In his 1976 novella *The Hill of Evil Counsel*, which takes place in Jerusalem in the last years of British rule, Oz offered the following description of the narrator's (a single child, who like Oz ended up leaving Jerusalem for a *kibbutz*) father's first few months in Palestine:

> In 1932, he had emigrated to Palestine with the intention of establishing a cattle farm in the mountains. … In his dreams he saw himself with a stick and haversack among the hills of Galilee, clearing a patch of forest, and building with his own hands a wooden house beside a stream. … For three months he stayed in a guesthouse in the small town of Yesud-Hama'alah, and he spent whole days wandering alone from morning to night in eastern Galilee. … His body grew lean and bronzed.[31]

In his 1975 autobiographical piece, Oz offered a similar description of his own transformation in the *kibbutz:* "For several years I worked a bit on the land and took my lessons

in a free socialist classroom, where we sat barefoot all day long learning about the source of human evil, the corruption of societies, the origins of the Jewish disease, and how to overcome all these by means of labour, simple living, sharing and equality, a gradual improvement in human nature."[32] This was the ideal *Sabra*, a healthy and productive alternative to the legacy of the Jewish Diaspora.

As he established his position as one of the leading public figures of his generation and as a prime example of the *Sabra* and Zionist ideal, Oz came to be known as the poet with a plow, the peacenik with a rifle. In 1967, he penned General Israel Tal's order of the day that was delivered to the troops on June 5, the day the Six-Day War commenced: "Today the Sinai desert will encounter the vigor of the brigade of steel. And the land will tremble beneath it."[33] Yet immediately after the war, Oz wrote to Prime Minister Levi Eshkol that Israel must seek peace and refrain from Chauvinistic tendencies.[34] Throughout his career, Oz called for compromises and offered sharp criticism of Israeli policies, but he never questioned the basic Zionist tenets. He was judgmental yet affirming—a true *Sabra*.

As a public intellectual, Oz embraced the basic contradictions of Zionism, what the sociologist Erik Cohen has called Zionism's Universalistic Particularism—Zionism's reconciliation of the particularistic national character of the Jewish state with universalistic and enlightened ideals of civil equality.[35] In a 1972 interview with *Al ha-Mishmar*, Oz defended Zionism's nationalistic tendencies:

> I am a Zionist, but I am a sad Zionist. I am a Zionist in that fundamental sense that though I hold that nationalism is an anachronistic and violent concept, I cannot allow myself, as a father, to become a sort of launching pad of internationalism. If I can quote Ivan Karamazov, on an entirely different matter, "I cannot yet allow myself." Let others try it. I will not be the first one to give up on the status of the nation state and the mechanisms of the state: an army and defense systems. Not the first in the world and certainly not the first in the Middle East. I'd be happy if I could be the second or third. In that sense I do not wish to be a pioneer, not after Auschwitz.[36]

A year later, though, following a meeting with Herbert Marcuse, Oz claimed, "Our experiment is not only as Buber suggested the only twentieth century experiment in a socialist mending of the world that has not failed. … We have an awesome duty not only for the people of Israel and the redemption of this particular wilderness, but also for the entire world that is devoid of a message and is yearning for salvation. … The world today is as it was two thousand years ago, when from Israel came the word."[37] As Yosefa Loshitzky, from a decidedly critical position, has commented, "Oz is the most celebrated and translated Israeli writer abroad … and to a large extent he projects to the international community what it regards as Israeli political conscience and moral voice."[38]

This position, as a universal subject, allowed Oz to assume a very critical position—but that of an insider—when examining various aspects of mainstream Israeli society: the *kibbutz*, the burgeoning urban middle class. But when he ventured beyond the geographical and social limits of the old—secular and Ashkenazi—Zionist establishment, that insider was like a traveler in a foreign country. This was perhaps most evident in his travelogue *In the Land of Israel*, in which Oz went to ultra-orthodox neighborhoods, development towns, and settlements in the West Bank to learn about the other Israel; or as the columnist Doron Rosenblum with his trademark sarcasm

described the book, “They—the ugly Israeli; He—the beautiful Israeli.”[39]

This is how Oz described his childhood neighborhood of Kerem Avraham in *In the Land of Israel*:

> There were artisans here, and scholars, trade-union functionaries, National Religious party hacks and dedicated Revisionists, clerks in the Mandatory government and workers in the Jewish Agency, members of the Haganah and the Irgun, youth from Betar and the Socialist Movement … world reformers who would compose and dedicate to one another fiery brochures about the brutal realities of Zionism. … Almost every man was a kind of messiah, eager to crucify his opponents and willing to be crucified for his own faith in turn. … All of them have gone. … But they left behind them a vibrant Jewish *shtetl.* … Yeshivah students, Hasidim, petty merchants have overflowed into this place from Meah Shearim. … Yiddish is the language of the street. Zionism was here once and was repelled.[40]

To paraphrase the protagonist of Haim Hazaz’s short story *The Sermon*, Zionism as opposed to Jewish history, or as Oz put it, “In these neighborhoods, where I was born and raised, the battle has been decided: Zionism has been repulsed, as if it had never been.”[41] Twenty years later, in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, in an Israel where there is no longer a national consensus, where cultural hegemony is hard to discern, and where the marketplace is filled with the sights and sounds of the “other” Israel, Oz returned to Kerem Avraham—but this time, it is the Kerem Avraham of his childhood that is the *shtetl*, that is, organically linked to the Jewish past. And from this new perspective there is no longer a fundamental rift between Judaism and Zionism; the two are naturally and historically linked.

In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, Oz’s personal history, which in the past was reduced to a few sentences (though he never concealed the basic facts about his past), becomes the subject of a lengthy autobiographical work. What was once described as a break with the past now becomes organically linked to it. And instead of short terse sentences, we have an abundance of anecdotes—an embarrassment of linguistic riches.

The protagonist of the book is not the Hebrew-sounding Amos Oz, but Amos Klausner; his story does not begin with a move to the *kibbutz*—with the discovery of the Zionist pioneering spirit—but in the *shtetls* and towns of Eastern Europe, before the emergence of Zionism. Oz is not the first Modern Hebrew writer to shed his *Sabra* image and explore his European/Diaspora past. Dan Ben Amotz (born Musia Tehilimzeiger), who came to Palestine as a boy from Poland and invented a *Sabra* identity for himself, revealed in the 1970s both in his novels and in interviews details about his past. But as Anita Shapira has shown, Ben Amotz remained ambivalent about the European part of his identity and emphasized the fact that he came to Palestine out of choice (his family’s) rather than necessity (as Holocaust survivors had).[42] Oz, in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, on the other hand, is not of two minds about his family’s past—he fully embraces it; he forsakes the overwhelming Israeli disdain toward the Eastern European *shtetl* or its contemporary counterpart, the Israeli ultra-orthodox neighborhoods—a contempt so apparent in his 1980s travelogue *In the Land of Israel*.

A Tale of Love and Darkness provides a detailed reconstruction of Oz’s maternal and paternal ancestors in Eastern Europe—a reconstruction that does not criticize Jewish life in the Diaspora but offers a fairly romantic vision of the era. The novel then offers a nostalgic look at the 1940s and early 1950s, at an economically austere Jerusalem (Oz provides the readers with a

wistful, yet comical, description of a trip to the pharmacy to make a long-distance call to Tel Aviv) that is at the same time culturally multifaceted, cosmopolitan, almost bohemian. It was a city where, as Oz writes, "hardly anyone had a radio in those days, and there was no television nor video nor CD player nor Internet nor e-mail, not even the telephone. But everyone had a pencil and notebook,"[43] and where Oz's grade school teacher just happened to be the poetess Zelda, who filled the mind of the young Oz with Hassidic tales, rabbinic legends, and obscure stories about holy kabbalists.[44] If modernity (and Zionism) sought to overcome the past, to dialectically surpass it, the Oz of *Love and Darkness* is immersed in the past. But he is not simply a historian; he is an archeologist or genealogist who exposes tales from the past like objects that become a source of longing.

The distance from the Other Israel, so apparent in *In the Land of Israel*, the sense of near parody with which he treated some of the characters in that travelogue, has given way to pastiche and kitsch in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*. If earlier Zionism led people to negate the past, in the post-Zionist condition, Zionism itself becomes a source of longing; it becomes a past that is embraced.

Throughout most of his literary career, Oz focused on a narrow sampling of Israelis (*kibbutzniks*, the Ashkenazi middle class), but his protagonists seemed to stand for a sort of general Israeli subject; they represented a sort of collective Israeli identity. *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, on the other hand, becomes the communal bonfire of one of many ethnic groups in Israel, a group that held a hegemonic position in the past, but which feels in the new consumerist Israel like any other group, another part in an ever more complex cultural collage. The book has become a source of nostalgia for a paradise lost.

This, perhaps, explains the type of emotional responses that readers of *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, especially those with a similar background to Oz, have shared with the writer. As Yigal Schwartz, who surveyed some of the letters from readers to Oz, has shown, for many readers the book has become a sort of sacred object. As one reader, who Schwartz has quoted, wrote to Oz, "I continue to speak with you through the book. And especially in light of our harsh reality, how good it is that you are with us. How important it is that people read this book. It is important as the Bible of our time."[45]

The book, as Schwartz has shown, triggered in many readers a visceral response, not as if they were reading a representation of the past, but as if they were reliving the past. To them, this was much more than a text: It was like a found object, a relic from the past that unleashes suppressed memories and feelings. As another reader wrote to Oz, "Dear Amos, though we've never met (apparently) I found you to be like a brother to me. Your life is like my life, your roots and background like mine. In your *Tale of Love and Darkness* you've joined, perhaps unknowingly and unwillingly, the group of my closest friends and relatives. … My identification with your story was immediate and complete, as if I wrote it."[46]

An analogy to museums and their role in shaping the public sphere might be useful here. In large national or metropolitan Western museums, there exists a division between high art, which reflects the dominant culture and tends to be representational, and exhibits dedicated to different minorities or foreign ("primitive") cultures that tend to focus on material culture.[47] These differences are only magnified when comparing urban art museums and galleries to more rural museums that are dedicated to regional and indigenous cultures. As the sociologist Sharon Macdonald has observed with regard to such museums in Britain that focus on "life gone by" in different regions, "Their subject matter is mostly the everyday life, at home and at work, of

'ordinary folk.' Everyday objects salvaged from past times summon up this world. … In some cases domestic interiors are recreated, complete with box-beds … half-moon spectacles on the family Bible. … 'Discover the past!' say the advertising leaflets, 'History comes alive!' "[48] Throughout most of his artistic and public career, Oz occupied a prominent place at the forefront of Israeli high art—he was one of the main pieces on exhibit on the Israeli artistic and intellectual scene—but as Yigal Schwartz has revealed, for many readers of *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, it is the real objects and real places that are described in the book that have registered most deeply with them.[49] As opposed to traditional novels (including Oz's own earlier work), Oz does not draw on personal memories or the memory of personal objects in order to take them on a psychological journey with universal insights. Oz seems to lead his readers to specific memories and objects that serve as modern-day talismans to a specific social group. A Tale of Love and Darkness is no longer an exhibit in a national museum, but rather an object of nostalgia in a regional museum, that of the old, secular Ashkenazi guard.

In his 1988 novel *Blue Mountain*, Meir Shalev also turned certain aspects of the Zionist past into folklore, removing from one of Zionism's formative periods, the second Aliya, some of its revolutionary aura. As Yaron Peleg has argued, Shalev's magic-realist novel is an ode to the great efforts of those Zionist legends who fulfilled the Zionist maxim of conquering the land, but at the same time it is also a send-up of the sheer lunacy and folly of some of those pioneers, whose grandchildren fulfill their legacy by profiting from their inherited farmland, selling it at exorbitant prices as burial ground for those who seek to be buried on the very ground that served as the backdrop for Zionism's constituting myth.[50] Unlike Shalev's *Blue Mountain*, Oz's *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is all but free of irony—but it is fueled by a similar sense of longing for a lost past, which renders Zionism's formative years folklore. The readers of Oz's novel, like the people who seek to be buried in the mythical fields cultivated by the Zionist pioneers in Shalev's novel, want to have a real connection with a past that is already mythologized. Or, as one reader wrote to Oz,

> Dear Amos: R. and I attended your reading at Beit Yad la-Banim last night. The reading of the last part on the 29th of November [the date of the UN vote on the partition of Palestine and the creation of the State of Israel] was of rare force. Afterwards we went the eucalyptus tree on Ya'acov Street, which was across the street from the municipal building that was bombed in May 1948. The shop of my late father, on 5 Ya'acov Street, bordered the municipal building, and I believe that I slept at the shop that night, because I remember myself (I was almost six) standing with my parents next to that eucalyptus tree in a setting very similar to the one that you described.[51]

Art, at least in its modern form, maintains a critical distance; nostalgia bridges this distance. For a group (Ashkenazi *Sabras*) that was told for decades that it had to sacrifice the personal and private on the altar of the greater good—that it had to assume the position of a universal subject—Oz's book provides a collective biography that embraces the past with all its contradictions, complexities, strangeness, and idiosyncrasies. In a post-revolutionary Israel, in perhaps a post-Zionist Israel, there is no longer a place for universal messages of redemption, but as is true of the postmodern age in general, there is only room for the construction of truth (and history) along the lines of ethnicity, religion, and gender—for the particular politics of identity.

One powerful manifestation of the role of identity politics in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*

comes when Oz recounts his youthful political transition from Revisionism, the right-wing Zionist movement that his family supported, to Labor Zionism and ultimately to the *kibbutz*. Oz writes that Menachem Begin, the legendary underground commander and later the political leader of Herut, was his chief childhood idol. But then, as a young teenager, he went to a Herut political rally that transformed his political outlook. Here is Oz's recollection of that event in the novel:

> There was a fine invisible dividing line between the front three or four rows, which were reserved for the prominent members of the intelligentsia, veterans of the National Front campaigns, activists in the Revisionist movement … who mostly came from Poland, Lithuania, White Russia, and Ukraine, and the throngs of Sephardim, Bukharians, Yemenites, Kurds, and Aleppo Jews who filled the rest of the hall. This excitable throng packed the galleries and aisles, pressed against the walls. … In the front rows they talked nationalist, revolutionary talk with a taste for glorious victories and quoted Nietzsche and Mazzini, but there was a dominant petit-bourgeois air of good manners. … Behind this inner circle extended an ocean of fervent believers, a loyal, devoted throng of tradesman, shopkeepers, workmen, many of them sporting skullcaps.[52]

In this crowd of the new supporters of Herut, Oz felt like an outsider. From the prism of identity politics, Labor Zionism came to be the home of the educated, professional Ashkenazi class. It is no longer the universal message of socialism that has attracted Oz to the Zionist Left; it is not a belief in its ideological mission, but the fact that the Revisionist camp became the domain of working-class, religiously traditional Mizrahi Jews, of a different social milieu.

In 1973, Oz warned the readers of *Hedim*, a publication of the *kibbutz* movement, that because *kibbutzim* were abandoning their core principles (and embracing more bourgeois ideals), "We are again turning the pyramid up-side-down, and we are turning Israel into a Diaspora and a Ghetto."[53] And he told the readers that Herbert Marcuse relayed to him the message that "You created a myth. If this myth is correct you are socialism's last hope." Oz of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* no longer believes in socialism's myth of redemption. For him, politics is a matter of tribal identities: Redemption is only a matter of identifying with one's relevant tribe. For the generation of Oz's parents, the Revisionist movement was the home of bourgeois intellectuals who were fascinated with radical ideas—but since the 1950s, Revisionism has lost its intellectual veneer and became simply an opposition party that, thanks to Begin's extraordinary rhetorical skills, drew to its midst groups that felt marginalized and alienated by the Labor Zionist establishment. And so Oz, the Ashkenazi intellectual, now examining his past from the perspective of the politics of identity, realizes that he felt estranged in that camp and sought to find a more natural political (and tribal) home for himself—and that search, as much as his desire to shock and upset his father, led him to the *kibbutz*, the symbolic vanguard of the Zionist and Israeli (Ashkenazi) establishment.

In another scene in the novel, which is isolated somewhat from the general narrative of the book, yet at the same time charged with political overtones, Oz recounts a family visit to the home of a respected Arab family in East Jerusalem in the summer of 1947. Oz describes how he played with two Arab children in the yard, a girl named Aisha and her brother Awwad, and he recalls the game as a sort of competition that for him, from the start, assumed an ideological and national character. Satirically, Oz initially reduces the game, which evolved into a tree-climbing

contest, into a brief presentation of the basic Zionist view of the gentile "other" and of the idea of the new Hebrew: "For sixty generations, so we had learned, they had considered us a miserable nation of huddled yeshiva students, flimsy moths who start in a panic at every shadow, *awlad al-mawt*, children of death, and now at last here was muscular Judaism taking the stage, the resplendent new Hebrew youth at the height of his powers, making everyone who sees him tremble at his roar: like a lion among lions."[54] But soon Oz realizes that this tree lion is a blind, deaf, foolish lion. While they are competing, Awwad is seriously wounded, and the most lasting image that Oz has of that day is Aisha's gaze:

> Like two sharp burning coals, her eyes beneath the mourning of her black eyebrows that joined in the middle: loathing, despair, horror, and flashing hatred came from her eyes, and beneath the loathing and the hatred there was also a sort of gloomy nod of the head, as though she were agreeing with herself, as if to say I could tell right away, even before you opened your mouth I should have noticed, I should have been on my guard, you could sniff it from a long way. Like a bad smell.[55]

For the mature Oz, in this retelling of his first personal encounter with the Arab-Israeli conflict, it is not the traditional Zionist narrative that accounts for the violent outcome of this encounter. It is not his childish attempt to act out the idea of the New Hebrew, the new virile, strong Jew. In fact, in the moments leading up to the scene's dramatic conclusion, he realizes how meaningless it really was (a tired lion). The violence, Oz ultimately believes, was a result of some primordial, instinctive, tribal hatred between the Jewish and Arab children. The conflict between the children was inevitable. Their very nature and differences made them fight each other and led to the tragic end of their playful encounter.

Oz concludes his description of this tragic encounter with another image that stayed with him after he was dragged away from the tree:

> And I can remember, vaguely, somebody, a hairy, short man, with a bushy mustache, wearing a gold watch on a very wide bracelet, may be he was one of the guests, or one of the host's sons, dragging me roughly out of there, pulling me by my torn shirt, almost at a run. And on the way I could see a furious man, standing by the well … hitting Aisha, not punching her with his fists, not slapping her cheeks, but hitting her hard, repeatedly, with the flat of his hand, slowly, thoroughly, on her hand, her back, her shoulder, across her face, not the way you punish a child but the way you vent your rage on a horse. Or an obstinate camel.[56]

In this very powerful passage, Oz conflates external, physical images that are commonly associated with Arab men: bushy mustache, hairiness, gold watch on wide bracelet, with brutal violence. Oz is pulled from the scene of the bloody accident in a rough manner, and Aisha is beaten (presumably because she did not protect her young brother) not as punishment, but according to some cultural code (the way you would treat an obstinate camel). Violence and force are not instrumental; they are part of one's cultural makeup.[57]

In a piece that appeared in the *Seventh Day*, a compilation of writings by soldiers published after the Six-Day War, Oz described the city of his childhood as a source of terror and fear surrounded by a dark and mysterious enemy:

> A city not of gold but of tin sheeting, bent and full of holes. A city surrounded at night by the sound of foreign bells, foreign odors, distant views. A ring of hostile villages surrounded the city on three sides: Sha'afat, Wadi Jos, Issawia, Silwan, Azaria, Tsur Bachr, Bet Tsafafa. It seemed as if they had only to clench their hand and Jerusalem would be crushed within their fist. … Jerusalem was often the background for nightmares and dreams of terror. … I would see us both surrounded by enemies. The enemy in my dreams not only came from east, north, and south, but completely surrounded us. I saw Jerusalem falling into the hands of her enemies.[58]

But when he traveled to East Jerusalem after the War had ended, the young master of both sword and pen, the peacenik fighter realized that,

> I came to places that with dreams and the years had become petrified symbols within my heart, and lo and behold—people lived here—houses, shops, stalls, signposts. And I was thunderstruck, as if my whole inner world had collapsed. The dreams were a deception. The world of terrible tales became a mockery. The perpetual threat was nothing but a cruel twisted joke. Everything was burst asunder. Laid wide open. My Jerusalem, beloved and feared, was dead.[59]

For Oz, the proud Zionist who came to his city with a submachine gun, there came a realization that history is far removed from childhood dreams. He described his experiences then as a transition from myth to history. He came to realize that Arabs were not some mysterious enemy but ordinary people, struggling with everyday life.

For Oz of the twenty-first century in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, however, the Arab-Jewish conflict, at least as it is portrayed in this one very powerful episode in the book, can no longer be understood strictly from a historical perspective. The war between the Jews and Arabs is a primal conflict, a tribal conflict that cannot be explained sufficiently according to historical parameters: It is a constituting myth of the Israeli experience. It is found already in a child's DNA. To Oz of *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, political conflicts are natural, biological, organic (they are like a bad smell). Politics, which is distilled to a politics of identity, is something that people are doomed to live with. Politics is not the outcome of history; it is driven by fear and emotion, by the competing identities that are ingrained in individuals' and communities' very nature.

This is not the first time that Oz has described Arab-Jewish relations as some kind of tribal rivalry and inherently violent. In some of his earlier fictional work, most notably the short story "Nomads and Viper" and his novel *My Michael*, he described Jewish-Arab interactions from such a perspective. In "Nomads and Viper," Ge'ula, the main character, says, "What can Etkin understand about savages. A great socialist. What does he know about Bedouins. A nomad sniffs out weakness from a distance. Give him a kind word, or a smile, and he pounces on you like a wild beast and tries to rape you."[60] In his nonfiction work, however (until *A Tale of Love and Darkness*), Oz was the very embodiment of the Israeli Left (Elkin)—seeking historical (rational) explanations for the Arab-Israeli struggle. The new Israeli historians, starting in the 1980s, have made themes that were already present in Israeli literature (in the work of S. Yizhar, for example) an integral part of a historiographical paradigm. *A Tale of Love and Darkness* does something similar within the oeuvre of Amos Oz: It draws on themes that were already found in his fictional works and presents them within the author's and the national historical narrative. In

A Tale of Love and Darkness, the dichotomy that Oz has maintained for decades between fiction writer and public intellectual collapses, and the universal intellectual gives way to a passionate particular voice.

Observing the nature of global politics at the turn of the twenty-first century, Terry Eagleton wrote, "For the most obvious political fact about our world is that we are growing both more international and more tribal simultaneously, and the more phony the internationalism the more morbid the tribalism."[61] Israel at the start of the new millennium is a society driven by high-tech, international industries; by privately owned media; by an increasingly deregulated market; and by a cultural field that is open to competing voices and genres. But also, Israel, at the time that *A Tale of Love and Darkness* was written, found itself in the midst of a bloody war with the Palestinians, a war that brought terror to the streets of Israeli cities, a war that heightened tribal sentiments in Israeli society. And increasingly during that period, Israelis no longer saw their country as a regional power driven by the latest technological developments, operating in some global village, but as an isolated community caught in an existential battle for survival. As Amos Oz's daughter Fania, a Haifa University historian, has commented about *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, the book "portrays Zionism and the creation of Israel as a historical necessity for a people faced with the threat of extinction."[62] This is also what more and more Israelis felt at the start of the new millennium—facing an existential threat. By the beginning of the twenty-first century, the idea of Zionism as a universal movement and of the *Sabra* as its subject had all but vanished from Israel's and Oz's cultural landscape. Instead, the particular has emerged as the dominant cultural force; the hegemonic has given way to the ethnic, his sounds and stories.

In 1967, in the aftermath of the Six-Day War, Oz wrote in the daily *Davar*,

> I believe in a Zionism that faces facts, that exercises power with restraint, that sees the Jewish past as a lesson, but neither as a mystical imperative nor as an insidious nightmare; that sees the Palestinian Arabs, and neither as the camouflaged reincarnation of the ancient tribes of Canaan nor as a shapeless mass of humanity waiting for us to form it as we see fit: a Zionism also capable of seeing itself as others may see it; and finally, a Zionism that recognizes both the spiritual implications and the political consequences of the fact that this small tract of land is the home land of two peoples fated to live facing each other, willy-nilly, because no God and no angel will come to judge between right and right. The lives of both, the lives of all of us, depend on the hard, tortuous, and essential process of learning to know each other in the curious landscape of the beloved country.[63]

This position that Oz formulated early in his public career continued to inform his writings on Zionism and Israeli politics for the next three decades: a view of Zionism as a complex ideology and of the Arab-Israeli conflict as similarly intricate. And as Laurence Silberstein has observed, Oz remained sanguine about the future, believing that through hard work and a careful understanding of the historical forces that shaped the Jewish national movement, as well as the political conflict in the Land of Israel, a peaceful resolution was possible.[64] In 1998, reflecting on Israel's jubilee, Oz wrote,

> I love Israel even at times when I don't like it, even when I can't stand it. … Zionism was an uneasy coalition of diverse dreams, and by definition it would have been impossible for all those dreams to have been fulfilled. Today, some are partially

> fulfilled, some forgotten, and some have turned into nightmares. … I'm not an optimist but an activist. Israel at the moment is in deep crisis. But I refuse to share the somewhat whining despair of some of my fellow intellectuals in Tel Aviv. … I belong by the temperament to those who ask: "What do we do next?[65]

Contrast this statement with the way Oz describes, in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, the start of Israel's War of Independence on the morning of November 30, 1947, the day after the UN voted for the partition of Palestine and the creation of the Jewish State: "While we and probably all our neighbors were asleep, shots were fired in Sheikh Jarrah at a Jewish ambulance that was on its way from the city center to Hadassah hospital on Mount Scopus. All over the country Arabs attacked Jewish busses on highways, killed and wounded passengers, and fired with light arms and machine guns into outlying suburbs and isolated settlements."[66] (And from this point in the book ensues a long description of the Arab siege on Jewish Jerusalem and the great suffering of the Jewish population in the city.) There isn't an attempt here by Oz to contextualize the violence, to delineate the historical processes that might explain the eruption of the attacks. Also, there is hardly any mention of what the other side, the Arabs, experienced (or suffered) during the war. All that Oz offers in this regard is a pithy summary of the traditional explanation that prevailed in the early 1950s in Israel with regard the fate of the Palestinians, "War was a terrible thing, of course, and full of suffering, people said, but who asked the Arabs to start it?"[67] It is worthwhile noting here that Oz's account of the 1948 War in *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is not all that different from that offered by Benny Morris in his 2009 book *One State, Two States*: "War eventually came to Palestine at the end of November 1947, and lasted until 1949. It was initiated by Palestinian Arabs and the Arab states, and they lost."[68] A lot, it seems has changed, between the late 1980s when Morris, imbued with optimism, set out to debunk old historiographical notions of the 1948 War and its causes and his characterization of that war in his more recent work.[69]

Oz of *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, in the midst if the second *Intifada* when many members of the Israeli peace camp mourned the end of the "Oslo process," has by and large lost the optimism of an activist. (Again, an allusion to Benny Morris might be useful here. In a 2002 article in *The Guardian*, in response to the second *Intifada* and Arafat's rejection of Prime Minister Barak's offers in the Camp David summit, Benny Morris, the father of the New Israeli History, stated, "The rumour that I have undergone a brain transplant is (as far as I can remember) unfounded—or at least premature. But my thinking about the current Middle East crisis and its protagonists has in fact radically changed during the past two years. I imagine that I feel a bit like one of those western fellow travellers rudely awakened by the trundle of Russian tanks crashing through Budapest in 1956."[70]) Politics in the book are not historical; they are not subject to change, rather, they are mythical, beyond mere temporality.

In his 2005 acceptance speech of Frankfurt's Goethe Prize, Oz declared, "For the first time in their long history, good and bad were both overruled by the idea that circumstances are always responsible for human decisions, human actions and especially human suffering. Society is to blame. Painful childhood is to blame. The political is to blame. Colonialism. Imperialism. Zionism. Globalisation. What not. So began the great world championship of victimhood." In the speech, Oz called for the recovery of instinctive notions of good and bad ("It may sometimes be hard to define good, but evil has its unmistakable odor.") that cannot be trivialized by relying on social or historical explanations.[71] For Oz, in the beginning of the twenty-first century, rational

historical explanations have given way to emotional, primal assertions—that is the other side of the post-Zionist condition, the pessimist, if not outright fatalist, side of it.

A Tale of Love and Darkness is not the first literary instance in which Oz traveled back to Jerusalem of the 1940s. In the mid-1990s, for example, in *Panther in the Basement,* Oz told the story (that drew on autobiographical motifs) of kids who grew up in pre-State Jerusalem and tried to live out the militaristic and heroic ethos of the time—this coming of age book was a more intricate and reflective take on the themes of Yigal Mosinzon's *Hasambah* series, which began in the 1950s and celebrated the exploits of young *Sabras* who battled against Arabs and British.

Panther, in typical Ozian fashion, depicted the important place of militarism in the bourgeoning Israeli society yet at the same time questioned that very ethos and revealed its limitations (the enemies in the book are the British, and the book's protagonist, Proffy, ends up becoming increasingly drawn to the enemies that he is spying on; this, in turn, leads him to be charged by his friends with treason). Proffy was a younger incarnation of Oz the Zionist intellectual, the contemplative and sensitive fighter, a boy torn between the world of books with which he is surrounded at home and the adventures that await outside. Amos Klausner of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is also contemplative and sensitive, but he is not a fighter (or a farmer); he no longer needs any of the dominant symbols of traditional Zionism to compensate for his (exilic, foreign) weaknesses. He all but succumbs to the comfort of the books that crowd the walls of his home. In fact, he writes that, "When I was little, my ambition was to grow up to be a book."[72]

The Jerusalem of *Panther* was dark, secretive, and cosmopolitan, but it was at the end the stage of a great national drama. Or, as Oz wrote elsewhere about the city of his childhood,

> We were growing up in a dramatic world: the underground, bombs, arrests, curfews, searches, the British army, Arab gangs, approaching war, apprehension. … If despite all this we were relaxed, even optimistic and unafraid, surely it was largely due to the Tarzans, the Flash Gordons and the westerns that we watched endlessly. … And all those films were in perfect harmony with the Zionist upbringing we were receiving.[73]

In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, the national drama also, at times, takes center stage (Oz offers in the novel a rich description of the anticipation leading up to the UN vote on the partition resolution and of the euphoria that followed the vote), but ultimately the personal and communal take precedence over the national and the universal. Proffy was the embodiment of the *Sabra* ideal (as Oz came to symbolize it throughout much of his public career). Amos Klausner is in many ways its negation—as Tarzan and Flash Gordon, the heroes of Proffy and his friends, have given way to Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky as symbols of the spirit of his youth. If Zionism sought for decades to negate the memory of the Diaspora and to base its ethos on the ideal of the *Sabra*, then at the start of the third millennium, it is perhaps the greatest representative of this ideal that questions its very foundations.

A Tale of Love and Darkness provides a rich array of personal, family, and national tales, but the dramatic core of the book is the suicide of Oz's mother, in 1952, when Amos Klausner was thirteen years old. As he has done in so many of his fictional works, Oz draws an opposition in *A Tale of Love and Darkness* between the characters of his mother and his father. Oz's father, as he is portrayed in the book, is a stern disciplinarian; he's cold, demanding, and emotionally unavailable. Fania, the mother, is a weak and fragile woman; she's depressed and throughout

Oz's childhood she gradually withdraws from life, confining herself to her bedroom and to great European novels until she kills herself in Tel Aviv in the winter of 1952. Throughout his childhood Oz sought the company of his mother, her warmth and humanity, while he feared his father and sought refuge from his foreboding gaze. After his mother's suicide, Oz rebelled against his father: He left Jerusalem for the *kibbutz* and forsook his father's last name for the *Sabra*-sounding "Oz." In many ways, the image that most people have come to associate with Oz over the years, that of the proud *Sabra*, the *kibbutznik*-intellectual, was a result of the revolt against the father.

As Avraham Balaban has noted, one of the key features of Oz's fictional works is the attempt to overcome a crucial binary opposition by bringing the warring contraries together to live in peace.[74] Writing in the twenty-first century about events that unfolded decades ago, Oz cannot bring back his family as a harmonious, peaceful unit. But what he is able to do in *A Tale of Love and Darkness* is to retrieve the memory of his mother, the person that for years he and his father could only refer to as "she" or "her." In Oz's earlier telling of a boy's childhood experiences in Jerusalem, *The Hill of Evil Council*, the mother of the young protagonist also disappears from the life of the young boy, prompting his departure for the *kibbutz*. But in the novella, the mother does not commit suicide; she runs away from home with a mysterious British aristocrat, abandoning her family. In that novella, the father is the warm and caring character; the mother is the aloof and distant parent. And as opposed to *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, in which the father's professional failures to gain an academic position are highlighted, in *The Hill of Evil Council* the father is rewarded with a professorship at the Hebrew University after the mother's disappearance. The mother who never bought into the Zionist dream is shunned by the younger Oz, while the (somewhat!) pioneering father is the character who draws the author's sympathy. Three decades later, the weak and vulnerable mother is the sympathetic character, and the dominating father is the one who is rejected by the young boy. In a 2004 interview with David Remnick of *The New Yorker*, Oz said about his mother's suicide, "She died because, for her, Jerusalem was an exile. This climate and environment and reality was alien. And she died because her hopes, if she had any, that maybe a replica of her Europe could be built here, without the bad aspects of the Diaspora Jewish shtetl, were apparently refuted by the reality of the morning after."[75] If for decades, as a public figure, Oz promoted a resolute brand of Zionism that was associated with the hegemonic voice of Israel, in *A Tale of Love and Darkness* he provides a more minor, at times compassionate and nostalgic, Zionist narrative that comes from the fringes rather than the center of the Israeli collective: The rebellion against the father has given way to an acceptance of the traumatic loss of the mother and the very limits of the Zionist experience.

The sense that the old Ashkenazi order was on the decline in Israel and that new forces (Mizrahim, religious) were on the rise was already apparent in Oz's 1986 novel, *Black Box*. Told through a series of letters, the book tells the story of the failed marriage between two Ashkenazi Israelis—Alec, an IDF officer and a professor (an ideal Zionist Israeli who ends up leaving the country), and Ilana, a well-read, rebellious woman (reminiscent of Oz's mother in *A Tale of Love and Darkness*)—a marriage that yielded a son, the wild and obstinate Boaz, and Ilana's second marriage to the religious Mizrahi, Michael Sommo. In *Black Box*, the Ashkenazi characters are clearly on the decline; they are markers of decadence (the professor who left the country, the mother whose sexual promiscuity could not be tamed), while Sommo represents the emerging forces in Israeli society. He is investing in new settlements in the West Bank; he is part of the ascending political and social forces in Israeli society. But at the same time, there is a clear social and cultural hierarchy in *Black Box*.[76] Alec and Ilana write in the language of an educated Israeli

middle class (the milieu that so identified with *A Tale of Love and Darkness*). Sommo, although learned, smart, and cunning (he is able to get a lot of money out of Alec, the leftist intellectual, for his ventures in the West Bank), writes in a different Hebrew. His is a language filled with religious allusions and motives. It is overly stylized, ornate, and florid, like someone trying to prove that he belongs, though he is not quite there. His Hebrew sounds foreign, not the language of the *Sabra* (Ashkenazi) establishment. For example, here is an excerpt from a letter in which Sommo asks Alec for more money:

> I the undersigned had sworn a solemn oath to have no further dealings with you, whether for good or ill, whether in this world or the next, on account of what is written in the Book of Psalms, Chapter 1, Verse 1. "Happy is the man who has not walked in the counsel of the wicked nor stood in the way of sinners nor sat in the sitting of the scornful." The reason for my hereby breaking my oath is that it is a matter of life and death, Perhaps even, Heaven forbid, two lives. … It is possible that your repentance and your contribution will arouse the divine compassion for the boy and he will return safely. There are rewards and punishments, there is divine justice, even if I am unworthy to presume to understand its workings.[77]

Sommo is an arriviste; his culture is still folklore. In *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, there is no longer a hierarchical difference between the Sommos and the Gideons; *Ashkenaziyut* has become folklore. But this is not an optimistic multiculturalism that denotes democratic openness; it is the world of the clash of civilizations where, deprived of unifying myths, society breaks down in a violent struggle for dominance.

Oz of *A Tale of Love and Darkness* no longer tells the story of a hegemonic Zionist group, but rather of one group among many others that compete in an ever-expanding cultural arena. And like many of the other groups that have claimed a voice in the Israeli public sphere over the past two decades and have placed trauma and loss at the core of their collective identity (Mizrahim, Orthodox Jews, Arabs), Oz does the same to his social milieu (middle-class Ashkenazim). The loss of Europe and the trauma of the existential threat posed by the 1948 War becomes the core of his group's identity. Or, to put it differently, the Zionist ideal of the negation of the past is replaced by an attempt to recover a (personal as well as collective) traumatic past. And this is perhaps the most vivid representation of the post-Zionist condition (more perhaps than the emergence of the various competing voices in contemporary Israeli culture). Anita Shapira, who in her essay on *A Tale of Love and Darkness* tried to insure that it would remain within the Zionist literary corpus, predicted, as we have seen, in 2001 that the upcoming century would be characterized by the struggles among different groups for cultural dominance, to redefine the limits and contours of Israeli identity. *A Tale of Love and Darkness* may be the quintessential example of this type of politics—not the optimistic post-Zionism of the 1990s that celebrated the assumed end of the Arab-Israeli conflict, but the pessimistic post-Zionism of violent, tribal identity politics, which seems to have dominated the first decade of twenty-first-century Israel.

THREE

EAST AND WEST ON THE ISRAELI SCREEN

> Joseph Palmi [mob boss]: "Let me ask you something … we Italians, we got our families, and we got the church; the Irish, they have the homeland, Jews their tradition; even the niggers, they got their music. What about you people, Mr. Wilson, what do you have?"
>
> Edward Wilson [CIA official]: "We have the United States of America. The rest of you are just visiting."
>
> —*The Good Shepherd*, Universal Pictures, 2006

Ella Shohat, in the introduction to her important study—and one of the pioneering post-Zionist texts—*Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation*, has made the following observation: "Geographically set in the East, the dominant Israeli imaginary constantly inclines toward the West. On the political level, Israel is at the same time an emerging nation, the product of liberation struggle … and a constituted state allied with the West against the East, a state whose very creation was premised on the denial of the Orient."[1] According to Shohat, Israeli cinema (and the Israeli imagination more generally) has followed two parallel, and seemingly contradictory, paths: one celebratory, highlighting victories and achievements of (particularly the young) Israeli state; and another, which has created a clear hierarchical order between a certain Ashkenazi elite and the Palestinians and Mizrahi Jews who constitute its "oriental other," to use the post-Zionist lexicon. And Shohat's aim in her study was to expose the representational means that have sustained the latter—the denial of the Orient, as she put it, in Israeli culture.

In exploring the means by which Israeli cinema has constituted the East-West divide, Shohat has focused on both the representation of Arabs in Israeli cinema and that of Mizrahi Jews. With regard to the oriental Jews, Shohat has claimed that Israeli cinema (with very few exceptions) has been dominated by a myth, according to which

> European Zionism "saved" Sephardi Jews from the harsh rule of their Arab "captors." It took them out of "primitive conditions" of poverty and superstition and ushered them gently into modern Western society characterized by "humane values". … Within Israel, of course, they suffered from the problem of the "the gap" … handicapped as they have been by their Oriental, illiterate, despotic, sexist, and generally pre-modern formation in their lands of origin, as well as by their propensity for generating large families.[2]

At the same time, according to Shohat, the Israeli state, or the Ashkenazi establishment, according to this myth, created social institutions and developed policies in order to civilize the oriental Jews and absorb them into mainstream Israeli society.

Shohat's analysis is prototypically post-Zionist (and postmodern). She has identified a core dichotomy that has defined the Zionist and Israeli imagination from its inception—in this case the East-West divide—and from that perspective she goes on to analyze various cultural products (films, in this instance) that reflect this divide. In the post-Zionist critique, and postmodernism more generally, there are no deeper or hidden causes (all we can find are traces that ultimately lead to nowhere) that can explain the culture or the collective imagination. In Shohat's analysis, culture is the all-consuming medium; everything is part of the representational realm, and the task of the critic is to explore the organizing mechanisms of the representational realm. If all we have are signifiers (and no signified), then cultural analysis is the only plausible way to expose the power mechanisms at work. Culture molds the collective imagination, and it leads to the production of more cultural products that only serve to reinforce the dominant cultural paradigm. Or as Shohat sees it, Israeli films are Zionist texts that translate the Zionist "master narrative" into the specific modalities of the film medium.[3]

Shohat's work was, in some ways, groundbreaking and highly incisive. The truly important achievement of the post-Zionist critique has been to strip Zionism of its self-righteousness. After reading Benny Morris's account of the 1948 War, it was all but impossible to accept the old (self) image of Zionism as a David defeating a menacing Goliath. And after evaluating the evidence accumulated by the sociological studies of the policies of the state vis-à-vis the new immigrants in the 1950s, it is far-fetched to simply think of the State of Israel as an oasis for persecuted Jews around the world. And Shohat's book certainly contributed to this process of reevaluating the Zionist project.

But Shohat's work also exposes one of the shortcomings of the post-Zionist critique: Its inability to account for the fundamental changes that Zionist and Israeli culture have undergone over the years. If one basic dichotomy defines the contours of the culture, then almost every cultural product must reflect this basic dichotomy. But even the most cursory overview of Israeli cinema and culture would reveal drastic differences in the representation of various groups over the years. There is little in common between the heroic representation of Israeli soldiers in a film such as *Hill 24 Doesn't Answer* from 1955 and the ambivalent and nuanced portrayal of the Israeli military in the movie *Siege* from 1969. Likewise, when it comes to the depiction of Mizrahi Jews, the diversity and multifacetedness of the representation of Eastern Jews on the Israeli screen calls for more than a simple binary opposition between East and West.

In this chapter, I will try to offer a different interpretive framework to assess the representation of ethnicity in Israeli cinema, one that aims to locate ethnic tensions and the representation of group identity within broader social and ideological developments in Israeli history. I will do so by focusing on three films: *Sallah Shabbati* from 1964, *Sh'hur* from 1994 and *Late Marriage* from 2001, movies that, to a large degree, focus on the issue of ethnicity and ethnic relations in Israeli society. These movies reflect three distinct periods in Israeli history: *Sallah* is a product of the melting pot period that championed social integration and a reliance on the state and social institutions to achieve national goals; *Sh'hur* is a product of the multicultural 1990s and the politics of identity, when "authentic" ethnic and cultural representations were celebrated; *Late Marriage* is a product of the twenty-first century, of the period beyond the "happy 90s" and the (facile) belief in local identities that operate harmoniously and independently within a global system. Furthermore, I argue in this chapter that both *Sallah* and

Sh'hur ultimately fail to address the fundamental ideological and social forces that define the contours of the ethnic relations that they describe (they suffer from an ideological blindness), while *Late Marriage* succeeds in this regard because it not only provides a powerful and insightful cultural representation of ethnicity but is also fully aware of the deeper social currents that constitute it. It is not my intention to frame this chapter as critique of Shohat's argument (her book was published in 1989, well before two of the films that I discuss in this chapter were produced), but rather as an interpretation of Israeli films and culture that goes beyond the framework of the post-Zionist critique, which Shohat was very instrumental in fostering.

Sallah Shabbati was written and directed by Ephraim Kishon, one of the most popular humorists and satirists in Israel in the 1960s. The movie was nominated for an Academy Award, and it featured both well-known veteran actors (Topol, Shmuel Rodensky) and some up-and-coming Israeli stars (Gila Almagor, Arik Einstein, Shaike Levi). The movie was a box-office hit drawing more than a million viewers in Israel—Israel's population then was less than three million—and it was shown around the world, winning prestigious awards. The movie takes place during the mass immigration to Israel in the 1950s—predominantly from Arab and Muslim countries—when hundreds of thousands of new immigrants were absorbed by the fledgling State of Israel. One of the greatest challenges of the period was providing housing for the immigrants. First, many of the new immigrants were placed in *ma'abarot* (transitory camps) and subsequently many were moved to *shikunim* (public housing projects) throughout Israel. The protagonist of the movie, Sallah, is a new immigrant from an unspecified Muslim country, and the movie describes his efforts to get his family out of the *ma'abara* and into a *shikun* apartment.

The basic plot of *Sallah Shabbati* is a story of immigration and the struggles of absorption, but what arguably made it a hit in Israel in the mid-1960s was the way it satirized the political establishment of the time. Labor was the dominant political and social force in the country (it had dominated Zionist and Israeli politics since the 1920s), and it did not seem back then that it faced any real challenge to its hegemony. Kishon was a Revisionist—Labor's main right-wing opposition movement since the mid-1920s—and his satire of the state and its bureaucracy originated from the position of an outsider. (At that time, supporters of the Revisionist camp were not only ideologically marginalized, they were also discriminated against in the work force. Many jobs in Israel at the time required employees to join the Histadrut—the federation of unions that was controlled by the Labor party—and Revisionists who refused to join the Histadrut were kept out of many jobs and government contracts.) One of the key aspects of Revisionist ideology was the belief in the power of free markets and private capital and a rejection of worker-controlled economic and social organizations. Ze'ev Jabotinsky, the founder of the Revisionist movement, wrote in the 1930s, "If it were possible to build the Hebrew majority in Palestine on the basis of 'national funds,' we were all very happy; but it is impossible, and the success of our enterprise depends, as we all know, on private property."[4] And Kishon's satire reflected those Revisionist leanings: In his feuilletons, sketches, plays, and scripts, he ridiculed the Labor establishment and its nationalized institutions for its corruption, cronyism, and overall ineptitude and championed an individualistic social vision that celebrated such virtues as private initiative, personal risk taking, and street (or market) common sense.[5]

In *Sallah*, Kishon mocked the ineptness of state bureaucrats; he ridiculed the way Labor operatives bought votes with empty promises and how Jewish National Fund officials duped American Jewish donors. And he showed *kibbutz* leaders—the *kibbutz* being the vanguard of the Labor movement—as naïve, detached, and perhaps what was the worst trait from Kishon's perspective: humorless.

It is within this framework—social satire—that ethnic relations come into play in *Sallah Shabbati*; they provide the necessary (humorous) tensions that allow the satire to unfold. From the very opening of the film, Kishon sets the basic difference (tension) between Ashkenazim and Mizrahim. In the film's opening scene we see two families arriving in Israel—an American Jewish family and Sallah's family. The Americans have no children with them, and the first thing the American Jew does upon landing in Israel is count and make sure that his entire luggage has arrived safely. Sallah, dressed in oriental garb, has seven children, and the first thing he does is count them, only to discover that one of them is missing. Eventually we see her coming out on the luggage carousel—the Mizrahi family treats children as commodities, if ever the meaning of proletariat was any clearer. The differences are clear: The Ashkenazim are modern, educated, and restrained; the Mizrahim are tribal, loud, and uncivilized. And as Ella Shohat has demonstrated quite convincingly, these ethnic stereotypes dominate the entire film: Sallah is uneducated, he wastes his days drinking and gambling, and he is untrustworthy. The Ashkenazim are also mocked, but for possessing the very opposite characteristics: They are aloof, cold, and educated but lacking street smarts.

The movie, then, presents a clear ethnic and cultural divide. Kishon did not create these stereotypes—they were part of Israeli popular culture of the period—but his comedic innovation in *Sallah* was the manner in which he harnessed them for his social satire. These stereotypes reflect the popular perceptions in Israel at the time (the humor of Ha-Gashash ha-Hiver troupe, one of the most popular comedic groups in Israel at the time, was informed by a similar manipulation of ethnic stereotypes). But in the case of the film *Sallah*, the ethnic stereotypes are not the punch line of Kishon's satirical jokes; they are comedic means. By illustrating (clearly ad absurdum, as Ella Shohat has remarked) the differences between Sallah's character and that of the Ashkenazi establishment, Kishon is able to expose the basic incompetence of the Labor social system as Sallah manipulates and cheats his way to the *shikun* apartment that he so dearly coveted. In the film, we have on the one hand an already decadent establishment that seems to operate only for the sake of maintaining its power (the election process is mocked in the film as we see party operatives trying to buy the votes of the new immigrants), and on the other hand we find the immigrants who inject vitality into the social body. Yes, Sallah drinks and gambles; he is a primitive fool at times—but he is also cunning and agile. Sallah is a quick study who grasps the very structure of the bureaucracy and its limitations, and he is able to play it for his and his family's needs. And at the end of the movie, he is able to procure an apartment for his family (we get a gleaming image of the *shikun*). He learns from a cab driver (always the character that reveals the essence of street smarts) that the best way to obtain something is to lobby for its opposite. So, Sallah mobilizes the new immigrants who were still left behind in the *ma'abara* to a rally against the *shikun*, and to prove their obstinacy, the authorities give him an apartment in the *shikun*.

In his analysis of Kishon's social satire, Gidi Nevo has shown that it was based, to a large degree, on a tension between an idealized (by Kishon) individualistic economic behavior and the Labor establishment, which served as its antithesis. As Nevo formulated it,

> At the pinnacle of Kishon's Utopian vision stands the economic man. … It is he who carries the whole society upon his shoulders. It is he who produces its wealth, his work turns its wheels, creating the products that its citizens desire (and so keeps the cycle of production/consumption going). … Israel is perceived by Kishon as a society which is not economic or is even anti-economic. … It subverts his enterprises, binds him head

> and foot in sticky webs of malignant bureaucracy, sucks in his money like an octopus with a thousand tentacles, and in general embitters his life and makes it a living hell.[6]

Kishon's (Zionist Revisionist) worldview was grounded in capitalist ethics. And while Sallah certainly is not the prototypical "economic man," to use Nevo's terminology—he is not an industrious puritan—he certainly allows Kishon to unmask what he sees as the anti-economic, anti-individualistic nature of the Israeli social system.

Sallah, as Kishon portrays him, is in many ways the Israeli version of the classic (American) success story, of rising from nothing (he came to the country with only the clothes on his body, without any resources, material or educational) and achieving the Israeli dream. Sallah is a complete outsider. He, at first, has no idea how to behave in the new culture. On Election Day, Sallah accepts bribes from different parties, and to please them—to stand by his word—he votes for all of them, thus canceling his vote. In another scene, he sees an advertisement promising a reward for finding the purebred dog of a very "cultured" (and stuffy) Ashkenazi family; to get the reward, Sallah brings that family a stray dog that he found in the fields outside the *ma'abara*. Sallah, somewhat naively, assumes that he would get the reward—the Ashkenazi family cannot understand how Sallah fails to tell the difference between a purebred and a mutt.

Sallah has no grasp of the cultural codes of the old (established) Israeli society. He cannot play within the boundaries and expectations of the system, and this position is what ultimately allows him to manipulate its institutions. Sallah, like all newcomers to a new environment, has to learn the hidden rules and codes of Israeli civic society from scratch, and the fact that he is a Mizrahi, the radical negation of the veteran Ashkenazi Israelis, only heightens the sense of his naiveté. To Kishon, the Labor-dominated establishment is decadent; it outlived its usefulness, and the best way to expose this is by pitting an absolute outsider against the establishment—an outsider who, against all odds (he does not have a formal education or technical skills nor does he master the civic vocabulary of the society), is able to outsmart the system and reveal its ineptness.

Kishon's *Sallah* was developed (Kishon wrote several skits using the character of Sallah in the 1950s) in a time when the idea of social solidarity, the welfare state, and the melting pot dominated the Israeli ideological spectrum. The state, and its many organs, was seen as the only viable way to absorb the thousands of new immigrants that came to the country and to transform them into productive members of society. Israel, as we have already discussed, was a highly uniform society at that time, with little (if any) room for individual expression. Most Israelis had few choices when it came to the clothes they wore, their diet (when it came to bread, Israelis had a choice on weekdays between white or dark standard, subsidized bread—on Fridays the only choice was challah), what they could listen to on the radio (as we have seen before, radio stations were run by the government—there was no television in Israel then), or many other aspects of their private lives. To Kishon, that was unacceptable. He sought to unleash the individualistic spirit of Israelis, and because by and large the veteran (Ashkenazi) Israelis were already caught in the web of the system, only the outsider, the Mizrahi, could realistically play that role (he is the child who cries that the emperor has no clothes; the veteran Israelis were already too jaded to notice).

But does Sallah truly challenge the system? Does he subvert the existing, decadent social order? At the core of the government's absorption policies were the *shikunim*, massive housing projects that were built in new development towns that were scattered mainly along Israel's

sparsely populated borders and away from the country's economic and cultural centers, or in the poorer parts of Israel's urban centers. Sallah's dream was to escape the *ma'abara* and move into a *shikun* apartment—and that's what he achieves by the end of the film. Although Sallah exposes the weaknesses of the Israeli system, his ultimate reward is the very foundation of the government's social program. Sallah, at the end, is a hero of the melting pot ideology (two of his children marry Ashkenazim from the *kibbutz*—the ultimate sign of integration); his success means achieving what the government already designated as the solution for the newcomers. On the satirical level, Kishon is very critical of the dominant Israeli (Labor) ideology, but ultimately, when it comes to the great national challenge, the absorption of new immigrants, he accepts the dominant ideological logic: the *shikun* apartment as the viable social solution.

From today's vantage point, it is clear that the *shikunim*, as a social policy, failed—lacking the necessary infrastructure, and detached from the country's social and economic centers, these housing projects soon became hotbeds of poverty, crime, unemployment, and social unrest.[7] One cannot criticize Kishon for lack of hindsight—but in other films and sketches, Kishon, in the 1960s, from his oppositional (Revisionist) perspective, believed that these types of government programs and initiatives could never succeed. Perhaps Kishon's best social satire was the movie *The Big Dig* (*Te'alat Blaumilch*, 1969). It tells the story of a man who escaped from a mental institution, found a pneumatic drill, and began to dig holes in the pavement of a major Tel Aviv street. Soon the police, who assume that the lunatic man was following orders from the government, help him to drill, and after the media begins to hail the project, the mayor and head of the roads department fight to take credit for the project that threatens to submerge the entire city. *The Big Dig* was a satirical portrayal of what, according to Kishon, was the inevitable fate of all government programs—again, told from the perspective of an outsider: a madman who escaped from an institution.

But unlike *The Big Dig*, *Sallah* is not only a satire, it is also a story of a great national endeavor, and here Kishon could not maintain his critical stance. When it came to the enormous social project of the time, he accepted the same ideological paradigm that he consistently tried to ridicule (including in the movie *Sallah Shabbati* itself). Here Kishon reflects in some important ways the general political dynamics of the period. Although the (mainly right-wing) opposition parties rejected Labor's social and economic policies, they could not, at that time, articulate a viable capitalistic or free-market alternative platform; instead, they focused on exposing Labor's corruption and ineffectiveness (only by the mid-1970s, with a much more decentralized Israeli economy and a far more heterogeneous and individualistic Israeli society, could the Israeli right assume political power and institute social and economic programs that ultimately dismantled the Israeli welfare system and deregulated the market).

Ultimately, *Sallah* is not a biting social satire. It is a feel-good film that allows the audience (as a great number of them did) to laugh at the clumsiness of the political system but, at the same time, to fully identify with its overall ideological message. Kishon wanted to portray Sallah as a comedic character, but Sallah ultimately (from Kishon's perspective!) is a tragic hero; his is a pyrrhic victory. Kishon's comedic failure was not the fact that he helped legitimize orientalist ethnic stereotypes; he was consciously using exaggerated stereotypes to advance the satirical elements of the movie. (Ella Shohat wrote about the "ethnic imbalance" in *Sallah*, that it was written and directed by Kishon, produced by Menachem Golan, and most important, it starred Chaim Topol as Sallah: All three were Ashkenazim.[8] But what if Kishon had chosen a Mizrahi actor? Then, all the stereotypes of the main character would seem "natural." The choice of an Ashkenazi actor actually creates a gap that enforces the idea that we are dealing with

intentionally overstated ethnic characterizations.)

Kishon's failure lay in his ideological blindness, in his inability to reveal the greater social forces that were shaping ethnic relations in Israel at the time. The proper comedic gesture (for Kishon) would have been for Sallah to demonstrate against the *shikun* and then to reject the government offer and remain in the *ma'abara*. That act would have exposed the basic futility (from Kishon's point of view) of the dominant ideological regime and placed the ethnic divide in its proper historical, social context. But at that time, what maintained the comedic power of Sallah—both his political satire and the ethnic jokes—was the very system that he was so critical of. What maintained all of Israel at the time was the political structure and political ideology that convinced Israelis that they should make personal sacrifices for the sake of the collective (imagined or real). And part of the sacrifice was being willing to expose yourself (and participate) in a game of exchanging jokes and stereotypes as way to overcome your previous identity and become part of a new Israeli ethos.

From the point of view of the melting-pot ideology, for Sallah's children, the stereotypes that defined the experience of their parents would no longer be relevant; they would become Israelis (the children of mixed Ashekanzi-Mizrahi marriages), leaving their heritage behind. But when the melting-pot ideology gave way to multiculturalism, an idea of a unified Israeli identity no longer seemed possible (or desirable). By the 1990s, the idea of any form of unified, single identity seemed to contradict the ideological edict of the time: diversity and choice. In a free-market economy (Kishon's ideal social system), one cannot make ethnic jokes in the hope of overcoming differences—one has to respect and tolerate the other, to allow the other full cultural autonomy. The power and ideology of the state have to give way to the dictates of the free market—to its maddening combination of violence and tolerance. The movie *Sh'hur* captured this very spirit of the 1990s.

The movie *Sh'hur* (the name refers to North African white magic), written by Hana Azoulay-Hasfari, who also plays one of the leading roles, and directed by her husband Shmuel Hasfari, was produced in 1994 in an Israel much different from the one Sallah emerged from. *Sh'hur*, which tells the story of growing up in a development town, in the same *shikunim* that Sallah coveted, in the 1970s, is a product of a radical cultural and social shift in Israel, where the melting pot and the welfare state gave way to identity politics, individualism, and the free market. Though not nearly as successful as *Sallah* at the box office, *Sh'hur* won six Israeli "Oscars"; it was shown in several international film festivals; and the director, Shmuel Hasfari, won a special prize at the Berlin Film Festival.

In *Sh'hur*'s opening scene we see Rachel, the host of a popular television talk show, in the studio. She receives a phone call telling her that her father has died and that she will need to bring her sister, who is in a mental institution, to the funeral. From there, the movie proceeds along two tracks: We follow Rachel, her sister Pnina, and Rachel's daughter, who is autistic, as they drive to the funeral; and through flashbacks we are taken back to the development town where Rachel grew up in the 1970s, to the time when she was thirteen and about to leave her home for a prestigious boarding school in Jerusalem.

The older Rachel, the television host, who looks like a typical yuppie, is cold and detached. She seems unable to communicate with her daughter and sister, and she is brisk and aloof in brief interactions with people who recognize her along the way. The younger Rachel, the only *sabra* (Israeli-born) in a traditional Moroccan Jewish family, is an independent-minded teenager determined to leave behind the squalor and backwardness of the development town and go to a prestigious boarding school. Her household consists of a blind father; her mentally challenged

sister who haunts the house like a ghost; a brother who aspires to go and study at the Sorbonne but has to put off his plans so he can take care of the family; and Rachel's mother, who practices North African white magic (other siblings, we learn, were married off or sent to a *kibbutz* and to religious boarding schools)—this is very much Sallah's family a decade after they moved to the *shikun*.

The young Rachel seeks to shed the remnants of her traditional Moroccan identity—and as we see with the older Rachel, she has been successful. The younger Rachel rejects the attempts by her mother to engage her in her magical rituals; she is impatient with her father and seems entirely focused on pursuing her dreams—to leave her primitive heritage behind and become a modern Israeli. But the young Rachel's success comes at a great cost. The old Rachel does not seem to be content; she projects a sense of emptiness. After spending her life trying to run away from her family and tradition, she is portrayed as a woman without a genuine sense of identity—a lonely woman (she is a single mother) in a cold and alienated world.

Ultimately, however, *Sh'hur* does offer its heroine an opportunity for redemption by way of reconnecting with her past. Toward the end of the film, we are at the young Rachel's house as she is getting ready to leave for the boarding school in Jerusalem. In the living room, her mother pleads with her to allow her to perform a magical ritual to protect the young girl on her journey, but Rachel vehemently declines to play along (the older brother tries to console his mother, telling her that that's how the younger generation behaves). But as Rachel exits the house and crosses the front patio, she sees her blind father, who is building a wooden cupboard, and she is able to have a brief conversation with her father, revealing genuine compassion and interest in him. She then spots what looks like a talisman. She grabs the object and looks back at her mother, who nods her head approvingly. Then the mother and daughter, who is clutching the talisman, come together and warmly hold hands. Then the scene switches to the present time, to the older Rachel, who is having a snack with her sister and daughter at a gas station. They are sitting outside where a group of men are watching an American action show on TV. Then Pnina moves her head and the TV broadcast is interrupted. Rachel's daughter does a similar gesture and the broadcast resumes, and then Pnina and the young girl begin to move their heads and telekinetically control the TV set. Rachel raises her voice and seems to be reprimanding her sister, but then the two begin to make childish faces at each other and begin to giggle affectionately. The ice has broken; Rachel accepts the wondrous and occult (that is part of her cultural heritage and identity), and in the process she regains her own humanity. Finally she is at peace with her past and with herself. She realizes that she could never escape her past (her daughter is the constant reminder of the past); moreover, Rachel realizes that her past, her family, her tradition are the keys to her own complete and healthy identity.

In her book *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen*, Yosefa Loshitzky has argued, "Without being a documentary in the customary generic sense, *Sh'hur* constitutes a form of ethnic document through its unusual juxtaposition of fantastic realism with a simulacrum of anthropological-like observation of ethnic rituals and daily activities."[9] The film, Loshitzky has claimed, escaped the fate of the "bourekas comedies"—an entire genre of movies that followed *Sallah* and played on the theme of ethnic tensions that ultimately resolved, usually through marriage—and enjoyed sweeping critical acclaim for its "authenticity." Loshitzky has called the film a social document.[10] She then argues, "Moreover, as an ethnic film *Sh'hur* is also a diasporic film, a form of 'otherness' that poses cultural and political challenges to the hegemony and homogeneity claimed by the Israeli nation-state."[11] *Sh'hur*, from Loshitzky's perspective, which Loshitzky herself describes as following in the path blazed by Shohat, is a quintessentially

post-Zionist product.[12] It provides a possible solution to what the post-Zionists claim is the fundamental opposition that has defined Zionism for over a century: the East-West divide. And it does so by rejecting the (perceived) dominant master narrative and instead providing the Other (the silenced Oriental) with an authentic voice.

But is *Sh'hur* an authentic voice that unlocks the tyrannical grip of the hegemonic ideology? Is it an authentic document that evades the limitations of the dominant ideological paradigm and generates a sense of otherness that cannot be formulated by the prevailing symbolic order? If the idea of the nation-state as a great melting pot as the all-encompassing ideological framework were still the dominant factor in Israeli life in the mid-1990s, then perhaps Loshitzky's argument would seem indisputable. But if the Israeli ideological order in the 1990s was altogether different, perhaps *Sh'hur* should not be seen as a work of art that challenges hegemony, but rather as one that affirms it.

In an article on the globalization of literature, the literary critic Louis Menand offered the following probing insight:

> The challenge now is to combine elements of non-metropolitan indigenousness with elements that metropolitan readers recognize as "literary …" It should be a hybrid of postmodernist heteroglossia (multiple and high-low discursive registers, mixed genres, stories within stories) and pre-modernist narrative (conventional morality, the simulation of an oral story-telling tradition). Between them, English and Casanova list the features of the world-literature prototype: a trauma-and-recovery story, with magic-realist elements, involving abuse and family dysfunction, that arrives at resolution by the invocation of spiritual or holistic verities. If you add in a high level of technical and intellectual sophistication, this is a pretty accurate generic description of a novel by Toni Morrison.[13]

And we can add to Menand's movies about riding whales in New Zealand or growing up in a Moroccan family in an Israeli development town. Unlike the 1960s, when Israel was dominated by a secular, Ashkenazi Labor establishment that favored a centralized economy and government-run social projects, Israelis at the time *Sh'hur* was produced, as we have already seen, had lived through fifteen years of Likud rule; they saw the deregulation of the market and the privatization of major government agencies; and they witnessed the emergence of an Israeli culture that no longer subscribed to a single hegemonic voice (secular Ashkenazi), but featured a variety of sounds and sights. Israel in the 1990s was becoming more and more part of the globalized world market. And as the post-Zionist critics Yehouda Shenhav and Yossi Yonah have observed, the processes of economic privatization also led to a parallel process of privatizing the national collective memory and the national cultural canon.[14] Identity politics might seem as subversive in a highly regulated and controlled culture (as Israel certainly was in the mid-60s)—but in an era of free competition and consumption, where variety and choice are the dictates of the market place, what exactly does it subvert?

The movie *Sh'hur* draws a stark contrast between the cold and detached life of the older Rachel and the warmth and empathy (despite the troubled family dynamics) of the development town of Rachel's youth. At the beginning of the film we get a glimpse of the mature Rachel's very modern home: It is an uninviting empty space and the scene is shot in cold blue colors. Rachel's childhood home, although poor (if not primitive), is shot in colors that project warmth and openness (this is the classic myth perpetrated in dozens of especially American TV shows:

The rich are cold and detached while the poor are sentimentally depicted as warm and embracing). Modernity, or the culture of the establishment, is formal and indifferent; traditional society is affectionate and accepting. Yes, life in the development town was harsh, and one of the memories that haunted Rachel was the rape of her sister (very much in the mode that Menand described)—but at the end it becomes a source of longing (like Amos Oz's yearning for the simplicity of mandatory Jerusalem: a harsh haven of Ashkenazi identity that led to great family trauma yet remains a place of comfort and stability).

What the creators of *Sh'hur* do not seem to be aware of is that the movie itself is a product of the very processes of the modernization and growing atomization of Israeli society. This is the paradox of identity politics: On the one hand, it portrays the modern, status-driven society as empty and callus, yet at the same time, it operates from within the very logic of late capitalism itself. It is the call for greater variety, for more options and more narratives, that produces the need for identity politics. Identity politics operates under the assumption that the current system has won—there are no real social and economic alternatives to free-market capitalism—and we are, in some sense, at the end of history, or in a post-ideological age. And from that position, it seems that the only way to operate in the world is to make the system seem more open, diverse, and ethical. Diversity, then, becomes the preferred political solution. People can choose their preferred identity (and isn't this the very foundation of the logic of the free market?)—but only as long as they play within the boundaries of the dominate paradigm. To quote the great comedian George Carlin, "They say 'freedom of choice.' You're given an illusion of choice. Americans are meant to feel free by the exercise of meaningless choice. You know what the choices are in this country? Paper or plastic; aisle or window; smoking or no smoking. Those are your real choices."[15] Identity politics provides an illusion that our true identity is individually constructed by our free choices. But in reality, the only choices left to us in this system are, at best, ornamental.

When we first see Rachel in her development town in *Sh'hur*, we find her walking down the street in what seems like a political rally. We have no idea what the demonstration is about; all we see is a carnivalesque atmosphere with a Fellini-like sense of surreal jubilation. The movie concludes with Rachel's choice of her tradition over the blandness of modern (Ashkenazi-dominated) Israeli identity: her political choice, in a sense. *Sh'hur* here captured what politics has been reduced to in the post-Zionist (or postmodern) period: no longer social movements competing to define and arrange the social (and ideological) landscape, but a series of personal choices that operate within the logic of the broader system. Ultimately there is nothing subversive about *Sh'hur* (or identity politics in general); it does not challenge hegemony but rather operates within its boundaries. It helps perpetrate the illusion of freedom of choice while ignoring the very mechanisms that render these choices possible and that, in the end, rely on these choices to continue and expand their hegemonic hold (after all, capitalism was a subversive, revolutionary force in the seventeenth century, not the late twentieth century). If *Sallah* was a typical product of the melting-pot era, then *Sh'hur* is exemplary of the multicultural period. While appearing to question the traditional order (providing an authentic Mizrahi point of view that is not constructed by the Ashkenazi establishment), it is ideologically blind to the manner in which it accommodates and supports the dominant ideological paradigm of Israel in the 1990s.

What led Rachel to embrace her ethnic identity and tradition are the requirements of the market place. Her choice of tradition is not all that different from that of stockbrokers who practice *kabbalah* or Buddhism or return to the Jewish bookcase after they return home from

work. It is a sort of postmodern yin and yang, the search for fulfillment in the empty world of cold exchange—but not to change the system of exchange, only to supplement it. Identity in the postmodern world offers a warm and loving refuge from the coldness of the marketplace. It offers a sense of nostalgia, a home that provides security that is based on tradition (as opposed to the fast pace of the professional world outside), but it is only a temporary refuge, not a substitute: A refuge that only helps mask the true nature of the existing social reality.

It is interesting to note here that arguably the most subversive Israeli film, from the point of view of identity politics, was Kishon's *Officer Azoulay* from 1971, which, like *Sallah*, was nominated for an Academy Award. Azoulay, like Sallah, is a Mizrahi character. He is a bungling, inept police officer, and as was the case with Sallah, Kishon uses his character to expose the hypocrisy and ineptness of the Israeli police—though unlike Sallah, Azoulay is highly educated: He speaks Arabic but also Yiddish, English, and French, and he is able to match ultra-orthodox rabbis in his mastery of the Bible. In *Officer Azoulay*, Kishon also accentuated—perhaps unintentionally—the deep historical divide between Ashkenazi and Mizrahi Jews as he all but foreshadowed some of the sociological claims that would later be made by post-Zionist critics—instead of trying to overcome the past (which was the quintessential nation-building Zionist trope), Kishon exposes the past.

In a key scene in the movie, Azoulay arrests a person in a movie theater, thinking that the person is an Arab terrorist. It is soon revealed that the person is a Mizrahi Jew (like Azoulay). Azoulay explains to his superior officer who arrives on the scene that he thought that the suspect looked like an Arab because he had a dark complexion. The suspect then retorts that he is paler than Azoulay. What is fascinating about the exchange is not that one Mizrahi Jew assumes that another is an Arab, but that they speak to one another in Arabic (they later argue who speaks a purer form of Arabic). Thus, in debating their true identity—trying to prove that they are not Arabs—they rely on their ancestral language, which speaks to their Arab-Jewish identity. One of the claims of critical scholars like Ella Shohat and Yehudah Shenhav is that the Ashkenazi establishment forced Mizrahi Jews to renounce their Arab/Eastern identity. In response to that they sought to call themselves not Mizrahim but Arab Jews. As Ella Shohat put it,

> I am an Arab Jew. Or, more specifically, an Iraqi Israeli woman living, writing, and teaching in the U.S. Most members of my family were born and raised in Baghdad, and now live in Iraq, Israel, the U.S., England, and Holland. … For Middle Easterners, the operating distinction had always been "Muslim," "Jew," and "Christian," not Arab versus Jew. The assumption was that "Arabness" referred to a common shared culture and language, albeit with religious differences.[16]

Kishon, in *Officer Azoulay*, used this very tension to describe the fundamental gulf between the Ashkenazi establishment and the Jewish immigrants from the Arab world—his Azoulay is a proud Arab Jew. Unlike *Sallah*, in which the cultural habits of Mizrahi Jews could quickly be transformed by the Israeli melting pot, in *Officer Azoulay* these differences were portrayed as much deeper, as part of one's cultural DNA. Yet, unlike *Sh'hur*, Kishon wrote and directed Azoulay in 1971 as Israel, in the aftermath of the 1967 War, was only beginning to shed its collectivist ethos and explore the possibilities of a more individualistic and diverse ethos. In that regard, Kishon's *Azoulay*, which was all but ignored by Shohat, is groundbreaking, whereas *Sh'hur* is no more than an affirmation of the dominant social order.

Dover Kosashvilli's *Late Marriage* was released in 2001 and won critical praise both in

Israel and internationally. It won ten Israeli "Oscars" and garnered several awards in festivals around the world. It played in twenty different cities in the United States in 2002, a rare feat for an Israeli film, especially if one takes into account the fact that the movie deals with the Georgian community in Israel, and most of the film's dialogue is in Georgian.

Whereas *Sh'hur* came out at a time when a plurality of Israelis felt that the conflict that defined Israeli history from its inception, the Arab-Israeli conflict, was possibly coming to a peaceful resolution and in the midst of unprecedented prosperity generated by the recent wave of immigration from the former Soviet Union and the high-tech boom—and the optimism that *Sh'hur* ultimately offers might reflect the spirit of that time—*Late Marriage* was produced when the "Oslo process" was becoming undone as the second *Intifada* was bringing terrorist attacks almost daily into the heart of Israel. And this sense of doom and fear permeates the film.

Late Marriage tells the story of Zaza, a thirty-one-year-old graduate student, whose traditional Georgian parents try to match him with a Georgian wife through an arranged marriage. Zaza has a girlfriend, a single mother who is not Georgian, and his parents force him to leave her and to accept a match from within the Georgian community. The movie is constructed of only a few very long scenes, which are imbued with raw violence and sexuality—American critics focused on the uniqueness of a very long love scene between Zaza and his girlfriend that is painfully intense and confrontational.[17] And the Georgian family is depicted in the film as a primitive, patriarchic unit in which raw violence seems to be omnipresent. But it is not only the violence and graphic nature of the film that make *Late Marriage* so relevant to Israel in the twenty-first century; the movie's real political force, in my mind, derives from its ability to unmask the social and economic forces that have shaped Israel (and the West more broadly) for the past thirty years and expose the limitations of the ideological system that they have constituted. *Late Marriage* does not offer a facile celebration of ethnicity or otherness; it depicts the very violent nature of modern society and the tribalism that exists under the façade of a happy global village in a supposed age of liberating technology. It is a kind of cinematic counterpart to Amos Oz's *A Tale of Love and Darkness*, though from the point of view of the marginal, not the (presumably) deposed hegemonic group.

To put it more broadly, one of the key questions of the twenty-first century has been, Why is it that with technological progress and great scientific and medical achievements, terror and fanaticism also thrive? How is it that in a world that is powered by information networks, fiber optics, and particle accelerators—all presumably the products of a rational, scientific, and enlightened worldview—the very same tools support what seem to be the agents of ignorance and hatred from the caves of Tora Bora to fundamentalist churches in the American Deep South, to young settlers on the hills of biblical Judea and Samaria? This is the paradox of our present age: How is it that secular progress has yielded not only the iPhone and Facebook but also the suicide bomber, the homophobic preacher, the nationalist settler who sanctifies the land? Several prominent figures in the last two decades of the twentieth century, from Francis Fukuyama to Thomas Friedman, from Bill Clinton to Tony Blair, assured us that technological progress would bring prosperity, tranquility, democracy, and peace—that ideology, with its potential for uncontrollable violence, would give way to pragmatism. In 1989, when the Berlin Wall fell and the Cold War came to an end, Francis Fukuyama, as we discussed earlier, predicted that history came to an end, and that our life would begin to resemble a kind of museum: We would live in a sheltered environment, and political forces of change would become but a memory of a dangerous past. Not that there wouldn't be conflicts in the world; there would still be clashes along ethnic and religious lines, but they would be relegated to the periphery—humanity would

be pursuing a liberal consensus, one in which the only real battles are those that are carried out in the market.

In the case of Israel, this meant a new ethos in which economic and technological development take the place of the old collectivist and militarized ethos. In the 1990s, Shimon Peres, one of the chief architects of the Oslo peace process, spoke of a new Middle East in which the new economy, fueled by high-tech advances, would foster new relations between old foes.[18] And Tom Segev, as we have seen earlier, argued that the high-tech center in Herzliya (named after Herzl) is the true realization of Herzl's Zionism: enlightened liberalism in the heart of the Levant.[19] So in light of all that, in a still highly developed and economically growing Israel, why is it that the conflict that seems to dominate the lives of most Israelis is not between Apple and Microsoft or between X-Box and Nintendo, but rather between Gaza and Sderot?

As we discussed earlier, one of the more popular explanations for the violent outbursts of the past decade is Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilizations" argument: What we are witnessing throughout the world are irrational, primeval conflicts that are motivated by tribal solidarity. (In the Israeli case, the most fervent promoter of this type of reasoning has been, as we discussed earlier, Benny Morris, who has argued that to understand the Arab-Israeli conflict, one must first address the question of the deep and fundamental differences between the two cultures and religions: He all but equates Arab and Palestinian nationalism with the ideology and means of radical Islam). And in such a conflict, a functional, rational peace is impossible—only by use of force could one side ultimately prevail.

The tendency to interpret history through the prism of the powerful clashes of cultural forces is not a twenty-first-century novelty; rather, it is a continuation of sorts of postmodern identity politics. But back then, in the latter part of the twentieth century, this was an optimistic approach. The great battles were behind us; the prevailing assumption was all that we are left with is to understand the relationships between the individual and the various groups that constitute her or his identity, which itself is always subject to change. In the comfort of the new Pax Americana, culture seemed like a liberating medium, like one happy global village—but in the current age of violence and global disasters, culture appears as the root cause of all of our societal and political ills.

The postmodern perspective, that which flourished in the globalized world without (perceived) borders and clearly defined centers of power, viewed any kind of normative order as the root cause of all evil—the hegemonic narrative that oppresses the marginalized other in the language of the time. The (postmodern) alternative was a cacophony of representations and identities that challenge the very possibility of a unified system. The postmodern vantage point identifies in the culture signs of oppression but ultimately creates an absolute identification between culture and reality—all that ultimately exist are signifiers and symbols (the signified objects are slippery and unstable and therefore cannot be fully perceived). And liberation is achieved, then, when we realize that any perceived essential link between sign and object, between identity and social order, is random: It represents the interests of power and control. Once everything is reduced to the cultural, representational realm, the hegemonic forces would be stripped of their source of power—a kind of anarchic cultural utopia, where computers do most of the heavy lifting. But what if this sort of all-out liberation manifests itself not only in the creation of Internet-based social networks that transcend traditional barriers but also in the form of uncontainable bursts of violence? Is multiculturalism, then, the solution, or rather, is it at the core of our violent present: the menacing nightmare of the peaceful, global village? Dover Kosashvilli's film, with its impulsive, patriarchic violence and the unsentimental depiction of

ethnic relations offers a fascinating look at these very dilemmas; it is one of the more brutal and original expressions of the very paradox in which we find ourselves in the new century, especially in Israel where the tensions between economic progress and tribal violence is ever so present.

One of Kosashvilli's truly remarkable achievements in his debut feature film is the manner in which the Georgian characters seem like modern Israelis—the cars that they drive, the gadgets that they use, even the interior of the houses looks like generic Israeli homes—yet at the same time, they are living in a sort of cultural isolation, maintaining traditional customs and practices that are foreign to the Israeli experience (the characters only speak Hebrew when they interact with non-Georgians). This sense of radical divide between the two worlds can be witnessed clearly in the film's opening scene. Zaza is brought by his parents to the house of a potential, much younger, Georgian bride, Ilana. The parents in the scene seem to be entirely within their Georgian world, but the prospective couple, in the bedroom of the girl, which looks like the room of a typical Israeli teenager, find the whole ritual alien. It is this duality, the movement between the modern and the primitive, which makes the violence and tribalism of *Late Marriage* so profoundly troubling. The characters do not live in a physical ghetto in isolation from mainstream society. They are at once part of modern Israel and part of a radically different world that operates according to its own set of codes and rituals. And isn't this divide the very characteristic of the late capitalist age?

In the late capitalist age, kids all over the world wear the same sport jerseys and sneakers, listen to the same music, and watch the same movies and TV shows—yet they are subject to radically different local codes and rules that respond to their very different material conditions. The spread of capitalism globally was supposed to advance a form of smooth rationality that would render violence (both political and personal) obsolete, yet violence seems to be as prevalent and more irrational as ever in the globalized system.

Late Marriage's dramatic climax comes in the film's penultimate scene, when Zaza's parents confront him after they find out about his affair with the single mother. The exchange between Zaza and his father is very heated and confrontational and culminates with the father spitting in Zaza's face. Then, Zaza's mother comes over to console her son. She takes a credit card from her wallet and places it in Zaza's front pocket (if ever there was a more painful depiction of symbolic castration), and then she places in his pocket a piece of paper with the phone number of a potential wife. From Zaza's parents' kitchen, we then move to the washroom of a banquet hall, where Zaza and his father, both in tuxedos, are pissing in the stalls before Zaza's wedding—an act of male bonding. Here, the sense of duality is magnified. On the one hand, we witness the violent outbursts of the father, who feels that his tribal code has been violated by his son, and then the mother who smoothes things over with the aid of credit card: capital as the agent of restraint and civility. But the mother accompanies the credit card with the phone number of the woman who'd become Zaza's wife, an aspect of the traditional code. It is this duality that, by and large, promises tranquility (the power of the market and its temptations to pacify us) but which again and again erupts in great brutality, which is perhaps the main attribute of the movie but also of our age.

In *On the Shores of Politics*, Jacques Ranciere made the following analysis of politics (or the end of politics) in the postmodern age:

> A world where everyone needs everyone else, where everything is permitted so long as it is on offer as individual pleasure and where everything is jumbled together is

> proposed to us as a world of self-pacified multiplicity. Reason is supposed to flower here in its least vulnerable form: not as discipline forever threatened by transgression and delegitimation, but as rationality produced by development itself, as a consensual deregulation of the passions. Pluralism thus is today's name for the point of concord, of utopian harmony, between the intoxication of private pleasures, the morality of equality in solidarity, and sensible Republican politics. Thus we now row towards the happy shores of the free exchange of goods, of bodies and candidates. But in this world all happiness comes to an end. … Realist utopias are, like other kinds, subject to the shock of the real.[20]

And the real, according to Ranciere, is the exclusion and hatred of the other that replaces harmonious rationality as the defining principle of our age, "and we need the brutal facts of events to remind us [the rise of ultra-nationalist, racist parties in the West]: relaxed attitudes are perhaps not exactly the most characteristic feature of the economy of pleasure. Rather than tolerance, what it meets with is … the irregulability of hatred and dread, the pure rejection of the other."[21] The Georgian family in *Late Marriage* is this very other. It is the element that seems to be part of the overall system (it seems to operate within it; it uses some of its features—the credit card), yet it does not accept the ideological injunction to act peacefully within the system. It is violent and irrational and it exposes the very cracks of the modern system.

Drawing on Ranciere's analysis, Žižek has offered the following observation about ethnicity and otherness in the postmodern world, "Liberal 'tolerance' condones the folklorist Other deprived of its substance—like the multitude of 'ethnic cuisines' in a contemporary megalopolis; however any 'real' Other is instantly denounced for its 'fundamentalism' … : the 'real' Other is by definition 'patriarchal,' 'violent,' never the Other of ethereal wisdom and charming customs."[22] And this is precisely the difference between *Sh'hur* and *Late Marriage*: the former treats ethnicity as folklore, with an emphasis on the mystical as a representation of otherness vis-à-vis the rational, established order; the latter, on the other hand, exposes the irrationality of the system itself, of the cracks through which the violence (of the father) emerges. (In *Late Marriage* we also see magic being practiced: once by Zaza's mother, who reluctantly follows the advice of another woman, and another time by Zaza's girlfriend. In both cases the magical ritual leads nowhere; it is but another sign of the primitive bond that suffocates Zaza).

The rawness and violence of the tribal code is in constant struggle with the "rational" order of the general society in *Late Marriage*. The father and his violence intimidate and terrorize their surroundings. But at the end, it is not the brute force and terror that establish the tribal code. Rather, the very mechanism of the modern free market is what allows the tribal code to assert itself. The mother buys her son off in order to pacify the father's rage (they also shower the daughter of Zaza's girlfriend with gifts when they force her to get out of his life). But by accepting the tribal code, Zaza does not find comfort or happiness. In the film's last shot, Zaza sits at a table at his own wedding banquet looking like a complete outsider (just as he and the teenager his parents tried to set him up with seemed in the girl's bedroom at the start of the film). And this is where the movie draws its force from: Progress and capitalism, it suggests, can smooth some rough patches in the global marketplace, but they cannot provide true resolution. Instead, modern society is based on basic contradictions that can be masked for a while but at times allow for brute violence to escape and unleash a reign of terror.

Sallah Shabbati was produced during a period in Israeli history when government programs ruled the social landscape. Kishon used ethnic differences, tensions, and stereotypes to ridicule

these programs and the bureaucracy behind them. But ultimately his comedy only survived on the surface—the solution in *Sallah* (or resolution of the story) to the question of the day, the absorption of new immigrants, was very much in line with the spirit of the day: winning an apartment in the government-sponsored housing project. *Sh'hur* was the product of a much more individualistic Israel, one where central planning gave way to privatization, deregulation, and the gradual dismantling of the welfare state. In *Sh'hur*, the conflict seems to be between the alienation brought about by modernization and the rejection of tradition. But in *Sh'hur* these forces are only treated as part of one's (cultural) identity, removed from the broader social context. What the movie in the end deals with are the anxieties of the individual who lacks meaning in his or her life, and the solution, in the hyper-individualistic 90s, is the search for a better and more complete self by way of cultural realization. The collapse of the social networks and programs is not addressed—the heroine, while sensing emptiness and loneliness in her yuppie life, seeks to supplement that life with frills derived from her ethnic, traditional background. But what the movie fails to appreciate is just how much this search for individual fulfillment is part of the very conditions (the capitalistic turn of Israeli society) that the movie only superficially acknowledges, if at all. It is not surprising, then, that both *Sallah* and *Sh'hur* provide a happy ending, a sense of resolution. Because both are blind to the very ideological forces that, if properly accounted for, would render both solutions hollow.

Late Marriage evades simple resolution. Zaza does accept his mother's credit card and the match she arranged for him. But, as pointed out earlier, in the closing scene of the film we see Zaza sitting in his own wedding looking completely detached: like an outsider in his own celebration. Like *Sh'hur*, *Late Marriage* exposes the sense of alienation of contemporary society. But unlike *Sh'hur*, it does not offer solutions—accepting the ethnic code does not provide a sense of (self) fulfillment. All that *Late Marriage* allows for is the stychic release of violence, which is, perhaps, the genuine byproduct of the post-Zionist (postmodern) condition. And isn't this the real mark of the age? Social and economic policies did not change in Israel (or in the West) after the second *Intifada*: privatization and deregulation continued their seemingly inevitable march. What did change, however, were perceptions and the political culture. What has characterized the political discourse of the twenty-first century is not the belief in the unrestricted power of technology and the markets to improve the world. Instead, fear, from terror and economic instability (the rising gap between the rich and poor, the dismantling of safety networks), has dominated the agenda. We can return to Terry Eagleton's observation that in the postmodern imagination, "capital accumulation goes on forever, in love with a dream of infinity. The myth of eternal progress is just a horizontalised form of heaven."[23] Accumulation, at least for the very wealthy, seems to be going on forever, but the world does seem less heavenly. And it is precisely this duality—global capitalism and local violence—that *Late Marriage* uncovers in the Israeli context.

Slavoj Žižek has offered the following observation about the relationship between ethnic jokes and national building (and dissolution):

> In ex-Yugoslavia, jokes circulated about each ethnic group, which was stigmatized through a certain feature—the Montenegrins were supposed to be extremely lazy; the Bosnians were stupid; the Macedonians were thieves; the Slovenes were mean. … Significantly, these jokes waned with the rise of ethnic tensions in the late 1980s: none of them were heard in the 1990s, when hostilities erupted. Far from being simply racist, these jokes … were one of the key forms of the actual existence of the

"official brotherhood of unity" of Tito's Yugoslavia.[24]

To Žižek, ethnic jokes, which were racist in appearance but were not accompanied by actual violence, were a cultural means by which various ethnic groups attempted to negotiate the idea of belonging to a single nation. This is precisely the role that ethnic humor and stereotypes played in Kishon's *Sallah.* And according to Žižek, when the new nation began to unravel (with the fall of the centralized, socialist state), the ethnic jokes disappeared and instead real violence among the ethnic groups that constituted Yugoslavia erupted.

Žižek captured here the duality of the postmodern age: cultural tolerance (not to make jokes about the other, respect the cultural values of the other) accompanied by social and political indifference toward the other (lack of social programs) and violence. This is also true of the Israeli experience (though in the Israeli case, the physical violence was mostly limited to the Arab-Jewish conflict) as the country transitioned from Ben-Gurion's *mamlachtiyut* (statism) to the free market of the Likud.

Not that under Labor's rule (and melting-pot ideology) there were no ethnic tensions in Israel. The Wadi Salib riots in Haifa in 1959 and the rise of the Israeli Black Panthers in the early 1970s exposed the deep social divides of the time. But both the Wadi Salib riots and the Black Panthers were driven by concrete social, economic, and political demands: They wanted actual reforms to address existing inequality. A leaflet distributed in Wadi Salib in 1959 emphatically declared, "Let us raid our neighbors in Hadar Hacarmel [a wealthier, mostly Ashkenazi Haifa neighborhood], our exploiters! All North African Jews, rise up, wake up, open your eyes and see how all other ethnic groups in Israel have succeeded and only we are lagging behind."[25] The Black Panthers' first communiqué from 1971 stated, "Enough!. … Enough of unemployment! Enough of 10 people sleeping in one bedroom!. … Enough of deprivation and discrimination!"[26]

The rise of the Likud to power, however, in the 1970s, was accompanied by much broader ethnic tensions that transcended social and immediate political demands and represented more general cultural gaps—or a sense of cultural marginalization. This is how Shlomo Ben-Ami described these changes: "Ben-Gurion was a nation builder that wanted to change the character of Jews and turn them into Israelis. Begin did not want to change their character: they are Jews and they should remain Jews."[27] Ben-Gurion wanted to create a new national ethos. Begin wanted to allow each group to reclaim its own Jewish identity.

What ultimately brought Begin and the Likud to power in 1977 was a shift among Mizrahi Jews from Labor over to the Likud.[28] These voters saw in him a fellow victim of perceived Laborite (Ashkenazi) condescension and marginalization, and he used his considerable populist oratorical skills to full effect. In the heated 1981 campaign, when he narrowly beat Shimon Peres to keep his Likud party in power (that summer, apparent Likud supporters painted the words "Ashke-Nazis" on buildings in Tel Aviv's more affluent neighborhoods), Begin's appeal to the Mizrahi voters was on full display. In a Labor political rally, Dudu Topaz, a popular (Ashkenazi) comedian and television personality described the typical Likud voters as *shin gimelim* (soldiers who guard the gates to a military base—in Israeli slang, *shin gimels* are the slackers who, unlike combat soldiers, are unwilling to make a real sacrifice) and *chakhchakhim* (a derogatory term directed at Mizrahim). The following day, during a Likud political rally, Begin replied directly to Topaz's speech: "Our Mizrahi Jews were heroic fighters. The martyrs [pre-State Irgun members who were executed by the British—several of them were Mizrahim], they locked in their hearts a hand grenade. They held the grenade to their hearts and blew up, Ashkenazi and Sephardi. One

heart. One people. Warriors!"[29]

Begin appealed to the common Jewish heritage of his voters: They were not new Israelis without a past (the Zionist negation of history); they all had their rich cultural heritage. And Begin was the protector of their heritage. He would not allow a comedian (Topaz) to make jokes that drew on ethnic stereotypes. In that regard, Begin signaled the beginning of the multicultural turn in Israel. But that 1981 campaign, and the one the preceded it in 1977 and which brought Begin to power, was also marked by heated and, at times, violent rhetoric, the obscene side of multiculturalism, as Žižek might have put it. (The short movie *Shuli's Fiancé*, from 1997, captured this duality perfectly. Written by Dorit Rabinian, it takes place on Election Day in 1977, almost entirely inside the house of a Mizrahi family that awaits the arrival of the future husband of Shuli, one of the family's daughters. What ensues is a comedy of errors and mistaken identities that describes Mizrahi culture from the inside with its quaint characteristics but also with its potential for paternalistic violence. The two scenes that bookend the movie, which in a way is a celebration Mizrahi identity, are related to the political events of the day: the opening scene in which an Ashkenazi Labor activist is violently chased out from the poor Mizrahi neighborhood in which the movie takes place; and the movie's final scene that shows the broadcast on Israeli TV of Begin's historic victory and which is accompanied by celebratory screams). Movies like *Sh'hur* and the post-Zionist critique more broadly have celebrated the optimism of multiculturalism—*Late Marriage* revealed the potential violence inherent in the multicultural condition.

So what are the possible responses to the violent side of multiculturalism—for example, to the rise of homegrown (Muslim) terrorists in the West? If the post-colonial position has posited that the rise of violence (along the East-West divide) is the result of the legacies of cultural oppression by the West (orientalist attitudes, to borrow Said's formulation), the conservative response has, by and large, been to strengthen traditional Western values in face of the "oriental" threat.

In 2011, the British Prime Minister David Cameron addressed in a conference in Munich the kind of challenges that liberal democracies in the West were facing. He argued that the cause of Muslim terrorism in the West has nothing to do with poverty and failed social programs (many of the Muslim terrorists, he claimed, came from middle-class families); rather, the erosion of traditional Western values by multicultural tolerance is the culprit. As Cameron put it,

> Under the doctrine of state multiculturalism, we have encouraged different cultures to live separate lives, apart from each other and apart from the mainstream. We have failed to provide a vision of society to which they feel they want to belong. We have even tolerated these segregated communities behaving in ways that run completely counter to our values … instead of encouraging people to live apart, we need a clear sense of shared national identity that is open to everyone. … Frankly, we need a lot less of the passive tolerance of recent years and a much more active, muscular liberalism. A passively tolerant society says to its citizens, as long as you obey the law we will just leave you alone. It stands neutral between different values. But I believe a genuinely liberal country does much more; it believes in certain values and actively promotes them. Freedom of speech, freedom of worship, democracy, the rule of law, equal rights regardless of race, sex, or sexuality. It says to its citizens, this is what defines us as a society: to belong here is to believe in these things. Now, each of us in our own countries, I believe, must be unambiguous and hard-nosed about this defence

of our liberty.[30]

Cameron has drawn a contrast here between the values that the West champions (rights) and argued that these core values should be imposed (muscular liberalism) in order to prevent the rise of violent groups that would undermine these values. But does Cameron really propose to strengthen the role of universal rights in society as a way to combat terrorism? Does he believe that a more liberal political system would draw away potential terrorists from the allure of radical Islam? Or does he try to rally the conservative base by accentuating the cultural differences between Westerners and immigrants from the East?

This has been the conservative playbook since the 1970s, including in Israel after Likud's victory in 1977. On the one hand, conservatives led a systematic dismantling of the welfare state (and the social safety net of the very people who brought Likud to power), and on the other, they tried to foster a sense of national unity based on shared heritage (Jewish, in the case of the Likud) that distinguishes the national collective from the foreigner and the stranger, which in the Israeli case is the Arab. Thus Begin emphasized the common Jewishness of the Mizrahi and Ashkenazi fallen warriors who fought under his command. But his appeal to Judaism was not grounded in some sense that traditional Judaism might offer his followers certain social and cultural benefits (a sense of community that supports the weak and dispossessed) that Labor-style Israeliness lacked—but rather Judaism as a symbol of group identity that lacks any real social or political content.

One option that has not risen with any significant force to counter the violence of the multicultural condition is, of course, a reversal of neo-liberal social policies. What if the talk of universal rights of the Tory prime minister were coupled with a call for radical social equality? What if the Likud's appeal to Judaism and Jewishness also included the rich Jewish tradition of levying taxes and transferring the wealth to the poor and the weak (as opposed to the Milton Friedman doctrine, which Begin's 1977 government adopted)? What if instead of politics that emphasizes differences (whether by multiculturalists who celebrate differences or conservatives who manipulate difference as a scare tactic) there was an alternative that emphasized radical sameness (and implemented social programs that would make people more and more alike in their social and economic abilities)?

Several recent Israeli films that addressed head on Israel's current social dilemmas have followed *Late Marriage. Aviva, My Love* (2006) offered some brutally honest depictions of poverty and its devastating impact on family dynamics; and Dover Kosashvilli's second feature film, *A Gift from Heaven* (2003), is a (Georgian) family crime thriller that, just as Scorsese's *Goodfellas* demythologized Coppola's *Godfather* saga, provides an unsentimental portrayal of the relationship between immigration, family bonds, and crime. *James' Journey to Jerusalem* (2003) exposed the reality of undocumented foreign workers in Israel—the new global underclass—in contrast to the booming globalized Israeli economy. The film has an explicit inter-textual dialogue with *Sallah*: The character who employs illegal foreign workers is named Shabati (he is played by an Arab actor, Salim Dau, in an interesting casting twist) and his father, Sallah, is a backgammon player (like Sallah in Kishon's movie) who develops a relationship with James, an African Christian minister, who came to the Holy Land as a pilgrim and gets lost in the Israeli legal and immigration system. (In *James' Journey*, the Mizrahim are the new middle class; the African workers are the new marginalized groups in Israeli society.) What all these films have offered is a glance of what Israel beyond the initial optimism of post-Zionism has evolved into: a modern, technology-driven society that is part of the global marketplace, yet

at the same time is a society that is full of fundamental social and economic problems that regularly and violently disrupt the social order. But these films, alongside *Late Marriage*, might also offer a glance at what a social remedy that is beyond post-Zionism might look like. Instead of continuing to accept the logic of a system that only intensifies social divisions and tensions, the solution might lie in resisting the cursory pleasures of the market (which can always be obtained by more and more credit) and engaging in an effort to fundamentally eradicate social differences and inequality. Perhaps Kishon was right all along—the *shikun* apartment is the social panacea.

FOUR

HERZL AND THE ZIONIST UTOPIA

> Trade becomes pernicious from the moment the go-betweens, due to their excessive number, become parasites [on the social body] and are ready to conceal goods, to let them rise in price under the pretext of an artificially produced scarcity, in brief, to rob simultaneously the producer and the consumer through speculation tricks instead of serving both as simple, open go-betweens.
>
> —Charles Fourier, "On Trade"

> The experimental Phalanx will be obliged to take similar actions, in a moral sense, against the contagion of civilized customs. It will be forced to withdraw itself from all passional or spiritual relations with its perfidious neighbors.
>
> —Charles Fourier, "The Establishment of a Trial Phalanx"

On the fifth anniversary of 9/11, Slavoj Žižek wrote,

> Today, we live in a post-utopian period of pragmatic administration, since we have learned the hard lesson of how noble political utopias can end in totalitarian terror. But this collapse of utopias was followed by 10 years of the big utopia of global capitalist liberal democracy. November 9 thus announced the "happy 90s," the Francis Fukuyama dream of the "end of history," the belief that liberal democracy had, in principle, won, that the search was over, that the advent of a global, liberal community was around the corner, that the obstacles to this Hollywood happy ending are merely local pockets of resistance where the leaders have not yet grasped that their time is over. September 11 is the symbol of the end of this utopia, a return to real history.[1]

One of the founding texts of Zionism was Theodor Herzl's utopian novel *Altneuland* (Old New Land). It was published five years after the convening of the first Zionist Congress and attempted to imagine what a viable future Jewish society in Palestine might look like. Herzl's was one of several "Zionist utopias" that were written at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century when the utopian imagination, or the belief in grand plans for a better future, had not yet been crushed by the two World Wars, fascism, and Nazism. In the "happy 90s" (to borrow Žižek's characterization), or in the Israeli case, the post-Zionist period, it seemed that Herzl's vision, and his revolutionary optimism, were a relic of a dangerous past, of a period that produced ideological monstrosities that are to blame for the current social and political ills. As the author and critic Yitzhak La'or phrased it,

> This is how Herzl put it in very crude words in his programmatic book *The Jewish State*. … "For Europe we shall be like a solid wall against Asia and we shall be on guard to defend Culture from the savages. As an independent state, the connection between us and the nations of Europe and will guarantee our existence." This prophecy is symptomatic, yet the violence it brought about was not targeted only against Palestinians, but also against the Jews from Muslim and Arab countries who were brought to Israel, and against religious Jews who were forcefully "modernized," according to the Zionist vision of creating "a new Jew." In short, the Colonial front was opened both outwards and inwards, both against the Arabs and against any Jews who did not fit the exact image of the New "western," secular, Waspish Jew.[2]

But with the end of the "happy 90s," it is worthwhile perhaps to look back at Herzl's crucial Zionist text and try to wonder what kind of significance it may hold for a period beyond post-Zionism.

In 1923, Lewis Mumford, an urban designer and an architectural critic, who wrote extensively on technology and its effects on society, published in the *Menorah Journal* a review of Herzl's *Altneuland*.[3] It is interesting that Mumford decided to write about Herzl's novel when he did. Herzl's novel was published in 1902, but it takes place in 1923—the year in which Herzl imagined that a viable Jewish society would thrive in the Land of Israel. But Mumford was not interested in evaluating the historical fate of Herzl's vision—he did not offer a checklist of just how much of Herzl's vision actually became a living reality in Palestine in 1923 (this would have a been a very short list, indeed); he was more interested in the historical context that led Herzl to formulate his utopian vision and what it ultimately said about the Jewish national movement.

In his review, Mumford noted that although Jews in the Diaspora always had a sense of pragmatic utopianism—a sense that helped them sustain a community, which was under constant pressure and threats—Herzl's utopian vision drew its inspiration from a different source: a traditional Jewish myth, a myth which was at the root of modern nationalist movements. This myth, according to Mumford, is the belief that Israel is the chosen people, the leader of all nations—a myth that had a Sorelian force in Jewish history: It united the Jewish people and gave them a unique sense of identity.

To Mumford, Herzl combined in his utopian novel universal themes of creating a just and productive society, but unlike other utopias, Herzl's vision was not universal; it was ultimately tied to the Jewish people and their constituting myth. According to Mumford, Herzl unintentionally identified the unique historical crossroads that modern Judaism found itself at by the start of the twentieth century: on the one hand, attempting to create a separate Jewish society, and on the other, reforming the different Jewish communities around the world according to universal values. Mumford's choice was unequivocal: He preferred the latter—a Jewish community that aspires to live according to universal values. As for Herzl's choice, Mumford was less than sanguine; he believed that it was bound to fail because it lacked universal character.

In a more recent assessment of Herzl's utopia, the historian Russell Jacoby has offered a somewhat different analysis of Herzl's novel (and its limitations), which nonetheless shares with Mumford a certain yen for a Jewish messianic spirit of universal reform. In *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age*, Jacoby contends that today, in the age of permanent emergencies, there is no room for idealistic reinventing of the future.[4] Today, according to

Jacoby, most people judge utopias as foolish dreams that inevitably lead to murderous totalitarian dictatorships. In the period after the Second World War and the Cold War, after Hitler and Stalin, there is no willingness to accept texts based on the idea of reimagining and remaking the future. Only utilitarian solutions for the here and now seem to be acceptable in our contemporary age.

However, in an attempt to salvage the utopian spirit from the claws of the liberal anti-utopians (Karl Popper, Isaiah Berlin, Hannah Arendt), Jacoby suggests a distinction between two kinds of utopian texts: blueprint utopias, which provide a minute description of every aspect of future society (from eating arrangements to sex to topics of conversation in public spaces) and can conceivably, though not likely according to Jacoby, lead to totalitarianism, and what Jacoby calls "iconoclastic utopias," which, following the biblical prohibition on graven images, are not concerned with drawing a map of future societies but seek to hint at the possibilities of the future by identifying and cultivating certain universal, humanistic qualities.[5]

To Jacoby, Herzl's *Altneuland* falls squarely within the blueprint category. The New Society that Herzl conjures up in his novel, Jacoby contends, is a cold, mechanic community that lacks even a hint of spirituality. Following Ahad ha-Am's critique of Herzl's novel at the time of its publication (a critique that we will address later in this chapter), Jacoby claims that Herzl's vision foregoes any Jewish qualities.[6] Jacoby contrasts Herzl's vision of the Jewish future with that of the philosopher Martin Buber who, like Ahad ha-Am, felt that Herzl did not capture the spiritual qualities needed to perform a truly fundamental Jewish revival.[7] To Jacoby, Buber was a prototypical iconoclastic utopian. Buber rejected the utopias that rested on technical fantasies and prized, instead, communities that cultivated human rapport and neighborly relations.[8] Whereas Herzl offered a cold and mechanic image of the future, Jacoby claims, Buber sought human camaraderie and endeavored in his writings to offer humanity an alternative path away from the impediments, restrictions, and alienation of modern civilization.

Though different in scope and temperament, both Jacoby and Mumford find a similar shortcoming in Herzl's *Altneuland*: the abandonment of the traditional (messianic) Jewish ideal of universal redemption. And one can easily imagine the post-Zionists embracing their criticism. Herzl, the founder of political Zionism, has been a popular target of post-Zionist derision and resentment. In post-Zionist writings, Herzl has been variously described as a champion of European colonialism, an orientalist, and a racist. If the postmodern age suspects any form of well-defined ideological structures, certainly the vision of the father of what the post-Zionists regard as the ills of the entire Zionist enterprise can find little sympathy in the current theoretical and cultural moment. In the conclusion of his analysis of *Altneuland* in a study of masculinity and the body in Modern Hebrew literature, the literary scholar Michael Gluzman has offered the following observation:

> As foundational fiction, *Altneuland* is a productionist text, and many of the aspects described in it materialized. … Already in the depictions of the woman and the Arab the problems in the utopia are exposed, which are destined to unravel Herzl's optimistic vision. Yet these problems do not arise solely from the inferior position of the woman and the Arab. The masculinity that is crafted in the novel is the result of the internalization of anti-Semitic stereotypes and of Jewish self-hatred. This self-hatred, which stands at the core of the effort to create the new Jew, leads to a process of creating the new masculinity by way of repression, departure, removal, exclusion and allocation. These repressed qualities will again reappear in critical junctures in the

history of Israeli culture, and in its return threaten the wholeness of the social body.[9]

In the post-Zionist (and the postmodern) imagination, Judaism and the Jew have been equated with marginalization, detachment, wandering—as Europe's eternal outsider. It has been depicted as the religion of the other that is consumed by a desire to accommodate and liberate the other.[10] Herzl sought a complete negation of this idea—he sought to transform the Jew into a sovereign, self-sufficient, powerful, historical subject. And from the post-Zionist perspective, that is the root cause of the basic malaise that haunts contemporary Israeli society.

Gabriel Piterberg, in his book *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* from 2008, a systematic attack on the ideological and moral foundations of Zionism and Zionist historiography that is informed by, and in some ways summarizes, the post-Zionist critique, has maintained, "I believe *Altneuland* was not just a utopian novel … but that it is a utopian *colonial* novel. More generally, I think that such an interpretation of *Altneuland* raises the possibility that colonialism is always potentially present in utopian literature."[11] To Piterberg, *Altneuland*'s (and more generally Herzl's) Zionist vision combines technology, colonialism, the move to the East, and an image of a land empty of natives.[12] And to him, these are the quintessential ingredients of the European fantasy of the time, which Jews, like Herzl, sought to emulate and ultimately join.

Although the post-Zionist corpus has not focused on the utopian aspects (literary or ideological) of Herzl's writings and tends to highlight what they perceive as the colonialist aspects of his thought, it is worthwhile to examine *Altneuland* as one of the key early Zionist texts, from the utopian perspective in this *still* postmodern, post-Zionist age.[13] The question that stands before us in this chapter is to assess the degree to which we should consider Herzl's text as (blueprint or otherwise) utopian, as predominantly a colonialist fantasy, while neglecting some or all universal redemptive aspirations, and to explore what promises (iconoclastic though they might be) it may hold for a time beyond post-Zionism. Moreover, one of the most fascinating aspects of Herzl's novel is that while stylistically it followed a long tradition of (primarily socialist) utopian texts, Herzl himself was a critic of utopian thinking, and he tried to convince his followers and critics that his text, in fact, was not a utopia. So what may this utopia-against-utopia text tell us about Herzl's idea of politics, and how, in an age that rejects utopianism, may his own (subversive) critique of the genre open up new possibilities for thinking about the revolutionary and liberating potential of politics?

In her probing and wide-ranging study of Zionist utopias, Rachel Elboim-Dror has shown that in the period between 1882 and 1922, there was an outburst of utopian texts among Jewish writers focusing on a future Jewish society in Palestine, with more than a dozen texts in languages including Yiddish, German, Russian, French, and Hebrew.[14] Some of the more influential Zionist utopias, which were published by Jewish and Zionist newspapers and reached a wide-ranging readership, were Menachem Eisler's "The Image of the Future" (1882), which described Zionism as a classic national revolution motivated by anti-Semitism, and which portrayed the Zionists as modern, secular Europeans who were supported by the European powers and launched a successful national war of liberation; Elhanan Leib Lewinsky's "A Journey to the Land of Israel in the 800th Year of the 6th Millennium" (1902), which depicts Palestine in 2040—a follower of Ahad ha-Am, Lewinsky offered detailed discussions of the type of cultural institutions in the future Land of Israel and the country's role as a spiritual and cultural center; Sigfried Bernfeld's "The Jewish People and Its Youth" (1919), which takes place

in the 1970s and focuses on the future educational system, while describing a society with a developed welfare system that centers its energy on the young and their education; Boris Shatz's "Rebuilt Jerusalem" (1918), in which a man in the year 2018 flies over Jerusalem in an airplane and sees a society that has rejected the rigid elements of modernism and returned to the harmonious and natural values of such movements as arts and crafts; and the most famous of the Zionist utopias, Herzl's *Altneuland*.

As Elboim-Dror has shown, these Zionist utopian texts were influenced thematically and stylistically by utopias that were written in Europe in the nineteenth century, primarily socialist utopias. In these Zionist utopias, the future Jewish state is a model of virtues and idealism. They describe a people that lives in peace, both internally as well as with its neighbors. The utopias tend to portray a very cosmopolitan society where people of different nations and races live and work in total harmony. As Boris Shatz envisioned in "Rebuilt Jerusalem," "Every person in the Land of Israel, regardless of race or creed can become a citizen in the land and join our community. All he must do is to follow our laws and become a member of his professional club. Lazy bums, we do not need."[15] And this cosmopolitanism is also apparent in the culture of the future state: The writers use a mixture of European and Middle Eastern elements; the citizens of the future state travel at night from the bazaar to the opera house.

In their depiction of the new Jewish society, these Zionist utopias emphasized the role of labor and productivity. The typical citizen of the Zionist utopia is a farmer or a worker who belongs to some sort of collective that provides most of the economic, social, and cultural needs of its members. In Boris Shatz's future society, "All the residents of the Land of Israel, boys from age three to eighteen and girls until they're sixteen have their education paid for by the state. And from the eighteenth year until the twenty-first year of their lives they must work in their profession in a job assigned to them."[16] While in Lewinsky's utopia, "Schools without farming you will not find in the land. All the early and middle schools are also farming schools, and together with the alphabet the young learn to hold a hoe and a plow."[17]

Most of the Zionist utopias portray an elaborate welfare system, with a substantial degree of centralized control. Berfeld's text described in detail the support the community provides pregnant women and young mothers:

> The months before the delivery, the woman is allowed to spend at home. … In some cases a doctor may force the mother to transfer to the mothers home. … The mother can stay in that institution for five months after the birth. … After leaving the mothers home, a mother may take the baby with her home … but most, voluntarily, leave the babies in this institution for 7–8 months. … A woman who gave birth has her job guaranteed for her until the end of her leave (up to ten months).[18]

But despite this paternalistic approach, the citizens are described as politically engaged and as active in the public realm. A utopian vision for the Jewish people, indeed.

It is in this context, then, that we should begin to examine Herzl's *Altneuland*, the most famous and influential of the Zionist utopias and a key text in the history of the Zionist movement. *Altneuland*, which was published in 1902, seven years into what Herzl referred to as his "engagement in the Jewish issue," wasn't Herzl's first major Zionist text. *The Jewish State*, which was published in 1896—a programmatic pamphlet, which described in great detail Herzl's diagnosis of the Jewish condition and Europe and his plan for the creation of a Jewish state as the only viable solution to the Jewish problem—was the text that propelled Herzl from relative

anonymity (he was a fairly successful journalist and a less successful playwright in Vienna) into a major figure in Jewish affairs with some renown (which he, on more than one occasion, tended to overestimate—Karl Kraus, the Jewish-Austrian essayist and satirist, described him mockingly as the King of Zion) in the greater international arena. The writer Stefan Zweig, who knew Herzl in Vienna, offered the following, rather melodramatic, description of Herzl's impact on world Jewry: "Without realizing it, Herzl with his pamphlet had brought to flame the glowing coal of Judaism, long smoldering in the ashes, the thousand-year-old messianic dream, confirmed in the Holy Books, of the return to the Promised Land. … By means of a few dozen pages a single person had united a dispersed and confused mass."[19]

Although Herzl was a journalist, a literary critic and editor, a fairly successful composer of feuilletons, and an aspiring playwright, his political program (and his political philosophy) was surprisingly mechanistic and very technical, both in content and form. If anything, Herzl had a strong anti-utopian sentiment. In the second chapter of *The Jewish State*, in his discussion of the effects of anti-Semitism, he wrote,

> The oppression we endure does not improve us, for we are not a whit better than ordinary people. It is true that we do not love our enemies; but he alone who can conquer himself dare reproach us with that fault. Oppression naturally creates hostility against oppressors, and our hostility aggravates the pressure. It is impossible to escape from this eternal circle.
>
> "No!" Some soft-hearted visionaries will say: "No, it is possible! Possible by means of the ultimate perfection of humanity."
>
> Is it necessary to point to the sentimental folly of this view? He who would found his hope for improved conditions on the ultimate perfection of humanity would indeed be relying upon a Utopia![20]

Herzl made here two very interesting claims for someone who three years later would commence writing a novel that, at least stylistically, derives its inspiration from the utopian genre: He is not a utopian, and he does not believe that universal reform would bring about resolution to the Jewish problem. All that he was willing to acknowledge in the conclusion of *The Jewish State*, as far as the messianic sentiment is concerned, was that, "The world will be freed by our liberty." While in his diaries, in which he chronicled what he described as his "Jewish adventure," he wrote, "What then differentiates a plan from a Utopia? I shall now tell you in imprecise language: the vitality which is inherent in a plan and not in a Utopia. … There have been plenty of before and after Thomas More, but no rational person ever thought of putting them into practice. They are entertaining, but not stirring."[21]

So why *did* Herzl make the (at least formal) choice of the utopian novel? A partial answer might be found in his diaries. On March 14, 1901, he wrote, "I am now industriously working on *Altneuland*. My hopes for practical success have now disintegrated. My life is no novel now. So the novel is my life."[22] When he began his Zionist project, Herzl was highly optimistic, if not out-and-out naïve. He realized that his idea was revolutionary and would be difficult to carry out, but he believed that the historical forces mandating the creation of a Jewish state were so powerful that nothing could prevent them from coming to their inevitable conclusion. He addressed this very question in the concluding chapter of *The Jewish State:*

> The news of the formation of our Jewish Company will be carried in a single day to the remotest ends of the earth by the lightning speed of our telegraph wires. And immediate relief will ensue. … The Maccabeans will rise again. Let me repeat once more my opening words: The Jews who wish for a State will have it. We shall live at last as free men on our own soil, and die peacefully in our own homes.

But as time passed, Herzl realized that bringing about the creation of a Jewish state would be much more difficult than he earlier anticipated. Although he had some remarkable success in spreading his ideas among different Jewish communities and groups and even found a sympathetic ear among some European leaders, he did not experience the mass awakening that he assumed would follow the publication of *The Jewish State* and the convening of the first Zionist Congresses. By the beginning of the twentieth century, his diaries betray a growing sense of gloom and resignation and fears that all his efforts on behalf of the Zionist cause were in vain. As Stefan Zweig has observed,

> The first moment, while the idea was still a dream of vague outline, was decidedly the happiest in Herzl's short life. As soon as he began to fix his aims in actual space, and to unite the forces, he was made to realize how divided his people had become. … In the year 1901, when I saw him for the first time, he stood in the midst of this struggle and perhaps he was even struggling with himself.[23]

Herzl, by that time, exhausted endless energies on negotiations with Turkish leaders and officials (and other world leaders who might have influence in the region) in an attempt to secure a charter for the Jews to settle in Palestine, but no real progress was attained. And so perhaps his frustration with real politics (and political programs) drove him to the more ephemeral realms of the novel.

It is this Sisyphean sense of facing an enormous, perhaps even unfeasible, challenge that might explain the abundance of early Zionist utopias in general. Zionism, the Jewish national movement, rose at the end of the nineteenth century amid the rise of national movements throughout central and Eastern Europe. But Zionism was unique among these movements. Unlike other national movements, which were situated in their own land and fought either against an imperial ruler or a colonial power, or led a popular revolt against a small ruling class, Zionism emerged in Europe and sought to launch a revolution that would take place hundreds of miles away in a land that most Jews had only a literary or spiritual connection with. Zionism needed to generate a certain vision that would make thousands of Jews leave their homes in one continent and move to new, hostile, and difficult environs in another continent. For such a movement, the utopia as a literary and ideological tool was incredibly useful. Political programs rely on a careful analysis of the past and present and on a thorough construction of possible future scenarios that are grounded in realistic assumptions. The utopian genre, on the other hand, allows the writer to break spatial and temporal boundaries and frees the imagination to plot scenarios that to most would seem utterly fantastic. Political programs and manifestos rely on convincing people that their platform is sensible and worth fighting for; utopias allow a glance at ideas that the majority regard as mere pie in the sky.

Altneuland was written at a time that not only saw the emergence of the Zionist utopias but also the revival of the utopian novel in Europe. In 1888, Bellamy published *Looking Backward, 2000–1887*, and two years later, Theodor Hertzka published *Freeland: A Social Anticipation*,

which stylistically informed Herzl's novel (Hertzka described in his novel the formation of Freeland by colonists as well as reports by visitors who describe with great amazement the achievements of Freeland; his new society, much like Herzl's, was filled with technological gadgets and marvels).[24] Herzl's novel draws on many familiar themes of the utopian genre. The novel tells the story of Dr. Friedrich Loewenberg, a young, middle-class, Viennese Jew, who lost all hope: He realizes that his professional prospects are dim and that the woman he loves is engaged to marry another man. In his despair he comes across a strange newspaper advertisement: "Wanted, an educated, desperate young man willing to make a last experiment with his life. Apply N. O. Body, this office."[25] The man behind the ad turns out to be an older German nobleman, a mysterious Adalbert von Koenigshoff, who spent years in America making a fortune and goes by the name Mr. Kingscourt. Mr. Kingscourt, too, grew tired of life and of civilization and wanted to leave everything behind and move to an uninhabited island in Cook's archipelago, and he was looking for a young, educated person to keep him company. The distraught Loewenberg immediately acquiesces to Kingscourt strange proposition, and the two men set out on the old man's yacht to the distant island.

On the way to the island, the two decide to stop in Palestine, what Kingscourt refers to as Loewenberg's "ancestral homeland." What they see is a poor and depressing land: "The landscape through which they passed was a picture of desolation. The lowlands were mostly sand and swamp, the lean fields looked as if burnt over."[26] The only exception in this otherwise regretful visit was Jerusalem, which, though they found it to be in decrepit condition, still cast a certain mystical spell on the young Jewish traveler. In 1923, after spending twenty years on the island (about which the novel offers but scant information), the odd couple decides to visit Europe, and again they decide to stop in Palestine.

In the years that passed since their previous visit, the country has undergone such great transformation that it leaves both men completely flabbergasted. Before them is a prosperous and verdant land, buzzing with activity and the latest technological advancements. When they land in the port city of Haifa, Loewenberg is immediately recognized by David Littwak, a young man who was one of the leaders of the new society that developed in Palestine. In the days just before Loewenberg joined Kingscourt in Vienna, Loewenberg ran into a young beggar at his regular café, and he gave to the child, whose family—Eastern European Jews—Loewenberg soon realized was on the verge of starvation, some money (he soon thereafter gave the family a more substantial sum of money out of Kingscourt's fortune) that saved the family and made Loewenberg, whom they assumed dead for all those years, in their eyes a saving angel. Reunited after twenty years, Littwak, who is married with a young child, brings Loewenberg and Kingscourt to his home and takes the odd couple on expeditions throughout the land.

The land that the two visitors discover is a carnivalesque mixture of technological marvels and progressive social experiments. They witness an electric overhead train; an elaborate railway system that connects Palestine with the entire region as well as with Europe; bridges, dams, and canals that provide water and electricity; an infrastructure of tunnels that provide for the reception of various pipes and cables; and telephonic newspapers. And the social structures that they encounter are all part of the New Society, the organizing communal framework of the land, which David Littwak describes to his guests in the following manner:

> The whole merit of our New Society is merely that it fostered the creation and development of the co-operatives by providing credits, and—what was even more important—by educating the masses to make use of them. … The plague, yes, the

> curse of the poor has been removed—they no longer earn less as producers and pay more as consumers than the rich. Here the bread of the poor is as cheap as the bread of the rich. There are no speculators in the necessaries of life. … Nor did we allow the old type of small tradesman to come into existence, but established consumers' co-operatives at the very beginning of the enterprise. There you have another example of the advantages of our freedom from inherited burdens. We did not have to ruin anyone in order to ease the lot of our masses.[27]

The co-operative system of the New Society expands beyond the economic realm into the cultural realm (newspapers, theaters) as well as the educational and even the penal systems (the visitors encounter a farming community whose inhabitants they deemed more subdued than the rest of the population that they encountered in Palestine; they learn that these were prisoners). And the harmonious social relations go well beyond the co-operative system. The New Society in Palestine is a model of inter-ethnic and inter-religious relations. One of the members of the New Society who accompanies the group in its travels is Reschid Bey, an Arab Muslim, who is a close friend of the Littwaks. When Kingscourt confronts Bey and asks him whether he is troubled by the Jewish immigration to his native land, Bey feigns an air of utter surprise: The new immigrants only brought economic and social progress to the land, from which he claims all people and all groups have benefited greatly.[28] A utopia if ever there was one.

But is *Altneuland* (and for that matter, the other Zionist utopias of the period) really a utopian text? First the term *utopia*. Utopia, in the manner that Thomas More coined the term and the way it was used in later utopias, means "no place."[29] The utopian space is an imagined or a remote and exotic place; it is not bound by a specific geography and history. *Altneuland* (and other Zionist utopias), however, takes place in a very specific place with a very definite history and social background: Palestine. (At different points in his Zionist career, Herzl considered other lands as possible sites for the future Jewish State—Argentina, Uganda—but in every case he spoke about a specific area with its unique local characteristics and global implications.) Utopian thinking involved a leap beyond physical and spatial boundaries, but the Zionist utopias, while maintaining many of the characteristics of the utopian genre, provided descriptions of a well-defined geographical sphere.

Utopia is a travel narrative; it leads to possibilities outside the conventional historical narratives; it offers the possibility of a radical negation and escape of history—be it a history of religious persecution or of economic oppression. Herzl's text, as well as the other Zionist utopias, hints at the exact opposite: One of their goals was to return the Jews to history.

Zionist ideology, from its inception, presented an ambivalent, if not contradictory, historical approach. On the one hand, one of the key ideas of Zionism was the negation of the Diaspora, a negation of the course of Jewish history for nearly two millennia; yet, at the same time, Zionist ideologues called for a return to history, to the general course of world history. According to the broad Zionist historical view, the history of the Jews since the end of Jewish independence in the Land of Israel at the hands of the Romans was but a story persecution, oppression, expulsion, and marginalization. The Jews were a religious minority that had to rely on the kindness of foreign leaders and groups for protection without having the ability to determine the Jews' own historical fate. The role of the Jewish national movement, then, was to allow the Jews to exit this vicious historical cycle, to bring the Jews out of the ghetto, and allow the Jews to become historical subjects. This is how, in 1937, Yitzhak Tabenkin, one of the leaders of Labor Zionism, described the emergence of the Zionist period in Jewish history:

> This is a period of great upheaval, and there was none like it in the life of the Diaspora as long as Jews were confined to the ghetto. Indeed, out of the ghetto emerged great people, legendary figures, but they were still shackled by the same fixed framework of religious life that has not changed for generations. In this period [Zionism] everything broke out from the steady course, all aspects of life were questioned and suddenly many hidden powers sprang out, storming to new lives, to the open … to escape the special streets to the field, to the forest, to the 'general' human street—to escape the economic and geographic ghetto, to exit the spiritual ghetto.[30]

Tabenkin here expressed the duality of the Zionist idea: to completely upend the course of Jewish history and to embrace (almost uncritically) the outside, mainstream world.

Indeed, one theme that is repeated again and again in *Altneuland* is how much the entire project in Palestine is just an appropriation of technologies, ideas, and systems that were already developed and used in Europe and in America. When Kingscourt and Loewenberg express amazement at the elaborate railway system in Palestine, their hosts tell them, "Everything you see here already existed in Europe and America a quarter century ago—especially in America."[31] At a political rally, David Littwak offered the following observation, "The New Society, however, did not evolve all this by itself. It did not derive it either from the brains of its leaders or from the pockets of its founders alone. The New Society rests, rather, squarely on ideas which are the common stock of the whole civilized world."[32] Joe Levy, one of the founding fathers of the New Society, says in a recording that Littwak plays for his visitors, "I did not feel that we were undertaking an experiment. We were merely utilizing world-old facts and experiences."[33] And later in the recording he says, "I do not claim that we created anything new. American, English, French and German engineers had done the same things before us."[34] Although the utopian imagination attempts to sever all ties with the old world, to negate the present (and the past) and envision a future that is completely independent of any precedent, *Altneuland* and the Zionist imagination embrace the present (in its Western, advanced guise) wholeheartedly.

As opposed to the more conventional utopian approach, which seeks to overcome temporal and spatial limitations, *Altneuland*, then, is rooted both in terms of place and its embrace of the present. But this is not the only area in which it (as well as other Zionist utopias) deviated from the generic conventions of primarily nineteenth-century utopias. One of the key themes of nineteenth-century utopias, especially socialist utopias, was to relieve people from the tyranny of labor. Or, as was the case with Charles Fourier's utopian communities, the phalanxes, to replace the economy of manual production with a libidinal economy—to substitute uninhibited pleasure for dullness, repetition, and weariness.[35] *Altneuland* (and other Zionist utopias, as we have seen), on the other hand, embraced the virtues of labor. Zionist ideology viewed life in the Diaspora as weak and passive, and it envisioned the future Jewish state as a self-reliant society of active and healthy producers—this sentiment also permeated the Zionist utopia. As Littwak imparts to his guests, "Here everyone has the right to work—and therefore to bread. This also implies the duty to work. Beggary is not tolerated."[36] The working conditions are excellent: As Herzl suggested in *The Jewish State*, the New Society has a seven-hour workday and modern, clean facilities. But work is seen as a civic virtue, as the ultimate source of happiness and fulfillment. (It is surprising how, in a novel written by a fin-de-siècle Viennese Jew, sex and other carnal pleasures are all but nonexistent.)

Altneuland, then, describes a future ideal society that utilizes technology and new social

frameworks for the betterment of its inhabitants—a classic utopian text. Yet, at the same time, with regard to its relationship to a specific territory, its view of the past and present, and its embrace of labor, it deviates from the conventions of contemporary utopias. But there is perhaps another way, a more profound one, in which Herzl's text subverts the utopian model: *Altneuland* (and Herzl's Zionist worldview more broadly) in its analysis of the Jewish condition at turn-of-the-century Europe, presumably unconsciously, reflects the attitude (scorn) of Marx and Engels vis-à-vis their utopian predecessors.

It must be said here, in no uncertain terms, Herzl was not a conventional socialist. Although the New Society in *Altneuland* is a collectivist, centralist, and cooperative society, it still has room for private property and private capital. Moreover, one of the arguments that Herzl used repeatedly in his conversations with German politicians, as he tried to solicit their support for the Zionist cause, was that Zionism would provide Jewish youth with a viable alternative to socialist and anarchist movements.[37] Yet Herzl's analysis of the Jewish condition in Europe, the formulation of his solution, and the contours of the his ideal society are all grounded in a firm materialistic worldview; and even more relevant to this discussion, the social forces that are at the core of the novel *Altneuland* (and presumably in Herzl's overall view of Jewish society) are in some important way the result of class conflict—between Jews and the non-Jewish world but also within Jewish society itself—and they reflect an understanding of the world that has, surprisingly, much in common with Marx and Engels' critique of the utopian socialists.

Here is rather lengthy but critical quote from the section titled "Critical-Utopian Socialism and Communism" in chapter 3 of the *Communist Manifesto:*

> Since the development of class antagonism keeps even pace with the development of industry, the economic situation, as they find it, does not as yet offer to them the material conditions for the emancipation of the proletariat. They therefore search after a new social science, after new social laws, that are to create these conditions.
>
> Historical action is to yield to their personal inventive action; historically created conditions of emancipation to fantastic ones; and the gradual, spontaneous class organisation of the proletariat to an organisation of society especially contrived by these inventors. Future history resolves itself, in their eyes, into the propaganda and the practical carrying out of their social plans. …
>
> The undeveloped state of the class struggle, as well as their own surroundings, causes Socialists of this kind to consider themselves far superior to all class antagonisms. They want to improve the condition of every member of society, even that of the most favoured. Hence, they habitually appeal to society at large, without the distinction of class; nay, by preference, to the ruling class. For how can people, when once they understand their system, fail to see in it the best possible plan of the best possible state of society? …
>
> They, therefore, violently oppose all political action on the part of the working class; such action, according to them, can only result from blind unbelief in the new Gospel.[38]

It is my contention here that Herzl did not simply provide an idealistic image of the future Jewish society in *Altneuland*; he did not seek to appeal to the "ruling classes" of Jewish society in his social solution (though he did try early on to solicit their support and money for the Zionist cause); he did not want to create a model society, a spiritual center, which would rejuvenate the

Jewish world and the rest of humanity. Rather, he understood the very forces (material, economic) that shaped the Jewish condition and was able, drawing on this analysis, to identify the revolutionary elements within the Jewish world that would bring about the solution to the Jewish problem.

Let's examine how Herzl chose to open the Introduction of the founding text of the Zionist movement, *The Jewish State.* The text does not begin with a sweeping overview of Jewish history; it does not offer emotional depictions of the possibilities of a better future for the suffering Jews of Europe. Instead, the Introduction begins thusly: "It is astonishing how little insight into the science of economics many of the men who move in the midst of active life possess."[39] Herzl's view of the Jewish condition in Europe is driven primarily by an economic and social analysis and considerations.

In a letter to Rabbi Moritz Gudemann, Herzl described his plan for the Jewish people in the following way:

> My plan calls for the utilization of a driving force that actually exists. What is this force? The distress of the Jews! Who dares deny that this force exists? Another known quantity is the steam power which is generated by boiling water in a tea-kettle and then lifts the kettle lid. … Such a tea-kettle phenomenon are the Zion experiments. … But I say this force is strong enough to run a great machine and transport human beings.[40]

And this force of nature is anti-Semitism and its historical and social causes.

In chapter 2 of *The Jewish State*, Herzl offered a concise, yet powerful, explanation of the roots and sheer force of modern anti-Semitism:

> Modern Anti-Semitism is not to be confounded with the religious persecution of the Jews of former times. It does occasionally take a religious bias in some countries, but the main current of the aggressive movement has now changed. In the principal countries where Anti-Semitism prevails, it does so as a result of the emancipation of the Jews. When civilized nations awoke to the inhumanity of discriminatory legislation and enfranchised us, our enfranchisement came too late. It was no longer possible to remove our disabilities in our old homes. For we had, curiously enough, developed while in the Ghetto into a bourgeois people, and we stepped out of it only to enter into fierce competition with the middle classes. Hence, our emancipation set us suddenly within this middle-class circle, where we have a double pressure to sustain, from within and from without. … Anti-Semitism increases day by day and hour by hour among the nations; indeed, it is bound to increase, because the causes of its growth continue to exist and cannot be removed. Its remote cause is our loss of the power of assimilation during the Middle Ages; its immediate cause is our excessive production of mediocre intellects, who cannot find an outlet downwards or upwards—that is to say, no wholesome outlet in either direction. When we sink, we become a revolutionary proletariat, the subordinate officers of all revolutionary parties; and at the same time, when we rise, there rises also our terrible power of the purse.[41]

If Jews are successful economically, they are singled out for their Jewishness and they are blamed for the corrupting influence of capital; at the same time, a majority of Jews are pushed out of the economic arena, mostly because of their Jewishness, and denied the opportunity to live

up to their professional potential. The Jews, then, especially in Eastern Europe, despite their intellectual capabilities, are thrown into the ranks of the proletariat where their economic distress is coupled by old anti-Jewish sentiments. In an entry in his diary, Herzl portrayed the Jewish tragedy and the causes of anti-Semitism, drawing on a more personal anecdote: "Last year I was glad when I saw the Jewish wood-carver in the house across the street. I regarded this as the 'solution.' This year I have returned. Kohn has enlarged his house, and added a wooden veranda, has summer tenants, no longer works himself. In five years, he will be the richest man in town and hated for his wealth. This is how hatred is produced by our intelligence."[42] To Herzl, in Europe, nothing could stop the rise of anti-Semitism; it was an inevitable outcome of the economic and social situation of the Jew.

Elsewhere in his diaries, in his recollections of a conversation with the Grand Duke of Baden, Herzl explained what he believed were the fundamental threats of advanced capitalism to Europe and its economic well-being: surplus of mobile, international capital and of cheap labor.[43] On the one hand, Herzl argued, the forces of this type of international capitalism drive jobs and economic opportunities away from Europe (America has become the leading agricultural producer, while China emerges as a manufacturing center fueled by European capital and cheap local labor—what an incredibly prescient vision of what late capitalism would look like a century later!); yet, at the same time, the forces of international capitalism draw poor workers into the rich Western countries in search of higher paying jobs. According to Herzl, his political solution would address both problems from the Jewish point of view: It would redirect to Palestine the Jewish proletariats from Eastern Europe who were flooding, as he put it, the West and also reign in international capital (presumably by directing it to the development of the Jewish state and not to developing factories in East Asia). Or, as Herzl put it before the German Emperor in 1898,

> This is the land of our fathers, a land suitable for colonization and cultivation. Your Majesty has seen the country. It cries out for people to work it. And we have among our brethren a frightful proletariat. These people cry out for a land to cultivate. Now we should like to create a new welfare out of these states of distress—of the land and of the people—by the systematic combination of both. We consider our cause so fine, so worthy of the sympathy of the most magnanimous minds, that we are requesting Your Imperial Majesty's exalted aid for the project.[44]

To go back to the metaphor employed by Herzl in his letter to Gudemann: The steam in the teakettle is anti-Semitism that is generated by modern economic conditions; the solution is to channel these forces into a political solution that would rearrange the economic order of the Jews in society—the creation an independent Jewish state.

When Herzl was formulating his initial plans for a Jewish state, his analysis focused mostly on central and Western Europe. As Shlomo Avineri has noted, at the time he knew very little about Eastern European Jewry and about the early Zionist groups that were formed there.[45] However, after the publication *The Jewish State* and the enthusiastic reaction it generated among the Zionist groups in Eastern Europe and the relative indifference, and at times outright scorn, that Herzl encountered among his more immediate Jewish circles, he came to regard the vast Jewish proletariat of the East as the social group that would be able to carry out his revolutionary idea. This tension between East and West as a class struggle is at the core of *Altneuland*.

As we have seen, the first part of *Altneuland* takes place in Vienna, depicting the last days

of Loewenberg in the city before his journey with Kingscourt. Loewenberg's social milieu in Vienna is made primarily of bourgeois, professional Jews like him, who find it difficult to find a suitable job and who spend their days in coffeehouses, playing games and engaging in idle conversations. There are also the older-generation Jews, who were more successful economically, who serve as patrons for the Jewish intellectual and cultural class. It is at a dinner party at the home of one such family that we encounter an outsider, an Eastern European Rabbi, Dr. Weiss, who is visiting Vienna. In the party—the two guests of honor are Gruen and Blau, two popular jesters—Dr. Weiss brings up the topic of Zionism, which immediately becomes a target for Gruen and Blau's vicious cynicism.[46] In 1902 Vienna, Dr. Weiss and the Littwaks, the supporter of Zionism and the refugees who beg for food, are the outsiders. In fin-de-siècle Jewish Vienna, there is a clear difference between the "local" bourgeois Jews and the Jews of the East.

When the story shifts to Palestine in the year 1923, it is the Viennese Jews who are the outsiders, while Eastern European Jews form the new establishment. The president of the New Society is a Russian Jew, and it is David Littwak who is elected to succeed him at the end of the novel. But not only the leaders are from the East: The group that Joe Levy, the founding father of the New Society, targeted for immigration to Palestine was Eastern European Jews (those who were in Eastern Europe or those who had already migrated to the United States).[47]

In Palestine, Loewenberg also meets some of his old acquaintances from Vienna, once at the opera and a second time at the gallery of the New Society's congress during the deliberations for the election of a new president. In the first encounter, he learns from David Littwak that the rich Viennese Jews did not even bother to become members of the New Society.[48] The second time he sees them, he is again exposed to the meaningless puns of the humorists Gruen and Blau and the utter sarcasm exhibited by the group toward the political process in the New Society: All they can do is try to speculate how the election results would impact the stock market.

The Viennese Jews, as portrayed in *Altneuland*, are what Max Nordau referred to as "coffeehouse Jews"—decadent, cynical and soulless—whereas the Eastern Jews are vibrant, healthy, motivated, and ready to take on the forces of history. Michael Gluzman was correct in noting the importance of the period that Loewenberg spent on the remote island as a time when he was able to rid himself of the insalubriousness of the bourgeois life of Viennese Jewry. Loewenberg returns from the island a new man; as Kingscourt observes, "Well our island did not disagree with you, Fritz. What a green, hollow-chested Jewboy you were when I took you away. Now you are like an oak."[49] Loewenberg had to spend twenty years on a deserted island to heal from the wretchedness of Jewish life in Vienna.[50] He needed to become a new man in order to appreciate and embrace the social experiment in Palestine. The Eastern European Jews, however, did not need this radical retreat away from civilization in order to prepare themselves for the challenges of life in a new land. The Eastern Jews did not have to find new energies to reshape their world. Their social and economic conditions made them such, so that people like Joe Levy believed that they would be ideal for the great undertaking of creating the New Society. They had a revolutionary potential that, with the right social conditions, could be unleashed in and revolutionize Jewish life.

Following Marx and Engels' criticism of earlier socialist utopias, we can see that in *Altneuland* Herzl is keenly aware of the historical conditions that are at the core of the Jewish problem. Herzl identifies a specific class (Eastern European Jews) who are the victims of economic and social oppression but who also possess the revolutionary impetus to alter

fundamentally their economic and social state. In the novel, Littwak explains to his guests why the Palestinian experiment is not based on nineteenth-century (utopian) models:

> The nineteenth century, however, was a curiously backward era. At the beginning of that era, muddle-headed visionaries were taken seriously, while sober, practical men were branded as lunatics. Napoleon the Great did not believe that Fulton's steamboat was practical. On the other hand, the absurd Fourier won adherents for his phalansteries, which were intended to provide homes and workshops for several hundred families. Stephenson, the inventor of the railway, and Cabet, the dreamer of Icaria, were contemporaries. … Clouds of smoke ascended from the chimneys of that factory, and darkened the blue heavens. … When the wishful human beings looked up, they no longer saw the heavens, but the factory-born clouds of Utopia. … But there were rosy clouds as well. Take the famous one of the American, Edward Bellamy, who outlined a noble communistic society in his *Looking Backward*. In that Utopia, all may eat as much as they please from the common platter. The lamb and the wolf feed in the same pasture. Very fine. Only then, the wolves are no longer wolves, and human beings no longer human. After Bellamy's book came *Freiland*, a utopian romance by the publicist Hertzka. *Freiland* is a brilliant bit of magic, which may well be compared with the juggler's inexhaustible hat. Beautiful dreams, indeed, or airships if you care to call them that—but not dirigible. Because those noble lovers of humanity based their ingenious schemes on a false premise. … They used as evidence something that still had to be proven, namely, that humanity had already achieved that degree of maturity and freedom of judgment which is necessary for the establishment of a new social order. … We did nothing very meritorious. We achieved nothing extraordinary. We did only that which, under the given circumstances and at the given moment, was an historical necessity.[51]

Herzl's solution to the Jewish problem is not a based on universal (utopian) platform. He does not believe that universal enlightenment is the way to liberate the Jews;[52] he has a very specific group in mind that would lead to change. His idea (while stylistically formulated as a utopia) is not based on some fantastic speculation that draws on some science fiction image of the future, as he makes quite plain when he rejects the various socialist-utopian programs of the preceding century. As the previous passage from the novel indicates quite clearly, Herzl distinguished between the false dreamers, the utopists who offered fantastic, unattainable programs and the scientists, the engineers, who base their solutions and remedies on a true understanding of social mechanisms.[53] Rather, his platform is based on a detailed analysis of historical conditions and the manner by which they could be best utilized to advance a social cause.

In 1880, Engels wrote,

> The Utopians' mode of thought has for a long time governed the Socialist ideas of the nineteenth century, and still governs some of them. … To all these, Socialism is the expression of absolute truth, reason and justice, and has only to be discovered to conquer all the world by virtue of its own power. And as an absolute truth is independent of time, space, and of the historical development of man, it is a mere accident when and where it is discovered. … To make a science of Socialism, it had

first to be placed upon a real basis.[54]

As his diaries indicate, Herzl was well aware of the charge against him that he was a utopist. In his letter to Gudmann, Herzl claimed, "*Freeland* [Hertzka's utopian novel] is a complicated piece of machinery, with many cogs and wheels, but I find in it no proof that it can be set in motion. As against this, my plan calls for the utilization of a driving force that actually exists."[55] His was not an idea based on some universal premise that would spontaneously be discovered and implemented. To paraphrase Engels, Herzl sought to place his Zionism on a real basis.

In *Altneuland*, Herzl describes a political battle between David Littwak and Rabbi Geyer. The crux of this ideological battle is whether the New Society should be open to all people (Littwak's position) or only to Jews (Geyer). In the novel, Herzl's choice is clear: Littwak has the upper hand; the New Society is an open society that does not discriminate along ethnic, racial, or religious lines. But this is a political debate that takes place in a post-revolutionary New Society. The revolutionary phase, the creation of the society, was achieved by a specific group of people, and the fruits of that revolutionary effort could be shared universally.[56] As the literary critic Yigal Schwartz has observed, although the Eastern European poor could launch a social and economic revolution, bourgeois, middle-class Jews could only follow a utopian path;[57] their transformation could only take place on an exotic island, away from civilization and its forces—in a utopian space.

In fact, the tension between the universal and the particular in politics also informed Herzl's view of (Western) European political ideologies of his time and their possible relation to the Jewish question. In 1897, Herzl wrote an article about the French historian Anatole Leroy-Beaulieu's treatise on anti-Semitism. To Herzl, Leroy-Beaulieu represented the classic (left of center) liberal approach to the Jewish question: "He is still a rigid believer in *laissez faire, laissez aller*."[58] And with regard to the Jewish question, this means freedom and equal rights. But according to Herzl, "This [liberal worldview] is a thing of the past; for better of for worse, it is gone. Someday in the future it will return, but just now the world is on a different track."[59] To Herzl, universal liberalism is a utopian fantasy that can provide no real cure for the present condition of European Jews.

But was Western socialism better suited to deal with the Jewish question? Here, too, Herzl was less than hopeful. In a different article from 1897, he wrote,

> The socialist ideal is surely an exalted one, and even though we regard it as unattainable, we do believe that good will come to men who strive for it. And we respect the genuine socialists. … But the pseudo-Socialists of recent vintage, the pinko Jews, inspire us with little sympathy. … Present-day philistine Socialism is no longer revolutionary anyhow. But the Jews, whether they like it or not, will be revolutionary flotsam until such time as the Jewish Question is solved in accordance with our proposals.[60]

Herzl's concerns with regard to Western socialism were twofold: The movement was universal in its approach and ignored the Jewish question, and the socialist parties in the West became part of the establishment—they all but forgot their revolutionary impetus. What Herzl admired about authentic Red socialism was its revolutionary spirit, the fact that it fought on the

side of the oppressed against the establishment.[61] Contemporary socialism, he feared, became itself the establishment (and therefore, he worried, would also turn anti-Semitic). The Jewish Question, to Herzl, was the quest of the oppressed to find a revolutionary alternative.

Herzl's critique of Western socialism was, in some way, a foreshadowing of the Žižekian insight (drawing on Ranciere's formulation) with regard to the task of proper politics:

> Political conflict proper thus involves the tension between the structured social body, where each part has its place, and the part of no-part, which unsettles this order on account of the empty principle of universality, of the principled equality of all men qua speaking beings. … Politics proper thus always involves a kind of short circuit between the universal and the particular; it involves the paradox of a singular that appears as a stand-in for the universal, destabilizing the "natural" functional order of relation in the social body.[62]

To Herzl, the particular question of the Jews had to find a revolutionary solution that did not conform to established, universal platforms. The solution to the Jewish Question had to offer a radical alternative that would lead to a new universal appreciation of the historical forces that led to the emergence of the Jewish problem: not inequality that can be amended by simple (universal, equal) legislation, but through the radical restructuring and redirecting of historical forces.

Herzl's solution did not entail the idea of the Jew as an outsider, as the marginal other who offers a moral alternative to the existing order by his very marginality. His solution was political—to organize a Jewish political structure, to allow the particular (and marginalized and oppressed) group the opportunity not to assimilate but to create its own particular political order. In the established Western political order, the assigned position of the Jew was that of the outsider, the dweller of the ghetto who is walled off from the natural political body. Herzl's fundamental Zionist insight was that the general Western political body would never accept the Jew as an integral part—by way of assimilation—of the general body. Therefore the Jew, in order to achieve his universal rights—had to make a radical break: Leave the Western political system, and create an independent political entity inspired by universal aspirations.

As Russell Jacoby has pointed out, one of Herzl's (and *Altneuland*'s) fiercest critics was Ahad ha-Am. Ahad ha-Am, the penname of Asher Ginsburg, a writer and a leader of early Russian Zionism, was the leader of what came to be known as spiritual Zionism. According to historian Jacques Kornberg, for Ahad ha-Am, Jewish creativity was at the core the Jewish nation's perception of itself as a spiritual people. And Judaism's task in the modern period was to absorb modern culture without breaking the thread that unites the Jewish people with their past. As Kornberg put it, "Herzl's political plan, Ahad ha-Am argued, was a threat to Jewish continuity. Political Zionism wished to consummate Jewish assimilation, balked in Europe by anti-Semitism, by endowing Jews with a State arranged and organized exactly after the pattern of other States."[63] The true aim of Zionism, Ahad ha-Am proposed, was to reconstitute the Jewish national culture.

Ahad ha-Am's criticism of *Altneuland* followed in the same vein. He ridiculed Herzl's technocratic vision; to him, Herzl's vision of mass Jewish immigration Palestine, by relying on Western technological advancements, was nothing but an expression of an assimilationist desire to immediately solve the Jewish question in a separate state that would ultimately allow the Jews to fully Europeanize themselves. To Ahad ha-Am, *Altneuland* lacked any sign of Jewish

creativity—the culture of *Altneuland* was European, not Jewish. To Ahad ha-Am, in *Altneuland*, as Kornberg phrased it, "Jews were to purchase non-Jewish acceptance through a cringing self-abnegation, through mechanical aping. The ultimate achievement of the Jews' state lay in eliminating the last residues of Jewish particularity."[64] Or as Ahad ha-Am put it, "The author [Herzl] is so committed to his system, to deny the Jews any ability to invent new things and to attribute every innovation to the Gentiles, that even the name of the new country—*Altneuland*—he did not want to leave with the Jews themselves, but first allowed a Christian to utter it."[65]

In today's post-Zionist, post-colonial imagination, Herzl and *Altneuland* have been reduced to a colonial, orientalist, misogynistic fantasy. And Ahad ha-Am's view that Herzl's writings are an expression of a self-hating Jew who seeks to be accepted by the dominant civilizational forces seems to predominate. Or as Michael Gluzman put it pithily, "*Altneuland*'s plot deals with the attempt to 'heal' the psychological hardships of the melancholic and effeminate Jewish male."[66] In other words, to turn him into a virile *goy*. But the self-hating nature of Herzl's writings isn't the only objection to his worldview in a postmodern, post-Zionist world.

In the dichotomy political/spiritual (Herzl/Ahad ha-Am), the Zionist movement, at least initially, chose the political path. As Russell Jacoby has observed, today's intellectual climate is more suspicious of grand political programs and is more conducive to the spiritual end of this early Zionist dichotomy. Adi Ophir, from a postmodern, post-Zionist perspective, claimed,

> Utopian discourse is an art of imagining the impossible as possible, of pushing the limit of the possible. From its inception it has been an ambiguous political tool with dubious morality. Plato's utopia is presented as the ideal city, the incarnation of good and justice, but it is a nightmare for anyone who does not accept the principles of Platonic ontology. If you don't share the socialist philosophical anthropology, you may mistake a socialist utopian community for a city of punishment, and in fact, this is precisely what happened to some socialist utopias. … Utopian thinking pretends to know how to portray the good as logically possible but fails to (if we believe Marx) or rarely show how to get there.[67]

The utopian spirit (or in Herzl's—and Marx and Engel's—sense, the desire to dare and imagine a radical restructuring of society) in the postmodern age is immediately reduced to a marginalization of the other—of abolishing all differences. And, indeed, as we have already seen, when Adi Ophir and Ariella Azoulay outline the ideal contours of their alternative to the Jewish state (modern Israel), they hint at a loose conglomeration of cultural (spiritual) centers that are bounded by a very loose political organization.[68]

In his study of utopia, Fredric Jameson has made the important observation that in the post-Stalinist era there have only been two theoretical attempts to place the problem of groups and their constitution back in the very center of what can no longer be called political theory: Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* and Laclau and Mouffe's *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*. According to Jameson, both theories are arguing for the very possibility of a radically different kind of organization than the one identified as Stalinist. Sartre does so by way of theorizing concrete social relations, while Laclau and Mouffe base their theory on culture or slogans around which a collective politics can best crystallize; they have sought to construct a type of "party line" that can ally different groups without privileging a single one. Both theories, Jameson surmises, seek to theorize groups while allowing for a certain minimal variety (freedom,

democracy).[69]

Martin Buber, in *Paths in Utopia*, writing from a distinctly post-Stalinist perspective, expressed a similar fear of totalizing political solutions that sacrifice the individual (and the possibility of difference) for the totalizing (statist) collective. Buber argued that the modern, centralized state infiltrated all forms of social association. Instead of an organic society that allows for the forming and reforming of social relations, the modern state establishes a totalizing, centralist ethos that destroys the organic nature of human interaction.[70] Buber's example of a modern social experiment that, as he put it, still has not failed is the *kibbutz*—a necessarily smaller community and not a state with its organs of power and control. But perhaps more important for Buber, "These Men [members of the Jewish communes in Palestine] did not, as everywhere else in the history of co-operative settlements, bring a plan with them … the ideal gave an impetus but no dogma, it stimulated but did not dictate."[71] Buber sought social commitment to relationships and caring, yet he also sought to leave a free space for change and organic growth for these relations.

While Buber (and Ahad ha-Am, a hero of *Hovevei Tzion*—Lovers of Zion—who believed in the creation of small settlements in Palestine as a way to facilitate change in Jewish life) viewed smaller communal structures as the ideal (universal) solution to the Jewish problem, Herzl opposed these efforts. When Loewenberg and Kingscourt first come to Palestine in 1902, they visit some of the colonies created by *Hovevei Tzion*—Kingscourt regards them as some oriental fantasy of Jewish Bedouins riding on horses, but Loewenberg is unimpressed by them. Herzl drew a clear distinction between the philanthropic efforts (of the Rothschilds) to support small settlements and a mass movement that addresses the Jewish question in its entirety.[72] But in *Altneuland*, and elsewhere in his writings, Herzl does not fetishize the state. He believes in a radical political solution to the Jewish problem, but he does not advocate strong manifestations of political power to attain this goal. In his diary, Herzl stressed that his solution to the Jewish problem does not begin and end with the creation of a state. In fact, the crux of his plan is the creation of social organizations that would facilitate the migration of the Jews to Palestine and create for them the necessary social and economic conditions to succeed. And in *Altneuland*, there isn't a Jewish State but the New Society, which does not have the power organs of a state: police or an army, the two organs that are necessary to impose a centralized (or "blueprint," to borrow Jacoby's term) system. From Herzl's perspective, this radical political restructuring does not create an enclosed space that deprives people of their humanity; it is the only way to allow Jews to regain their humanity. At the same time, though, Herzl did not advocate a sort of politics of identity (of allowing the Jews to freely express their cultural and spiritual needs). He fully understood the global forces of the market, and instead of simply accepting their internal logic and finding for the Jews empty spaces in the cracks that global system produces, he called for a radical change that questions the prevailing (economic) logic. Not a likely hero of post-Zionists.

Ahad ha-Am and Buber (and following them, Jacoby) accused Herzl of creating a cold technological image of the future that alienates that human spirit. And while *Altneuland*'s New Society is certainly driven by the achievements of modern technology, Herzl's view and appropriation of technology was much more nuanced than his critics may have insinuated.

In his speech before the German Emperor, Herzl argued that Zionism is a thoroughly modern movement that draws on civilization's latest achievements in the fields of technology and transportation in order to solve the Jewish problem. Steam and electricity, Herzl told the Emperor, transformed the earth. And from these achievements, human beings could benefit as

well.[73] But Herzl did not argue that the well-being of people and social programs should be solely predicated on technological achievements. In fact, in *Altneuland*, in his speech on the shortcomings of nineteenth-century utopian programs, David Littwak argued that, "They believed that the most important factor in creating a new order of things was machinery. Machinery was their sine qua non. But that is not correct. No … it is power that counts."[74] And earlier in that speech, in talking about the relationship between technological achievements and farming, Littwak argued that, "Machinery enriched the large landowners and still further improvised the small ones. A New order of slavery was created. The free farmer became a serf, and his children drifted into the industrial wage slavery of the factory."[75]

To Herzl, technology and machines were important tools that could be harnessed to benefit human beings. But they could also lead society toward greater inequality and oppression. Herzl was not a Luddite. He did not seek a utopian space that rejects the modern world—yet at the same time he understood that culture (and to him, technology was part of culture) was not the medium through which radical improvement could be attained. Ahad ha-Am accused Herzl of neglecting the cultural aspects of the Jewish revival and of identifying the human spirit exclusively with material forces.[76] But Herzl, through David Littwak's speech, does differentiate between external mechanical forces and the power of the human spirit. And it is only that latter that could lead people on the true path to political salvation.

In 1900, Herzl wrote a short story, "Solon in Lydia," that deals directly with the question of technology. In the story, Solon, the Athenian leader, warns Croesus, the king of Lydia, not to accept a revolutionary gift—an invention that produces flour without any human labor—because, Solon tells Croesus, "Consider the heights to which Greek culture has risen compared to older ages. This we owe to hunger, which taught us the value of work. At its highest, work is ennobled into art, just as pondering one's own advantage may be enhanced to the loftiest peaks of philosophy. … Do not paralyze man's vision! Perhaps, some far-off cloudless day in history, man will no longer need the goad of hunger. I cannot see that day."[77] Croesus first accepts the gift, and then anarchy reigns in his kingdom—peace is restored when that magical device is destroyed. "Solon in Lydia" is at once an anti-utopian tract—it is a celebration of the virtue of human labor and effort—and a classic materialist text: Ideas and art are the outcome of material action, and not the opposite. But it also shows Herzl's great belief in human power rather than merely dreaming of mechanical devices that would free people from the tyranny of labor.

It is worthwhile in this context to contrast *Altneuland* with the literary product of a later Zionist ideologue, Ze'ev Jabotinsky. His short utopian text, "Tristan da Runha," described the formation of an ideal society on an island in the south Atlantic by criminals who were banished to the island. Unlike the writers of the early Zionist utopias, Jabotinsky penned his text when the Zionist movement was already beginning to see Herzl's early vision turning into a reality in Palestine. And Jabotinsky's main motivation in writing "Tristan da Runha" was not to convince young Jews of the viability of the Zionist idea; he was already caught, in the mid-1920s, in the ideological battles of what political and ideological contours the Jewish state should assume. In opposition to the emerging force within the Zionist movement—Labor Zionism—Jabotinsky championed a society based on the virtues of individualism and the free market, and his utopian text sought to provide a model (and celebrate the inherent successes) for such a society.

Unlike the earlier Zionist utopias, Jabotinsky did not locate his in Palestine, nor did he deal with the fate of the Jewish people; his utopian text took place in an exotic island outside the reach of civilization, inhabited by criminals with diverse ethnic backgrounds. As Jabotinsky put

it, “I realise that I have failed to convey the most essential, the basic feature of the Tristan de Runha settlement: the outlandish character, the strangeness of that little world.”[78] And what allowed this society, which started from arguably the worst possible conditions imaginable (criminals without access to the outside world), to develop into a vibrant and prosperous place, according to Jabotinsky, was among other factors its isolation and the fact that its economy was strictly individualistic (the very opposite of the New Society, which is highly regulated and closely tied to developments around the world).[79]

From a Marxist point of view, Jabotinsky was a classic utopist. He imagined the creation of a new society ex nihilo, while ignoring the forces of history (and class). (Jabotinsky argued that one of the key characteristics of Tristan da Runha was the lack of metal, which among other things also prevented the domination of one group of people by another—class struggle.) Jabotinsky rejected socialism and the material analysis of human nature. He believed in a cultural revolution whereby leaders find the right symbols and slogans that allow people to unleash their human potential. *Altneuland*’s David Littwak believed that altering social conditions would allow people to escape their oppression—not cultural (technological) developments. Jabotinsky, on the other hand, believed that class struggle (or any attempt to control and reshape the markets) was doomed to fail. Only through a cultural quest could man be freed. Herzl believed that machinery, in itself, could not liberate people; moreover, if technology were allowed to dominate social relations without setting external limits, it would lead to greater abuses. Conversely, Jabotinsky admired technology and believed it had the ability to ultimately free people from the need to work for a living. Herzl sought to change history by exploiting its innate currents; Jabotinsky, like a true utopist, sought to transcend history—to escape the everyday economic struggles to the very margins (the south Atlantic) that allow for complete cultural rejuvenation.

Jabotinsky dedicated a substantial portion of “Tristan da Runha” to a description of the cultural achievements of the settlement, especially the development on the island of a new language and the profound educational and developmental role that that language played. Culture is not absent from Herzl’s *Altneuland*: One key scene in the novel takes place at the opera. But as Herzl’s critics pointed out, language and other cultural tools are all but irrelevant in Herzl’s Zionist vision.[80] Language, like other major aspects of modern national movements (militarism, national symbols) is all but absent from Herzl’s brand of Zionism. It is not culture that fills his metaphorical teakettle—it is only the forces that are unleashed from that kettle that also give meaning to the cultural life of the people.

Russell Jacoby has correctly observed that we live in an assumed end-of-history, anti-utopian age—that it seems that we are at an epoch when the global system has achieved such dominance that it is impossible to imagine a future outside its absolute grip. But couldn’t it also be argued that we live in the golden age of a certain form of utopian thinking, that politics today have been reduced from seeking radical alternatives that subvert the forces of history to a search for the very cracks in the global system that do not point the way to a revolutionary future but only allow for a certain sense of (cultural) freedom? Today, it seems that the only role of politics is to provide for the representation of identity, for the “production” of multiple points of view that give the illusory feeling of freedom from domination. It is a form of political “resistance” that imagines conditions beyond the limits of space and time (history)—beyond the limits of material forces (for modern technology, in the Tom Freidmanian sense, liberates society), what Herzl (or David Litwak) might have described as a typical technology-driven utopia. It is the notion that battles, like class struggle, driven by material concerns, need no historical resolution; they can be overcome through the power of technological innovation and the sense of freedom

provided by cultural expression.

Another one of Slavoj Žižek's observations about our current age may be useful here. According to Žižek, we are living today under the hegemonic regime of (Eastern-influenced) New Ageism. Or as he put it,

> Eastern thought offers a way out that is far superior to the desperate attempt to escape into old traditions. The way to cope with this dizzying change, such wisdom suggests, is to renounce any attempts to retain control over what goes on, rejecting such efforts as expressions of the modern logic of domination. Instead, one should "let oneself go," drift along, while retaining an inner distance and indifference toward the mad dance of the accelerated process. … Here, one is almost tempted to resuscitate the old, infamous Marxist cliché of religion as "the opium of the people," as the imaginary supplement of real-life misery. The "Western Buddhist" meditative stance is arguably the most efficient way for us to fully participate in the capitalist economy while retaining the appearance of sanity.[81]

Today's New Ageism can also be described as utopian—as seeking to complement the dreariness of our everyday lives with a sense of total escapism. Herzl, in this regard, was an anti-utopist par excellence. He did not try to offer a fantasy that would lead people to ignore their material conditions (or cultivate a cult of individuality); rather, he sought to convince (the Jewish) people to tackle reality, with all its might and power, and try to imagine a better future that operates from within history and at the same time against it. Or, as he put it in his diaries after the publication of *Altneuland*, "There will of course be stupid people, who because I have chosen the *form* of a Utopia, which has been used by Plato and More, will declare the *cause* to be a Utopia. … In form it is a Utopia, in subject matter it is not. In fact, I wrote the Utopia only to show that it is none."[82] Herzl did not promote a revolution that offers immediate solutions—he envisioned a long process that would involve the dull, even uninspiring gradual development of institutions and companies that would eventually create the necessary conditions that would ultimately unleash the revolutionary impetus that has been building among (Eastern European) Jews for decades. In this regard, *Altneuland* is not a (blueprint) utopia; it is a text that is based on a rigorous analysis of the present, while attempting to fundamentally alter that present condition in search of radically new horizons.

Much of the current critical assessment of Herzl (that of Gluzman as well as Piterberg) is inspired by Daniel Boyarin's analysis of Herzl's Zionism in his book *Unheroic Conduct*. In the chapter dedicated to Herzl, "The Colonial Drag," Boyarin asserts that (Herzlian) Zionism is the "most profound sort of assimilationism, one in which Jews become like all nations, that is, like Aryans, but remain Jews in name (and complexion)."[83] To Boyarin, Zionism grew out of complete acceptance of every anti-Semitic stereotype that the Jew is weak, effeminate, passive, unproductive.[84] But unlike the desire among enlightened Jews (including Herzl before he became a Zionist, when, for example, he considered mass conversion as a possible solution to the Jewish problem) to leave their Jewish identity behind and become proper Europeans, Herzl, according to this view, realized that in order to perform the ultimate act of assimilation, the Jews have to define themselves as a distinct (European-like) nation and move outside of Europe in order to become an equal partner in the predominantly Western (colonial) world order. Or as Boyarin put it, "Make the Jews into colonists, and then they will turn white!"[85]

Boyarin quite correctly rejects the romantic myth (perpetrated to a large degree by Herzl himself) of the origins of Herzl's Zionism: that following the Dreyfus affair, which Herzl was covering for his Viennese newspaper in Paris, he came to the realization that the Jews had no future in Europe—if in the country that first gave Jews full civil rights they are still persecuted by the state because of their Jewishness, then a similar fate would await them elsewhere in Europe—and that a radical solution to the Jewish question must be formulated.[86] As Jacques Kornberg has shown (his study serves as the basis for Boyarin's argument), Herzl did not experience a Paulinian "Road to Damascus" moment in Paris—his route to Zionism was more gradual and more nuanced than the myth of radical conversion to the cause might suggest.[87]

To Boyarin, then, Zionism was not a revolutionary movement, but rather the logical conclusion of a process that defined the modern Jewish experience in the West—an acceptance of the gentile view that Judaism carried within it inherent physical and spiritual deformities that can only be cured if Jewishness itself (in its traditional form) was to disappear.[88] And in the case of fin-de-siècle Viennese Jews, the image of the deformed Jew was only heightened with the arrival of Eastern European Jewish refugees, who have not undergone the process of assimilation that their Western co-religionists have and therefore feature a more raw and immediate image of the Jew as un-European. The *Ostjuden* were to become the "natives" of the Zionist enterprise—the ones who would undergo the most radical transformation into modern European subjects.

For Boyarin, ultimately, Herzlian Zionism revolves around issues of self-identity: the desire of bourgeois Jews to be accepted. It was, then, a product of modern European culture and fit nicely within the logic of the time—colonialism, which for Boyarin is not explained by material forces but rather by cultural dynamics (the desire of the native to be acknowledged by the dominant culture, to become "normal"). As Boyarin phrased it,

> Herzl's famous passion, shared with many German Jews, to achieve the honor of the dueling scar … is, in this sense, a mimicry of inscription of active, phallic, violent, gentile masculinity on the literal body, to replace the inscription of passive Jewish femininity on that same body. His ultimate remedy, however, was to lead to the inscription of this maleness on the body of Palestine—and Palestinians.[89]

And this very sentiment also informs the type of criticism that Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir have expressed in a post-Zionist evaluation of Israel at the time of its jubilee, "We are the last frontier of the military colonialism that Europe abandoned in shame decades ago. We are the thorn the Europe left in the Orient. … We are a laboratory for political and military experiments in various kinds of political messianisms that Europe had invented in the nineteenth century and since the end of the Second World War has worked so hard to forget."[90] In the post-Zionist imagination, the evils of modern-day Israel can all be traced back to the founding fathers of Zionism and their desire to become Europeans, to adopt (mimic) Western values and ideals—to become normal, male, powerful.

The current (postmodern, post-Zionist) dominant critical assessment Herzl's Zionism and its legacy, then, places it within the context of the frustrations of bourgeois Jews who sought acceptance into European culture and, once they realized that they were denied acceptance, sought to create a replica of their desired civilization in the East. This analysis rejects the revolutionary aspect of Herzl's Zionism and refuses to see a break between Herzl's Zionist vision and the general struggle of Western Jews, which began a century before the rise of

Zionism, to assimilate. But is this the only viable critical assessment left of Herzl's legacy?

Although it is probably correct to assume that Herzl did not experience a sudden epiphany in 1894 or 1895 that revealed to him that European Jews were, in fact, facing insurmountable barriers in Europe and that questions involving the place of Jews in European society had occupied his mind well before he formulated his Zionist program, we can still identify a radical break in his approach to the Jewish questions as he began to formulate his Zionist plan. One is tempted here to draw on Althusser's analysis of Marx's philosophy, particularly on his (admittedly highly problematic) insistence in his early essays, which were collected in the volume *For Marx*, on the radical break between the texts of the young Marx and Marx's mature works. Althusser drew a contrast between the humanistic early Marx who, according to Althusser, was thinking within an idealist, subjective philosophical mode and the mature, scientific Marx: "Marx's theoretical revolution was precisely to base his theory on a *new element* after liberating it from its *old element*: the element of Hegelian and Feuerbachian philosophy."[91] Or as Etienne Balibar, Althusser's student and collaborator, suggested, Marx sought to explode the circle of representation, of the distinction between subject and the world (the "old" idealistic philosophy that places the individual man and idea at the center of everything) and instead think of humanity through multiple changing forms and relations—through the scientific analysis of social structures and forces.[92] And isn't this also the core of the Herzlian revolution, which we have tried to trace through our reading of *Altneuland*? Herzl's principle understanding about Zionism was that it couldn't be based on individual initiatives—be they philanthropic or based on the pioneering spirit of brave individuals—and that it could not be based on cultural aspirations, but rather on a collective effort that is informed by a material analysis of social conditions.

Herzl certainly was not the first to identify the Jewish problem in Europe, and he was not the first to formulate a political solution for it. But his major breakthrough, his point of rupture, to borrow Althusser's terminology, was his insistence, beginning in 1895, to think of the Jewish problem through a scientific, materialistic analysis of the social forces that defined the Jewish experience in Europe. The pre-Zionist Herzl (who is the real subject of Boyarin's analysis) was consumed by questions of personal (subjective) identity, and his solutions, most notably mass conversion, were informed by the bourgeois Jewish milieu of his Vienna. But the Zionist Herzl all but forsook that perspective. In his Zionist writings he wasn't concerned with questions of identity or cultural dynamics (and isn't this ultimately what Ahad ha-Am's criticism of Herzl amounted to? That Herzl did not focus enough on questions of Jewish identity and culture?); he was preoccupied with identifying the social forces that led to modern anti-Semitism and to finding solutions that would addresses these very forces. His approach to the Jewish problem became thoroughly materialistic and scientific, and therein lays its true revolutionary potential. (Boyarin's textual analysis of Herzl's writings focuses largely on his pre-Zionist writings; a close reading of Herzl's diaries that chronicle his Zionist period would reveal that he spent far more time thinking and writing about hydro energy than he did about Jewish identity.)[93] Herzl's real revolution was his realization that Jews can no longer just accept the historical logic of the time (assimilate into the dominant culture)—but rather must defy the perceived inevitable course of history. He refused to acknowledge a sense of end-of-history (utopia), but rather wanted to engage with the forces of history.

The writer and historian Tom Segev—arguably more than anybody else, he was responsible for popularizing and disseminating the spirit of the New Israeli history and the post-Zionist critique—has suggested that perhaps we should consider Herzl the first post-Zionist thinker.

Segev has speculated that if Herzl was to visit modern-day Herzliya (a town north of Tel Aviv that was named after Herzl) with its metal and glass skyscrapers that project a sense of luxury, and with its foreign-named restaurants and luxury delicatessens, he would have felt at home—in a kind of normal, modern urban setting.[94] Writing from the perspective of a capitalistic, individualistic Israeli, Segev focuses on the pre-Zionist, Viennese Herzl, who was consumed by questions of acceptance into the dominant civilization—he all but ignores the later Herzl who imagined a co-operative Jewish society and sought to curb the forces of international capital.

In the "happy 90s" the revolutionary Herzl might have seemed outdated—as opposed to the younger, bourgeois Herzl, who seemingly could have fit right in with the crowds of young high-tech entrepreneurs, exchanging text messages in dimly lit sushi joints. Ultimately, from the postmodern perspective of the 1990s, both Boyarin and Segev invoke the pre-Zionist Herzl—whether to celebrate the achievements of the New Israel economy (as the latter does) or to find the root causes of Israeli militarism (as the former does). Ultimately, they both seek to do away with the collectivist, materialist ethos that was at the core of the (Herzlian) Zionist idea, while promoting a common outcome: a social space freed from any constraints or centralized control, one in which the wandering Jew can freely roam. But if we think beyond the (neo)liberal categories of the "happy 90s," isn't there another Herzl whose legacy we can invoke today? Couldn't the rupture that Herzl formulated more than a century ago be a viable prism through which to examine the possibilities of thinking beyond post-Zionism? The pre-Zionist Herzl was a truly utopian thinker (in the sense that Žižek has described the "happy 90s" as utopian, the realm of unbounded hedonism), and his grand pre-Zionist idea—the mass conversion of the Jews—was the quintessentially utopian dream (perhaps the post-Zionist Israel as player in the global market is a realization of that utopian dream). Conceivably, then, to conjure up Herzl today and the legacy of his stylistically utopian novel, the proper act would be to leave utopia behind and re-enter history through a material and scientific understanding of it: or to paraphrase Balibar's assessment of Marx's true legacy today, to bring together the theoretical knowledge of the social material conditions and the need to act in the present.[95]

Russell Jacoby has concluded the introduction of *Picture Imperfect* by declaring, "The iconoclastic utopians were utopians against the current. They did not surrender to the drumbeat of everyday emergencies. … They kept their ears open for distant sounds of peace and joy, for a time when, as the prophet Isaiah said, 'the lion shall eat straw like the ox' (Isaiah 11:7). We can learn from them." Couldn't then, in this still post-Zionist period, Herzl be regarded as iconoclastic? In a time when all great plans are derided, isn't the mere notion of a revolution that draws on historical forces and works within them the very embodiment of going against the current? Isn't in our age the idea of politics as building communal and social structures that affect the very material essence of our lives a human version of a lion eating straw?

FIVE

THE LEGACIES OF HEBREW LABOR

> Materialist dialectic is a revolutionary dialectic. This definition is so important and altogether so crucial for an understanding of its nature that if the problem is to be approached in the right way this must be fully grasped before we venture upon a discussion of the dialectical method itself. The issue turns on the question of theory and practice. And this not merely in the sense given it by Marx when he says in his first critique of Hegel that "theory becomes a material force when it grips the masses." Even more to the point is the need to discover those features and definitions both of the theory and the ways of gripping the masses which convert the theory, the dialectical method, into a vehicle of revolution.
>
> —Georg Lukács, "What Is Orthodox Marxism?"

In 1998, a group of Israeli musicians organized a special project to mark the country's jubilee. They invited some of Israel's leading pop musicians to choose their favorite Israeli songs and offer new cover versions. The project was called *Avodah Ivrit* (Hebrew Labor). The title was not only a smart play on the word *Hebrew* (which can refer both to the Hebrew language and to the Jews in Israel), it also contained an element of nostalgia for the old, "ideological" era when such values as Hebrew labor, collectivism, and even austerity were the order of the day. Not that Israeli pop singers were eager to renounce their lucrative recording contracts and commercial endorsement deals, but the 1980s and 1990s, which experienced the vulgar consumerism that overtook Israel, also saw a new sentimental longing for a more pure and simple Israel (or the old Ashkenazi Israel of Amos Oz's Jerusalem). Like German *Ostalgie* after the collapse of the Berlin Wall, old posters, commercials, radio skits, and early Israeli TV shows became camp. In the 1960s and 1970s, Israeli musicians looked to Britain and the United States for inspiration; in the "happy 90s" the gaze became more local—Israeli pop culture embraced postmodern self-referencing.

Pop musicians were not the only ones going back to the early days of Hebrew labor. Ze'ev Sternhell, one of Israel's leading academics and public intellectuals, also set his (academic) gaze on that era—though not out of nostalgic yearning, but rather with a cold analytic scalpel. Throughout most of his professional career, Sternhell has been known (and has become internationally renowned) for his work on European fascism. But in 1995, Sternhell shifted his focus from the European right to the historical roots of the Israeli Labor movement. His book, *Binyan Umah o Tikkun Hevrah* (*Nation-Building or a New Society*)[1] has offered a harsh critique of Labor Zionism's "founding fathers," claiming that their "socialism" was but a façade that only thinly masked a staunch nationalist ideology that was at the root of Labor's ideological

framework. Sternhell has maintained that the driving force behind Labor's political agenda was a commitment to nationalist goals and that social questions only played a secondary role in their worldview. In fact, Sternhell, who has never been known for mincing his words, defined Labor Zionism's brand of socialism as national socialism.

The book generated great controversy, and several critics branded Sternhell a post-Zionist.[2] Yet, although Sternhell's book certainly shares many of the sentiments of post-Zionist works that were published in the 1990s, it is difficult to categorize Sternhell's as one. As Sternhell has noted in the book's Introduction, he is a traditional historian who seeks to unravel a concrete historical reality rather than explore historical images.[3] In fact, Sternhell has been vocal in his attacks on postmodern intellectual trends, even comparing them to fascist intellectual currents in the early part of the twentieth century.[4] Sternhell, recipient in 2008 of the Israel Prize, is a rather traditional intellectual historian: Neither from a generational perspective nor from the point of view of his intellectual temperament does he fit the post-Zionist mold.[5] Yet his work, which was published during the heyday of the post-Zionist debates and contributed intellectual fuel to those debates—in some respects, "old" Israeli historians and sociologists such as Anita Shapira and Moshe Lissak were as much the target of Sternhell's criticism and ire as were Labor's founders—is perhaps even more revealing in the broader examination of the evolution of the Israeli/Zionist left since the 1960s and the relationship between the founding fathers' brand of leftist politics and the contemporary ideological and intellectual climate in Israel. An examination of Sternhell and other more pronounced post-Zionist critics of Hebrew Labor and the ideological legacy of the Zionist Labor movement are the main focus of this chapter, as is the relationship between the pioneering legacy of Labor Zionism and the post-1967 settlements in the West Bank—but it is also an examination of what happened to the Israeli/Zionist left after 1967 and how these changes, which reflect broader political, social, and cultural changes in Israel, impacted both the Zionist/Israeli left's view of the past and its remedies for the present.

Sternhell's overriding argument in his analysis of Labor Zionism is his contention that the movement's leading ideological figures were not motivated by a socialist-Marxist worldview but rather by nationalist-tribal concerns. Or as Steven Ziperstein, in a review of Sternhell's book, put it,

> The universalistic aspirations of socialism never mattered to them [Labor Zionists], says Sternhell. What mattered to them always were the "tribal" demands of the Jews. They settled in Palestine at the turn of the twentieth century, coming mostly from the townlets of the Pale of Settlement in Russia. Hard as they worked to look and sound "progressive"—this was a part of the cultural baggage that they took with them from the turbulent politics of Russia before the revolution of 1905—they remained inescapably small-town Jews. This hobbled them, and reduced their interests to things exclusively Jewish, with the worst influence being (Sternhell speaks of it with special scorn) the traditional Jewish primary school, the heder.[6]

Throughout the book, Sternhell does not hide his own ideological leanings. He describes himself as an adherent of a universal, humanistic, socialist (and liberal!) point of view, and by and large he criticizes the founders of Labor Zionism, particularly David Ben-Gurion, the political leader, and Berl Katznelson, the movement's leading ideologue, for lacking these very foundations in their own weltanschauung. According to Sternhell, the Constructivist-Socialist model that Labor Zionists developed—the call for the creation of a state and a new society—was

nothing more than a traditional Eastern European nationalist ideology that paid lip service to socialist values. And he describes the founding fathers of the Zionist Labor movement as organic nationalists who used revolutionary rhetoric to advance their nationalistic and territorial goals.[7]

To Sternhell, the socialism of the Zionist Laborites was nothing more than a Sorelian mobilizing myth that was intended to enlist the masses in the service of the national cause.[8] Sternhell, in fact, has compared the writings of Nahman Syrkin, one of the early leading ideologues of Labor Zionism, to those of Sorel, claiming that they both embraced the power of belief, will, and emotions in the service of mobilizing the masses. The rationality of political programs, Sternhell has maintained, was not paramount for neither Syrkin or Sorel, and an absurd program, but one that could ignite the imagination of the masses, was to them the one with viable (and preferable) historical power.[9]

Even though Sternhell does not provide a definition of what he considers to be true or authentic socialism, to him one of the principle dichotomies that distinguishes between true (in the Sternhellian sense) and nationalist socialism is the tension between the universal and particular. And according to Sternhell, when faced with this choice, Labor Zionists always chose the latter over the former, the interests of the Jews over universal considerations.

To Sternhell, Labor Zionism was not founded on a class-based social analysis. It was not driven by a sense of class struggle, nor did it aspire to achieve universal equality. To Sternhell, Labor Zionism was exclusively motivated by the desire to create a nation-state regardless of any universalistic, social considerations. In short, for Sternhell, the socialism of Labor Zionism was nothing more than a myth, and a plurality of Israel's contemporary social and political ills (particularly the growing poverty and deepening economic gaps) can be traced back to the founders of the Zionist society in Palestine, who did not strive to achieve true social equality. Or, as Sternhell pithily put it in an article from 1998,

> At its core, all Zionism is just a classic variation of that closed nationalism which appeared in Europe at the turn of the century, just as the liberal nationalism that emerged from the Enlightenment and the French Revolution was on the wane. Jewish nationalism is scarcely any different from the nationalism of Central and Eastern Europe: ethnocentric, religious and cultural, immersed in the cult of an heroic past.[10]

The strategy that Sternhell employs throughout his study is to suggest (never define) an abstract model of what he considers to be authentic socialism and attack early Labor Zionists for not following this model.[11] Sternhell's use of the term *socialism* as well as that of *Marxism*, however, is rather limited in its historical and geographical scope. He does not fully explain what he means by Marxism; rather, he develops a vague structure that draws largely on the reformist platforms of Bernstein and Jaurès. Ultimately, the image of what might live up to Sternhell's notion of true socialism would be an ideological framework that offers a social analysis based on sensitivity to class issues and seeks ways to address social ills and reform society in a manner that would advance social equality while maintaining a commitment to individual, civil rights—though, and this is crucial, without any emphasis on revolutionary change. If that is the definitive articulation of socialism, Labor Zionists would have indeed fallen very short of living up to these ideals. But if other aspects of Marxist and socialist thought are to be taken into account, the socialist and revolutionary credentials of the Labor Zionism's founding fathers may be salvaged yet.

One of Sternhell's main arguments is that Labor Zionism's analysis of the Jewish problem was predominantly nationalistic and ethnic in nature and lacked the perspective of class. But here, Sternhell did not fully account for the complexity and multifacetedness of the Zionist socialist understanding of the Jewish question. Already in the writings of Herzl, as we have seen in the previous chapter, a materialistic and class-based analysis was used to describe the anomalous position of the Jews in modern European society. Similarly, Ber Borochov's—the founding ideologue of Labor Zionism—view of the Jewish condition in Europe was entirely based on the analysis of class structure and the tensions among different classes. As Borochov, with his Marxist-laden jargon, formulated it, "Anti-Semitism flourishes because of the national competition between the Jewish and non-Jewish petit bourgeoisie and between Jewish and non-Jewish proletarianized and unemployed masses."[12] Syrkin, another of Labor Zionism's founding ideological fathers, analyzed modern anti-Semitism entirely on the basis of class antagonism. In his "The Jewish Problem and the Socialist-Jewish State" from 1898, Syrkin wrote, "Since the lower middle classes were the most vulgar elements of society, their anti-Semitism, too, was the most vulgar type. … Anti-Semitism of the middle class is a revolutionary movement of a low type, the revolt of class against class and against the existing order not for the sake of higher human principles but for egotistic interests."[13]

Later, when the members of the second *aliya*, among them the young future leaders of the Labor Zionist movement, came to Palestine and encountered the administration set up by Baron Rothschild in the settlements that were created by the first wave of Zionist immigration to Palestine in the 1880s,[14] they tended to describe those relations between employers and workers from a class-based perspective. And the rhetoric in the struggle of the members of the second *aliya* for Hebrew labor and the right of the workers to unionize and manage their own institutions was firmly within the socialist tradition. For example, in an analysis of the strike on the Kinneret farm from 1911, Ben-Gurion wrote,

> How many times have we heard our "friends," and even those who purport to represent the workers from within the "true nationalistic" camp, say that here in Palestine, the worker should sacrifice some of his class interests for the sake of national interests, and that class politics detracts from the general national enterprise and should, therefore, be curtailed. But all those workers who have not been confused and besotted by "holy names" and empty highfalutin phrases, know that it is only deception and trickery. There is no contradiction between class politics and national politics. The workers need not compromise or give up one for the other. Of all the classes and sectors in our society, the workers are the only ones whose interests and needs are consistent with those of the interests and needs of the nation as a whole. The interests of the workers and the general national interests are one and the same; there is no discrepancy between them whatsoever.[15]

For Ben-Gurion, in his assessment of work conditions in the bourgeoning Jewish community in Palestine, class interests and national interests were synonymous.

Similarly, the political platform of *Po'alei Zion*, the Labor Zionist party that was founded in the beginning of the twentieth century, described the tensions between the capitalists of the first *aliya* and the laborers of the second *aliya* in the following way: "The capitalism developing in Palestine requires intelligent and energetic workers. Since local laborers are still inferior and in poor state, the capitalist development of Palestine depends on the immigration of overseas

laborers who are better qualified. Capitalism, while it revolutionizes the feudal structure, slowly turns farmers into proletariat."[16] Marx and Engels could not have articulated it any clearer from a class-based perspective.

Throughout the writings of the founders of Labor Zionism, then, when they attempted to explain both the rise of European anti-Semitism and labor relations in Palestine, they relied almost exclusively on a class-based, material analysis. It was when Labor Zionists attended to the greater question—how to solve the Jewish question in its entirety—that they deviated from traditional, Western socialist approaches; yet their solution was fundamentally informed by a Marxist and materialistic perspective.

The problem that the socialist Zionists faced was not entirely different from what the Russian socialists had battled with since the 1870s. Whereas elements of Marx's analysis of the historical tendency of capitalist accumulation could be, and have been, interpreted to mean that socialism could only emerge in societies that have already achieved a high state of capitalist development, what should socialists in less-developed economies and societies do? Wait for capitalist development or seek other social conditions (in the Russian case, existing co-operative communes) as the basis from which to draw the social forces to launch a socialist revolution? Marx himself addressed the Russian question, and he acknowledged, as Etienne Balibar has shown, that there are various paths of historical development and different historical social formations and that this type of "overdetermination" (in the Althusserian sense) speaks to singularities in history. There is no one plan of historical development; rather, as Balibar summarized Marx's position of the Russian question, there are distinct historico-political units that react differently (from their own unique historical present) to the tendencies of the mode of production.[17] These tensions (waiting for the right conditions of capitalist development or drawing on existing social forces and channeling them toward revolutionary action) would continue to define the development of Russian socialism: They would be part of the historical split between Bolsheviks and Mensheviks and the great rift between Luxemburg and Lenin.

The Zionist socialists were faced with a similar dilemma: They could not account for the Jewish problem in Europe based on pure class analysis. Although class conflicts explained the rise of anti-Semitism, the Jews did not constitute a social class in the conventional sense. First, Jews were found in different social classes, but more important, the economic and social conditions that were brought about by the advent of capitalism and modern technology changed the condition of the Jews and unleashed new, harsher forms of anti-Jewish sentiments. But they did not alter the fundamental truth about the Jewish existence in Europe that had existed well before the advance of capitalism: Jews were a distinct, persecuted group in Europe. In fact, from the Zionist perspective, as it was already formulated by Herzl, one of the great failures of the modern era was its inability to solve the Jewish problem; indeed, it only accentuated the existing Jewish predicament.

Therefore, the Zionist socialist point of view begins from the contention that the Jews are not an integral part of the European social order, and as a result, a strictly class-based analysis of their situation, within the broader European social system, would be insufficient. In order to solve the Jewish problem by way of accepting the principles of a socialist view of society, the necessary conditions for the creation of an independent Jewish society must be attained, and only then, under "normal" historical conditions, could the development of social relations based on a socialist vision be carried out.

Ber Borochov, drawing on several passages from the third volume of *Capital* and employing some intricate dialectical maneuvers, argued that a materialistic-historical analysis

does not only account for economic conditions but also explains questions of collective consciousness and national consciousness. Borochov called for a form of "realistic" nationalism, which he argued can be found only among the progressive elements of oppressed nations and which does not dim the sense of class consciousness among the people. For Borochov, this type of "realistic" nationalism would lead to the liberation of the nation and would create the material conditions that are necessary for real freedom. Once these conditions were attained, Borochov argued, a healthy class structure would emerge.[18] In his "Our Platform" from 1906, one of the seminal texts of Labor Zionism, Borochov further argued that the situation of the Jewish proletarian is anomalous, and this anomaly could only be solved when the Jews attain their own political territory—without such a territory, Borochov warned, no element of class struggle on behalf of the Jews could be achieved.[19] Therefore, in order to create healthy social conditions (that are necessary for the creation of a socialist community), the socialist Zionists should not passively wait for the emergence (by capitalist means) of a normal Jewish society in Palestine—it was their historical task to create such a society.

From the perspective of Labor Zionists, the national task was so monumental that it called for all elements of the Jewish people to participate in it. To them, unlike certain "leftist" elements in the Labor Zionist camp that insisted on a pure form of class struggle—the workers would have to wait until the Jewish middle class would create a thriving society in order to engage in a struggle against them—what the situation called for was a general effort, led by the workers themselves, to create a sovereign entity. As Berl Katznelson described it in an article from 1935,

> Po'alei Zion left never questioned the collective destiny of the nation, but they believe that there is no need for inter-class cooperation: The Jewish capitalists will build the Land of Israel out of their own class interests, the Jewish worker will come to the country and fight his own battle, and everything will fall into place … by war, without hurting the "revolutionary" tradition. … The bourgeois Jew will be forced by historic necessity to build the Land of Israel. And since he will go here to build an advanced capitalist market in a backward feudal land, he most certainly would not be able to plant his citrus groves and build his factories without relying on developed workers, meaning: the Jewish worker. And the Jewish worker, which the capitalistic development of the country would draw him in, will come and fulfill his duties, owing to the dictates of his class, and will fight his class war. The Jewish worker will be relieved of the need to build. The bourgeoisie will do that for him. He will be free to engage in his class war. … He will have no use for Zionist congresses, national funds, the Zionist Organization, national settlement—anything that can be based on cooperation among classes and "blurring" of class autonomy.[20]

Perhaps, from a purely critical Marxist position, it would have been better to observe the emergence of an advanced Jewish society in Palestine and only then engage in a "pure" form of class struggle in order to turn that society into a socialist society. The Laborite leaders, however, felt that it would serve the interests of the Jewish workers to actively participate in the building effort of the social structures. Moreover, unlike their Russian counterparts, the Zionist socialists did not only need to create a new advanced society: They had to do it in a remote territory. Ben-Gurion described this task in very dramatic tones: "All other revolts, both past and future, were uprisings against a *system*, against a political, social, or economic structure. Our revolution is

directed not only against a system but against *destiny*."[21] And this type of collective, national challenge, the Zionist Laborites assumed, could not be carried out without the active participation of the Jewish proletariat. The workers, they asserted, could not simply wait for the national revolution to succeed; they needed to take an active role in it.

The Labor Zionist ideologues were aware that this was not an "orthodox" socialist approach. Syrkin, for example, in defending the synthesis of Jewish and socialist claims, wrote,

> From the sound of these words one may perhaps picture a type of reactionary socialism, because the word "Jewish" seems to parallel the terms "Christian," "German," or "National," etc. However, this is not a valid inference; in logic and truth, Jewish socialism should be placed on the same level with proletarian socialism, because both have a common source in the oppression of human beings and the unjust distribution of power.[22]

To Labor Zionists, the very condition of the Jews was "unorthodox."

From the Zionist socialist perspective, then (as was the case when Herzl compared the Jewish to the French proletarian), the Jews, as a group, faced structural oppression that could only be remedied under normal social (and national) conditions within the broader social, international order. As Borochov claimed, "Political territorial autonomy in Palestine is the ultimate aim of Zionism. For proletarian Zionists, this is also a step toward socialism."[23] And from their point of view, they could not wait for the gradual development of social conditions in Palestine: The persecution of the Jews called for immediate action. And in order to attain these goals, socialist Zionists, again drawing inspiration from their Russian counterparts, argued that the workers, their party, and their institutions should take an active role in leading this (national) revolutionary movement. Or, as Berl Katznelson phrased it, "The revolutionary constructivism that is at the core of our movement determines our historical role in the realization of Zionism. … The impoverished and battered Jewish masses need a constructive–avant-gardist force that would blaze the trail for them."[24]

From the vantage point of Labor Zionists, then, there were two available options: Wait for the development of an advanced (capitalist) society in Palestine and then launch a struggle based on class differences, or create (ex nihilo) a new society in which, from the very beginning, the workers would take a leading role in shaping its social contours while cooperating with other groups and classes. The Labor Zionists were committed to the latter. Berl Katznelson offered a compelling argument as to why the national struggle and the class struggle were ultimately the same:

> Between socialism and national sovereignty over labor relations and the economy—there is no contradiction. Socialism has always battled the liberal conception that viewed the state simply as a policeman who is in charge of maintaining the law and who mustn't intervene in the economic life and inter-state relations. Socialism has always called for the intervention of the state, the legislation of labor laws, the regulation of labor relations, social insurance, care for the unemployed etc. These are the immediate partial demands of socialism. And the actual realization of socialism means: asserting the national sovereignty in other areas of social life, not just mediating and finding compromise among classes, but also enforcing on them the will of the nation, so much so that classes are abolished and no single class holds any

advantages, while another class is disadvantaged.[25]

This is hardly a disavowal of socialist principles. It is, rather, a practical realization that the Jewish condition is unique and that the struggle for social equality for the Jews would have to be carried out alongside the struggle for independent sovereignty. It might have been preferable, from an "orthodox" Marxist position, to follow the two-step maneuver suggested by Marx in his *Critique of the Gotha Programme* (though not in the order it appears in the text): to advance toward *the revolutionary dictatorship of the proletariat* and, once a full communist society has emerged, *from each according to his ability, to each according to his needs.* But the *Critique of the Gotha Programme* addressed the platform of the German social democratic movement, which came into being in a fairly advanced capitalist society with a well-defined social structure. The Zionist socialist case was radically different: They needed the very material conditions to be formed before a purely social revolution could take place. And faced with the choice of allowing the forces of capital or the leaders of the workers to lead this struggle, they chose the workers. Or as Ben-Gurion with his trademark practical and straightforward approach saw it, once Zionism became an internationally recognized movement, it had to transform from a strictly political body into a movement that builds a country and society that could absorb the Jewish masses.[26] And Ben-Gurion claimed, "The building of the nation means first and foremost guaranteeing the well-being of the worker and his family. Only by building the working class does the country itself get built."[27] The Zionist mission, Ben-Gurion held, was to transform the Jewish masses from an oppressed class (in the Diaspora) into a working people (in the Land of Israel).[28] As Mitchell Cohen has suggested in a recent article, in comparing the Labor Zionists to other socialist and social-democratic parties, it is likely that if the Zionist Laborites had chosen the path of strict class politics, they most likely would have evolved into a minority party with little ability to impact the social dimensions of the Jewish community in Palestine.[29] It seems that Sternhell might have preferred that the more liberal and capitalist forces in the *Yishuv* would have created the community's social structure and that the role of the socialists would only commence after this had been completed.

As indicated earlier, since the 1870s (and even to some degree before that) some of the more notable splits and ideological battles among socialist movements and camps tended to concentrate around the question of how to react to existing capitalist structures (or existing modes of production): whether to accept their reality and seek to reform them in a manner that would best meet the needs of the workers or whether to upend them and create a new social horizon controlled entirely by the proletarian. At the core of Marx's *Critique of the Gotha Programme* is the rejection of the willingness among some German socialists to seek a reformist agenda (which Marx claimed was already the reality in some advanced liberal states) that is already based on accepting the key logic of capitalism (that labor could be given absolute quantifiable value and that redistribution of wealth, rather than a fundamental restructuring of the modes of production, could create real equality). In that text Marx offered one of the only practical markers as to how to combat the existing capitalist structures: the dictatorship of the proletariat, as opposed to what he identified as the reformist approach that sought to operate within the existing system.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, Lenin drew a similar distinction between his and the Russian Social Democrats' brand of socialism and Bernstein's reformist platform. As Lenin put it in the first section of *What is to Be Done?*

> In fact, it is no secret for anyone that two trends have taken form in present-day international Social-Democracy. … The essence of the "new" trend, which adopts a "critical" attitude towards "obsolete dogmatic" Marxism, has been clearly enough *presented* by Bernstein and *demonstrated* by Millerand. Social-Democracy must change from a party of social revolution into a democratic party of social reforms. Bernstein has surrounded this political demand with a whole battery of well-attuned "new" arguments and reasonings. Denied was the possibility of putting socialism on a scientific basis and of demonstrating its necessity and inevitability from the point of view of the materialist conception of history. Denied was the fact of growing impoverishment, the process of proletarisation, and the intensification of capitalist contradictions; the very concept, "*ultimate aim*," was declared to be unsound, and the idea of the dictatorship of the proletariat was completely rejected. Denied was the antithesis in principle between liberalism and socialism. Denied was *the theory of the class struggle*, on the alleged grounds that it could not be applied to a strictly democratic society governed according to the will of the majority, etc.[30]

In his book, Sternhell aligns himself squarely with the Bernsteinian camp. He accentuates the relationship between Marxist thought and the (liberal) project of the Enlightenment, and he all but ignores socialism's revolutionary aspects. He bemoans the fact the Labor Zionists ignored the alternatives offered at that time by Austrian Marxism, which added a Kantian dimension to their socialist analysis, and he attacks them for lacking universalist aspects in their platform.[31] (It is worthwhile to note here that one of the leading intellectual voices of early Labor Zionism, Chaim Arlosoroff, was a student of the Austrian school. His dissertation focused on Marx's theory of class struggles; in it he criticized the materialist, reductionist tendencies that influenced more dogmatic readings of Marx at the time and instead emphasized the role of national-cultural consciousness among the working class. Arlosoroff, the "reformist" Marxist, formulated some of the more nationalist ideas among the early Labor Zionists. In a 1932 letter to Chaim Weizmann, in which he addressed the growing tensions between the Arab majority and Jewish minority in Palestine, he suggested an approach that, as he admitted, was not all that different from that of the right-wing Zionist Revisionist party of Jabotinsky. Arlosoroff wrote,

> Zionism cannot, in the given circumstances, be turned into a reality without a transition period of the organised revolutionary rule of the Jewish minority; that there is no way to a Jewish majority, or even to an equilibrium between the two races, or else a settlement sufficient to provide a basis for a cultural centre to be established by systematic immigration and colonisation, without a period of a nationalist minority government which would usurp the state machinery, the administration and the military power in order to forestall the danger of our being swamped by numbers and endangered by a rising (which we could not face without having the state machinery and military power at our disposal).[32]

For Arlosoroff, the Austrian Marxist, revolutionary action entailed a national minority government—not necessarily what Sternhell would describe as a pure socialist solution.)

But where does Sternhell's own position stem from? What was the intellectual background in which his own image of authentic socialism was formed? Although the answer to this question is undoubtedly complex and draws on a host of sources and references, the crisis of Western

socialism in the 1960s and the subsequent rise of the "third-way" left—in the West but also in Israel[33]—might be useful in locating the impetus for Sternhell's critique of early Labor Zionism and its ideological framework.

In the 1960s, in the aftermath of the revelations about the Stalinist atrocities and then the failure of the student uprisings of 1968, many intellectuals on the left sought alternatives to the now-perceived dogmatism of party line Marxism. This is how Christopher Hitchens (a prominent lapsed comrade himself) described the transition of Leszek Kolakowski, the Polish philosopher and historian, from "orthodox" Marxism to reform or revisionist Marxism in the late 1950s and early 1960s—a move that many Western leftists would emulate in the following decades: "Kolakowski was shorn of his Stalinism by exposure to its Moscow form on a visit to Russia. … At that stage, he advocated a form of democratic socialism approximately based on a reading of young—as opposed to late—Karl Marx."[34] He is referring to the young "humanist" Marx, the champion of liberal values such as individual rights and freedom of expression, as opposed to the dogmatic, materialistic, and anti-liberal later Marx.

Tony Judt's 1994 critique of the work and legacy of Louis Althusser is another prime example of this intellectual current and its legacy in the 1990s.[35] In that article, much as Sternhell does in his book on the intellectual origins of Labor Zionism, Judt drew a clear distinction between the (pure) Marxism upon which he was raised (by parents who sympathized with the Bund[36] and social democracy) and communism and Bolshevism, which were regarded in his home as a travesty of Marxism. Judt portrayed Althusser as an incoherent relic of a dogmatic past who could not adapt to the changing times and insisted on rigid and selective readings of Marx. Judt criticized Althusser's historical claim that we should differentiate between the early humanistic and romantic Marx and the late, anti-humanist works of Marx that lay out the core principles of communism. Judt condemned Althusser for not realizing the type of atrocities that were committed in the name of anti-humanist totalitarianism, and instead he posited the writings of the young Marx, which had entered the canon only in the 1960s, as a humanistic and moral alternative for the progressive camp.

Indeed, it was this very "discovery" of the early writings of Marx that prompted Althusser's own theoretical formulation as he tried, at a time when many on the left were drifting away from Marxism, to return (in a very Lutheran manner) to what he perceived to be the authentic, scientific Marx. Althusser's move was decidedly unfashionable (just like his decision to stay outside the May 1968 mayhem and remain firmly within the orthodox communist party); since the 1960s, for progressives and liberals, Marx's early writings had become a way to embrace the reality of the market while still holding on to some relic (in the full catholic sense of the word) of their radical past.[37] Perhaps more than anything else, despite its many theoretical limitations, Althusser's was the last comprehensive attempt by a Western leftist to hold on to the scientific, revolutionary vision of Marxism. Third-way leftists chose a path, blazed already by Lassale and Bernstein among others, of reformist moralism: to accept the victory of market capitalism and seek only to offer reforms and modifications that would add a veneer of morality and empathy to our social institutions. More radical approaches (both theoretical and practical), including Labor Zionism in its formative years, were seen as dangerous reminders of failed experiments that were no longer suitable to the modern world. Or, as Sternhell himself argued, Marx failed to understand the force and vitality of capitalism and the many gains that workers would make within the framework of modern democracies. Therefore, for Sternhell, only those who offered a revision of Marxist dogma that understood the new realities of the marketplace were acceptable socialist role models. For social democrats, according to Sternhell, Marxism was to become a

general (moral) conceptual framework, an analytical tool that is meant to serve as a guiding light in the effort to reform, not to revolutionize, bourgeois society.[38]

Sternhell has maintained that the early Laborites were not Marxists because they failed to adopt universal, humanistic and liberal principles, which he claims are at the core of a Marxist worldview. In one instance he makes a very revealing argument against Ben-Gurion. Sternhell claims that Ben-Gurion's ideological worldview lacked any form of spontaneity.[39] This is, of course, a loaded term in Marxist thought, bringing to mind, among others, the debate between Luxemburg and Lenin and the insistence of the latter on the role of the party as an organizing force in leading the workers on a revolutionary path. Lenin held that spontaneous activity among the workers could only lead to trade unionism, which for him meant the enslavement of the workers to bourgeois ideology. It is not my intention to choose here between Luxemburg and Lenin, rather to understand the gulf that separates Sternhell and the founders of Labor Zionism with regard to their understanding of what socialism and Marxism entails. And in this instance, Sternhell's emphasis on Ben-Gurion's lack of spontaneity is crucial.

Anita Shapira has rather exhaustively shown just how much the founders of Labor Zionism were admires of Lenin and the Bolshevik revolution. Shapira has quoted Ben-Gurion, who asserted that, "We are constant in our love for the great revolution in Russia."[40] But what is this love for the revolution? This is not only (as Shapira has tried to portray it) a romantic fascination with the revolutionary idea; this is what drew people like Abba Ahimeir and Uri Zvi Greenberg, the leaders of the maximalist wing of the right-wing Revisionist movement, to Lenin on their way to the Zionist radical right. For Ben-Gurion and the other Laborite leaders, this "love for the great revolution in Russia" was ultimately an embrace of revolution in the most fundamental Leninist sense: not waiting for some romantic, spontaneous outburst that would change the course of history, but rather developing the organizations and mechanisms that would create the necessary conditions for a revolution to take place. This was the driving force behind the "constructivism" of the early Laborites and the role that they envisioned for the workers in leading the entire nation on the path to revolution. And it is this brand of Marxism—top down, controlled by a centralized party—that Sternhell ultimately objects to.

Sternhell may have chosen to depict Ben-Gurion and his colleagues as nationalists with a coating of socialism, but in the end, it is his own ideology, third-way socialism/liberalism, that only holds on to a thin veneer of traditional or "orthodox" Marxism. As he articulated it in his 1998 article in *Le Monde Diplomatique,* for Sternhell the key to heal Israel from the wounds inflicted on it by its founding fathers is to embrace the liberal secularism of the Enlightenment and the French Revolution. Sternhell may justifiably attack the ideological and moral principles of the founders of Labor Zionism, but by employing the tactic of claiming that they deviated from some pure humanistic Marx, he reveals his own ideology that was born out of the crisis that the left underwent in the 1960s and which forsook socialism in its materialistic, revolutionary guise for a third-way alternative.

Sternhell has not been alone in his criticism of the founders of Labor Zionism at the height of the post-Zionist debates. But while the Arab-Jewish conflict isn't necessarily the key theme of his analysis of the early development of Labor Zionism, for others it has been a central theme. Zachary Lockman, from a distinctly post-colonialist perspective, has argued that the entire ideological edifice of Labor Zionism was constructed on the basis of the exclusion of Arab workers.[41] To Lockman, Labor Zionism was just another case of a colonial discourse that ignored the indigenous workers in Palestine and paved the way for the future partition of

Palestine and the treatment of Arabs under Israeli rule.[42]

The sociologist Baruch Kimmerling similarly maintained that, "The Zionist socialism of David Ben-Gurion and Berl Katznelson … has always expressed itself mainly as a kind of rhetoric that masked a host of interests."[43] Likewise, for another critical sociologist, Gershon Shafir, Labor's advocacy of rights for Hebrew laborers was not motivated by socialist ideals, but (not dissimilarly to what Sternhell has argued) by a nationalist, colonial impetus.[44] According to Shafir, when the leaders of the second *aliya* fought for higher paying jobs for the Jewish immigrants (instead of hiring cheaper Arab laborers), for their right to unionize, or to gain control of their farms or factories, they were in fact engaging in a national struggle: They were creating the conditions for a Jewish market that would drive the Arabs out of the future Jewish national territory.

In his book *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914*, one of the cornerstones of the post-Zionist canon, Shafir has drawn a distinction between the farmers of the first *aliya* and the laborers of the second *aliya*. To him, the bourgeois farmers who came to Palestine in the last two decades of the nineteenth century practiced a form of moderate Israeli nationalism. And their attitude toward the Palestinian Arabs was measured because they relied on cheap Arab labor. It was, according to Shafir, colonization without a sense of demographic urgency.[45] The champions of Hebrew Labor, on the other hand, advocated, according to Shafir's analysis, a struggle against the Arab workers, and their brand of nationalism was a militaristic one. To Shafir, their struggle was aimed first at securing employment for Jewish workers (as part of a broader national struggle), and only then were they ready to fight for better social conditions.[46] The national struggle was regarded by Laborite leaders as the prime tool to attain the goal of conquering the labor market.[47]

The texts that were written at the time of the second *aliya*—both the ideological manifestos and minutes of party and organizational meetings—barely mention the national aspects of the labor struggles (with regard to the Arab question). They are, in fact, rich with traditional socialist formulas and jargon: They speak of wage compression, of the right to a dignified living, and they convey a strong sense of class consciousness (the workers against the bureaucracy or the factory owners). Shafir (and others) might very well be right that this was all but a rhetorical smokescreen aimed to hide the true colonialist and nationalist aims of the Labor Zionists with progressive-sounding socialist language. But this might also be a case of reading back into events (by Shafir and others) that unfolded later, in the 1930s and 1940s, when the Jewish and Arab national movements in Palestine entered into a prolonged bloody battle for control of the land, and not necessarily a reconstruction of the type of dilemmas that concerned Labor Zionists at the time of the second *aliya* (1903–1914) when, before the Balfour Declaration, the mere notion of an independent Jewish State seemed like a far-fetched fantasy.

It might be useful to examine here the ideological and political evolution of David Ben-Gurion's understanding (and analysis) of the growing violence in Palestine between Jews and Arabs since the late 1920s. In the aftermath of the 1929 riots, which erupted after several calm years of Arab-Jewish relations in Palestine, Ben-Gurion as the Head of the Histadrut (the federation of labor unions) offered the following observations:

> About two months ago, our country was the scene of murder, bloodshed, looting and severe attacks upon towns and villages. Ghastly murders were committed, for the most part at Safed and Hebron, two old Jewish Communities, the residents of which are

> either tradesmen or divinity students who have lived in peace with the Arabs for many generations. … This bloodshed and destruction is not an outgrowth of strained relations and quarrels of long standing between Jews and Arabs. The last years have seen quiet and steady development whereby the economic ties between all sections of the population have been strengthened.[48]

In fact, Ben-Gurion argued, the Jewish immigration benefited the entire population of Palestine and improved dramatically the living conditions of both Jews and Arabs. The cause of the violence, according to Ben-Gurion, was the traditional leaders of the Palestinian Arabs who, as he put it, "fear that the introduction of another civilization will set up new standards for the masses and stimulate them to free themselves from the authority and influence of their exploiters. This class-fear has been one of the main factors in arousing enmity against the Jewish population."[49] And, Ben-Gurion continued, this class fear was tied to religious propaganda to fuel populist anger: "The natural allies of the effendis in this work were the Moslem religious leaders. United with the effendis by family ties and a common dread of seeing the country raised to a higher cultural level, the clericals were interested on their own account in arousing religious hatred, whereby it might be possible to organize Moslem masses in Palestine and elsewhere."[50] The solution, Ben-Gurion held, was ultimately socioeconomic:

> When once the cultural level of the Arab working masses is higher and they are capable of directing their own affairs, a solution for the political problems of the two nations can be found by peaceful means. The workers of both nations have no interest in either nation ruling over the other or dominating sections of the country, not inhabited by their people. The national aspirations of the proletariat cannot be other than full autonomy for each group.[51]

It is clear, then, that at least as late as 1930, when analyzing the violence that engulfed Palestine in the previous year, Ben-Gurion and the Laborite establishment understood the tensions between Jews and Arabs from a purely class-based, economic perspective, not as a national struggle. This point of view would undergo a dramatic change, however, by the time the Great Arab Revolt in Palestine was in full bloom in the last three years of that decade.

In reaction to the violence in Palestine, a royal commission headed by Lord Peel recommended in July 1937 that Palestine be portioned into Jewish and Arab States. Ben-Gurion and the predominantly Laborite Zionist leadership begrudgingly accepted the plan (which was ultimately rejected by the British government, only to be revived in the late 1940s by the UN). In October of 1937, Ben-Gurion wrote a letter to his son Amos, who opposed the proposed partition plan, in which he offered the following observations:

> If we have a state, we'll be able to populate the land, outnumber the Arabs, and accelerate building and expansion. The more our forces grow, the sooner the Arabs will realize that they cannot and should not oppose us. They will rather take advantage, both politically and materially, of the Jewish presence. I am not a dreamer and I do not like wars. I have always believed—even before the option of a state materialized—that when we are strong and numerous in the country, the Arabs will realize how beneficial an alliance with us can be; if they let us settle in all parts of Palestine, they can benefit from our help.[52]

Here, again, an argument is made that the Jewish colonization of Palestine would benefit the Arab population as well (this might lend credence to a post-colonial argument that Zionism from its inception was a paternalist, colonialist movement, but this does not undermine the earlier text's Marxist perspective—Marxism, which never shied away from paternalism, championed the improvement in the conditions of workers), but the perspective is different: It is fundamentally nationalist. In 1937, Ben-Gurion clearly understood the tensions between Jews and Arabs in Palestine to be part of a violent national struggle for territorial control between the two communities, not necessarily a class struggle. One can accept Shafir's (and Sternhell's) claim that this change was the product of the very ideological makeup of Zionism from its very beginning. Or one can make the case that the ideological shift was grounded in profound historical changes: the rise of Hitler in Germany, which made the case for an independent Jewish State ever more urgent; the growing intensity in the Arab assaults against Jews in Palestine; and the changing attitudes of the British toward Zionism, as they gradually moved away from the principles of the Balfour Declaration.

To Shafir, then, the principles that shaped the Jewish *Yishuv* from the onset, those espoused by Labor Zionists, were the real driving force behind what has become since the 1940s Zionism's and Israel's territorial maximalism. Shafir has created a clear contrast between the almost pure capitalism practiced by the first-*aliya* landowners and the nationalist brand of socialism practiced by the members of the second *aliya*, which came to dominate Jewish policies in Palestine/Israel for decades: The former, for him, tended to avoid conflicts, and the latter thrived on them. And it was only when more liberal, capitalist forces began to dominate Israeli society starting in the 1960s that, according to Shafir, Israel began a gradual process of decolonization—of replacing the ethos of struggle with that of conflict resolution.

In the preface to the paperback edition of *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914*, which Shafir wrote in 1995, he made the following argument about the legacy of Labor Zionism and developments in Israel in the 1990s, an argument that is emblematic of the post-Zionist mindset and which deserves a lengthy quote:

> Over the years Israel's economic development … has weakened the state's and Histadrut's control of the economy in favor of private business interests. The sectoral shift has manifested itself in policy changes that began as early as the 1960s and have gradually intensified over the past two decades. Among these changes were the greater role played by market forces in the labor market and the opening up of financial markets, as well as substantial privatization, the institution of stable exchange rate, reduced government subsidies and increasing governmental resistance to "bailouts," and cuts in the defense budget and budget deficits. Correspondingly, the export-oriented high-tech sectors have grown considerably … and their concern—the converse in many ways of that of the Jewish Labor Movement—is no longer to be protected within this market, but rather to expand it as much as possible. … Peacemaking was the Israeli way of gaining security as well as access to a more global economy. … Just as the institutional edifice created by the Labor Movement around the Histadrut—and by extension the welfare state in general—was viewed by the new economic and professional strata as a hindrance to their own well-being, so the settlement ethos … became anachronistic. … Under the influence of these elites, the stage of state building has ended for most Israelis, and Israel has effectively entered into the era of post-Zionism. The process of decolonization at the

present [1995] moment is still at its beginning stage, though it seems to have passed the point of no return.[53]

Let's assume for now that Shafir and his interpretation is borne out by facts, that the struggle for Hebrew labor at the expense of Arab workers marked the initial salvo in the Arab-Jewish conflict in Palestine, and that only once Israel began to shift away from Labor's ideological legacy (when it traded socialism for the free market) did it begin to embrace the idea of territorial compromise and propose a historical thought experiment. What if after the 1967 War the state of Israel, instead of allowing cheap Palestinian labor from the West Bank and Gaza to flood the Israeli market, would have enforced the principles of Hebrew labor as preached for and practiced by the leaders of the second *aliya*—what Katznelson envisioned as the true nature of national sovereignty? It would have been quite plausible that on the one hand, the great economic boom that Israel experienced since 1967 might not have happened. But at the same time, perhaps, one of the key rationales for holding onto the Occupied Territories—the availability of cheap labor—would not have presented itself, and without this economic factor, conceivably, Israel would have sought to withdraw from the Territories as part of some kind of peace agreement (as it did after the 1956 conquest of the Sinai peninsula) that would have offered it concrete rewards. In this scenario, it is possible to imagine the idea of Hebrew labor as an anti-colonialist principle. If Israel had chosen to resist the promises of the marketplace, to say no to the rationale of liberal economic policies, maybe the current condition in which millions of people live under Israeli control without the benefits of sovereignty could have been prevented? And perhaps the Jewish settlements in those territories would have never been built in the first place. In this context, perhaps the revival of the socialist fighting words of the second *aliya* (whether they were hollow or real) could have offered a radically different horizon.

With the benefit of hindsight, we know that the process of decolonization was not as inevitable as Shafir predicted it might be. In fact, the number of Jews living in the West Bank has nearly doubled since 1995; it has not diminished.[54]

True, Palestinian violence has rendered the Territories an economic burden, and Israel, economically and socially, has begun to separate itself from some of the Territories—though not as part of a peace deal, but rather by keeping the Territories under Israeli military control (and the Arab population there still without normal political sovereignty) and by replacing the Palestinian workers with guest workers from all over the world. If anything, in the period of deregulation and privatization, the violent interaction between Israelis and Palestinians has only intensified, while the number of people living under Israeli control without the benefits of citizenship and sovereignty (Palestinians and foreign workers) has only increased. From the post-Zionist perspective of the 1990s, the fundamental struggle that has defined Zionism from its inception was that between an ideology that champions a strong state and a strong commitment by individual members of society to the collective and a more individualistic worldview that places the individual person before the social collective. And in this dichotomy, statist collectivism is tied to colonization, exclusion of non-Jews, and to the struggle between Jews and Arabs; while the opposite approach is described as more peaceful in nature (exchange as a form of peaceful social interaction), and one that leads to decolonization and the easing of tensions along ethnic or national lines. Therefore, as long as collectivist, Labor Zionism was the hegemonic force, Israel continued to expand and engage violently with its surroundings[55]—while the transition to a more market-driven society has ushered in (among the Israeli elites) a more dovish worldview that champions peaceful integration into the global economy and which

mandates a peaceful resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflict on the basis of the land-for-peace formula. But from our twenty-first-century perspective (after the second *Intifada* and the ongoing violence between Israelis and Palestinians), this narrative seems, at best, outdated—if not outright wrong.

The case of the settlements in the territories that Israel captured in 1967 is crucial to understand the changing role of labor and the state in modern Israel (if only because for early Labor Zionists the notion of the conquest of Hebrew labor was tied to the idea of the conquest of the land). The conventional description of the rise of the Jewish settlements beyond the "green line" focuses on the role of the a new generation of national religious activists who were driven by a messianic ideology formulated by Zvi Yehuda Kook—the son of the first chief Ashkenazi rabbi of mandatory Palestine. In this tale, the 1967 victory unleashed a wave of messianism throughout Israeli society—and this allowed the followers of Rabbi Kook, who believed that the settlement of the entire Land of Israel is necessary on the road to the redemption of the Jewish people—to begin to settle the newly captured Territories.[56] This tale is usually described as a struggle between the Labor-led government that had no clear vision of what to do with the Territories and the motivated national-religious settlers who were armed with a clear notion of what results of the 1967 War entailed.[57] Even the excellent study by Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *The Lords of the Land*,[58] which exposes the deep connections between the Israeli establishment and the settlers from the very beginning, still emphasizes the deep ideological gap between the religious settlers and the Labor government. Of course, in these narratives, the picture changes after 1977, when the Likud government made the settlements an integral part of its overall official policy.

Undoubtedly, the ideological aspect of the rise of the religious Israeli right is crucial, but it is not the entire story of the settlement project. Moreover, by limiting the discussion to the rise of a certain messianic form of Zionism, one can resort to simple dichotomies that divert us from some of the important factors that are at work in modern Israel. This is especially apparent in Gadi Taub's account of the settlers (he focuses almost exclusively on the religious settlers), where he draws a clear line of demarcation between a rational (and secular) brand of Zionism and the dangerous messianism of the followers of Rabbi Kook.[59] If only Israel could rid itself of the settlements and the ideology that lies behind them, it could return to be a beacon of democracy and liberalism in the region. It is easy, from a liberal perspective, to describe the settlement project as an unplanned outgrowth of some deranged ideology, just as it is for the religious settlers to perceive themselves as the true heirs of the pre-state Zionist pioneers: Secular Israelis are decadent hedonists, while we are willing to make sacrifices for the national good.

In the aftermath of the Israeli pullout from Gaza in 2005, the historian Moti Golani articulated quite succinctly the Israeli liberal position:

> The faith-driven settlement of the territories that were conquered in the Six-Days War was accompanied by the destruction of the Zionist idea by using its symbols and signs [by the settlers]. … But the faith community in the territories is the exact opposite of historical Zionism, whose mainstream sought to create a Jewish national home like that of all other nations. … This kind of Zionism arrived at the idea of a compromise that sought partition that created the opportunity for life in this country.[60]

More recently, the *Haaretz* columnist and Middle-East analyst Zvi Bar'el offered a similar

account of the settlement project:

> The "settlement enterprise" knew how to camouflage itself. Only a few more hours of prayer in the Cave of the Patriarchs, begged the settlers; just let us clean up the site of the Avraham Avninu synagogue in Hebron; only a small and intimate neighborhood in Kiryat Arba; just a small increase in the population of the neighborhood; only an outpost and an access road. And as though in a military diversion exercise, the "enemy"—Israeli governments, center-left Knesset members, various peace movements—bought this camouflaged plan as though it were the real plan.[61]

The settlers, in this equation, reject all compromises; they reject the rule of law in the name of a fanatic, religious ideology. They trick and manipulate the Israeli State in order to carry out their ideological goals. If post-Zionists argued that the outcome of the 1967 War was a direct continuation of Zionist policies from the beginning of the twentieth century (the settlements in the West Bank are a new wave of the Zionist pioneering spirit of the second *aliya*), the liberal Zionist position is that if only Israel could cleanse itself of the malignant (religious, messianic) settlements, the pure, virtuous Zionism of the first half of the previous century would re-emerge.

A closer examination, however, may indicate that the story of the settlements in the West Bank transcends the simple opposition between secular, liberal Zionism and religious Zionism (the liberal Zionist dichotomy)—nor is it simply a new chapter in the Zionist quest to settle Palestine since the time of the first waves of Zionist migrations (as the post-Zionists would have it). The important social and economic changes that Israel has undergone over the years cannot be ignored in the discussion of the settlements. In the pre-1977 period, most of the settlers in territories conquered by Israel in the 1967 War were not religious settlers informed by Rabbi Kook's teachings. In fact, if the traditional tale of the Israeli settlements in the territories describes them as the direct outcome of the efforts of a select group of national religious activists who defied the policies of the government, another story, just as plausible, could be constructed. According to this narrative, after 1967, successive Israeli governments, both Labor and Likud, decided that civilian settlements in certain areas that Israel conquered in 1967 were crucial for Israeli security and for the future development of the country. In the period between 1967 and 1977, the Labor government built settlements (including *kibbutzim*) in the Jordan Valley, the Golan Heights, and the Sinai Peninsula (not including the settlements that religious activists established with some aid from the government and the military during that period and Jewish neighborhoods in East Jerusalem, which was annexed by Israel). After 1977, the Likud government built settlements, especially in areas close to the "green line" (the June 4 border between Israel and Jordan) and in the vicinity of Jerusalem, with the idea of obliterating the "green line." The majority of the Israeli Jews who settled in those communities were not necessarily driven by ideological reasons. They were motivated to settle there because they were given economic incentives (housing, jobs, education, and more) to do so. Even under Likud governments there were clashes between the government and the more radical settlers who wanted to build settlements in the most densely populated (by Palestinians) areas in the West Bank.[62] But the overwhelming majority of the settlers were encouraged by various Israeli governments, Labor as well as Likud-led governments, to settle in the Territories.

One of the few academics who examined the economic dynamics of the Jewish settlements in the territories has been Daniel Gutwein. Gutwein explored the relationship between the changes that Israeli society as a whole underwent and the settlement project. One of his key

arguments has been that,

> The enormous benefits, which the "Land of Settlements" offers in housing, education, health, taxation, infrastructure and employment, have actually become a mechanism which compensated the lower classes for the damages inflicted upon them by the privatization of welfare services in Israel. These benefits spurred, in fact, most of the migration to the Territories. The migration to the "Land of Settlements" offered the lower classes symbolic capital as well: inclusion into the new Israeli elite of the settlers. The lower classes' political support of the right, and their ideological identification with the settlement project, blurred the economic and social motives for their migration into the Territories. The importance of the economic and social opportunities that the settlements opened up for the lower classes increased—also for those who have not yet taken advantage of them—as privatization of the welfare state exacerbated the inequality in Israel.[63]

According to Gutwein, since 1977, Israeli governments have systematically dismantled the welfare system as they privatized and deregulated every aspect of Israeli economic and social life. But while in Israel proper this process was going on, in the Territories, mainly in the West Bank, the exact opposite was going on. There, an elaborate welfare state was constructed, allowing the poorest members of Israeli (Jewish) society an economic safe haven of sorts. In fact, if we look at the evolution of Jewish migration to the West Bank, we can identify three major waves: under the Likud governments of the late 1970s and early 1980s, lower class Israeli Jews, many of them Mizrahim—the group that propelled Likud to power—moved to settlements that offered them, at drastically reduced costs, suburban living within convenient commuting distance to either Tel Aviv or Jerusalem (the major advertising campaign of the Likud government to draw settlers to those communities then was that they were only five minutes away from Kfar Saba, a suburb of Tel Aviv); then in the 1990s, many immigrants from the former Soviet Union were settled in the West Bank; and over the past fifteen years, the fastest growing settlements in the West Bank have been Beitar Ilit and Modi'in Ilit—two ultra-orthodox towns in the West Bank. As Gutwein has argued, for the weakest, the poorest, and most vulnerable groups in Israel (though not the Arabs), the West Bank has become an alternative to the disappearing Israeli welfare state.

One of the most pronounced post-Zionist analyses of the settlements has been Yehuda Shenhav's *The Time of The Green Line: A Jewish Political Treatise* from 2010. In this work, Shenhav has criticized what he sees as the liberal Israeli obsession with the "green line." He sees this as a romantic image of some utopian pre-1967 Israel by a certain secular, Ashkenazi elite who long for the time when they were the hegemonic force in Israeli life.[64] To Shenhav—as for other post-Zionists—the two-state solution is no longer viable. There are too many settlements and settlers in the West Bank, and removing them in order to create an independent Arab-Palestinian State in the West Bank and Gaza is simply unrealistic, he claims. Shenhav adopts Gutwein's analysis and points to the fact the majority of the settlers are indeed Mizrahim, immigrants from the former Soviet Union, and ultra-orthodox—the victims of Israeli neo-liberalism.[65]

So what is Shenhav's proposed solution? Although his analysis emphasizes the economic and social dynamics of Jewish settlement in the West Bank (which would prevent the creation of an independent Palestinian State), his remedy, in true post-Zionist fashion, evades the economic

question altogether. Because, he argues, the evacuation of the Jewish settlers is both impractical and immoral,[66] the only solution is the establishment of one state between the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River that would accommodate the national and communal aspirations of both Jews and Arabs. He envisions a kind of co-societal entity, where each group can exercise its own identity and culture while sovereignty is shared by the two groups and mediated by some kind of constitutional court. He compares his model to the European Union, where regional characteristics are maintained under some kind of general political umbrella.[67] Shenhav admits, however, that this is a utopia, and he is doubtful it has any practical merits. As he put it, "Is there a chance that this would happen without violence? Apparently not. In the utopian analysis that I have offered I left outside the dimension of power, the fear from change. … Leaving the dimension of power outside the parameters of analysis is paradoxical for sociologists who are trained to identify power structures in every act or saying."[68]

This is the quintessential post-Zionist paradox. On the one hand, Shenhav (following Gutwein and others) acknowledges the fundamental impact of economic and social processes in understanding the present, yet when it comes to offering a solution, the economic (and political) plane is set aside, and culture (politics without real power) becomes the arena for solving political disputes (Jews will recognize the harms they caused to Palestinians; Arabs will recognize the Jewish connection to the land). Or to put it differently: Global capitalism and neo-liberalism are the problem, but the solution does not involve addressing them; rather, one accepts culture as the only place where political action can take place, which is the very logic of the neo-liberal order. Instead of changing the system, you turn all political battles into culture wars.

Gutwein has also addressed the future of the settlements (and the broader Arab-Israeli conflict) and wrote, "Applying the experience of decolonization means a radical change in the priorities of the left, principally by adopting a policy of 'welfare in exchange for territories.' That is to say, providing social security to the lower and middle classes through economic regulation, just distribution and social equality in the framework of a universal welfare state that will bridge the social and economic gaps."[69] If Shafir has maintained that only abandoning the legacies of statist socialism would lead to de-colonization, Gutwein, with the benefit of hindsight, has argued that perhaps the opposite is true. What drove the majority of Jews to the West Bank were the economic incentives that were no longer attainable in Israel itself. If Israel would return to offer the same kind of protections (though this time as part of real, universal equality), there would be no benefit in settling in the West Bank, and except for the ideological hard core of the settlers, the main rationale for living in an area that is not under full Israeli sovereignty would vanish.

One of the slogans that Israeli liberals have used in promoting de-colonization in the West Bank has been that the budgets that go out to the settlements would instead be diverted to aid the poorer sectors in Israel. But Gutwein's argument goes much deeper. He does not speak of redirecting funds. He speaks of changing the entire system—of resurrecting the social and economic frameworks that were at the core of the Labor Zionist ethos—the social infrastructure of Hebrew labor. In fact, he calls on everyone to make a sacrifice—not for the rich to see the poor receive a few more programs. This is a social vision that rejects the fundamental economic gaps that were created by the neo-liberal or free-market regime. It is a real call for the return to the values of Hebrew labor, not a nostalgic yearning for some innocent past.

The attitude of the Israeli left, since the 1980s, toward the settlements in the West Bank provides a clear snapshot of the overall evolution of that camp. The initial liberal reaction has been to blame the settlement project on a right-ward ideological shift among the majority

(predominantly poorer) of Israelis. And to argue that the dismantling of the settlements and the peace that it would bring would elevate the economic condition of all Israelis, including those who favor the policy of continuing to hold on to the Territories and the settlement despite the negative impact that this has on their own economic interests (ultra-nationalism as a classic case of false consciousness). Not surprisingly, some of the chief proponents of this position, and some of the leaders of the Israeli peace camp, are the captains of the Israeli business class. For example, Benni Gaon, a leading Israeli industrialist, wrote in 1997, "In my view, the economic benefits of the peace process are irrefutable. … The peace process also enabled a redistribution of resources from defense to infrastructure, transportation, telecommunications and education. The felicitous impact on our national well-being over the longer term is therefore inestimably greater."[70] The post-Zionists have advanced this position to its radical (and arguably logical) conclusion. If the way to overcome the legacy of the occupation is by renouncing national chauvinism and embracing the power of globalization, then a peace solution that maintains the nation-state will not solve the underlying problem (nationalism as an agent of strife). The only viable solution, then, is abolishing the (Jewish) nation-state and creating a new multinational and multicultural state, in which there will no longer exist any differences between a settlement in the West Bank or Tel Aviv. Both will be part of the Jewish component of the new federated country. But if the hopes of the older liberal guard were based on practical political calculations governed by the national interest, the post-Zionist position seeks to completely eradicate concrete political action, instead seeking symbolic remedies. And this signals the ultimate surrender of the left to the logic of the market: the state and politics as an obstruction to the natural flow of market forces.

There is yet another option for the left. To return to the old (fashioned) values of Labor Zionists—not to the imagined cultural purity of that age (again, the image of Amos Oz's secular, Ashkenazi, pre-State Jerusalem, or Gadi Taub's idealized Israel without the dangerous messianism of the religious settlers), but to the idea that political change involves changing the social and economic reality—changes that involve direct action by the state. The great Israeli poet Yehuda Amichai once wrote about Jerusalem,

> I've come back to this city where names
> Are given to distances as if to human beings
> And the numbers are not of bus routes
> But: 70 After, 1917, 500 B.C., Forty Eight.
> These are the lines you really travel on.[71]

Much of the symbolic struggle over Zionism has always been tied to borders and years, especially the 1948 lines and the 1967 lines and what they mean. For the post-Zionists and the Israeli right,[72] the lines of 1967 are meaningless—the significant event is 1948, the founding of the Jewish State. For Shenhav, as we have seen, liberal Israelis use the 1967 line as a fig leaf: Only the occupation and the settlements (by the radical messianic fringe) have tainted the moral legacy of Zionism—before 1967 Israel (and Zionism) was an exemplary moral state. By unmasking this truth, Shenhav seeks to declare (as do other post-Zionists) that since its very foundation, Israel (and Zionism) was immoral. From the post-Zionist perspective, once Jews adopted the idea of political sovereignty through the state, they abandoned their moral position as the excluded other, and when the State was created in 1948, this became a living reality. But by inserting economic and social changes into the equation (as we discussed in chapter 1), 1967

assumes a new transformative dimension in Israeli history: not as the beginning of the occupation, but as a watershed moment in the transition of Israel from collectivism to free-market individualism (aided to a large degree by the occupation). In this regard, the fundamental change that 1967 brought about, or the event, to use Badiou's terminology, which reconfigured the symbolic order, was not a new wave of colonization, but rather a shift from socialism to capitalism, from collectivism to individualism. (And as we saw, 1967 reconfigured the basic definitions of left and right in Israeli politics, which pre-1967 tended to focus on socioeconomic questions—socialism as opposed to civil society and the free market—and which post-1967 related almost exclusively to the question of territories and peace.) From this perspective, the Zionist revolution meant that Jews should be allowed to become a collective that is self-reliant, and 1948 was the realization of this process. What 1967 symbolizes is a retreat from this ethos and the embrace of individualism, the dismantling of political bonds (which was a quintessential feature of the exilic Jewish condition). Both the post-Zionist and the rightist position, which embrace the 1948 lines, see, at the end, a march toward a one-state solution. For the right, it will be a Jewish state (by force, though there are some leading right-wing activists who insist on granting some or full political rights in this state to Palestinians in the West Bank)[73]; for the post-Zionists it will be a multi-national or multi-ethnic state. For them, dismantling the settlements is impossible or immoral, and therefore Israel would become one state between the Mediterranean and the Jordan River. From the point of view of the 1948 lines, political action is all but meaningless. Nothing can change the outcome—the experiment of an independent Jewish State is doomed to fail. But by seeing 1967 from a social-economic perspective, perhaps political action is possible. But this action starts not with the dismantling of settlements (which is indeed a daunting task) but by rebuilding the social networks inside Israel, the very networks that now only exist in the West Bank. This could be the beginning of a reversal of the migration from Israel to the West Bank that has grown in direct relation to the disappearance of the Israeli welfare state. One of the great questions of the twenty-first century, for Zionism, is whether the process of the loosening of the collective social bonds will continue (and potentially become more and more violent in the form of ethnic and economic clashes) or whether collectivism will re-emerge as a commitment to social welfare and equality. And tied to this is the question (again, to borrow loosely from Badiou) what kind of event may trigger the change.

At the heyday of the optimism with regard to the possibilities of the market, in the 1990s when the vision of a global village seemed more and more viable, a return to the dogmatism of the second *aliya* may have seemed anachronistic. In the 1990s, *avodah ivrit* could have only been imagined as part of a nostalgic artistic endeavor. Ze'ev Sternhell set out to uncover the reasons that laid the foundations for the growing social ills of the State of Israel back in the formative years of Labor Zionism. From that perspective, if the rigid (if not dogmatic) socialism of the early *aliyot* is to be blamed for the current ills, then perhaps a more liberal form of socialism may have had a brighter lasting legacy. But, again, the Israeli case was different from the German, British, or French case, where the legacy of the reformist socialist parties can be detected (though less and less) in current progressive social programs. Zionist socialism did not have the luxury of emerging in an advanced society and economy—it had to create a new society. And would a new society created solely by the forces of capital without massive input by the workers and their institutions have had a more positive legacy? Is the United States, with its fundamental social gaps and lack of a social safety net, the model that Sternhell is pining for? Sternhell was projecting the reality of the 1980s and 1990s back to the beginning of the last century. In an Israel that is advanced and governed by the logic of capitalism, he sees the role of

Israeli socialism as that of a reformist, liberal movement—one that would infuse the current social structure with moral principles. But the reality of the early twentieth century was radically different: It did not call for reform; it called for building something new. Sternhell bemoaned the fact that contemporary Labor Zionism has abandoned its commitment to social issues (that is absolutely true), but for him the reason lies in the fact that Labor Zionism was never truly committed to social questions; it was always consumed by nationalist concerns. But it is Sternhell's critique that is itself already rooted in the shift that Western socialism underwent since the 1960s. Labor Zionism created a new society that, however flawed, withstood incredible challenges. What it could not account for was the social and cultural changes that swept Israel (partly due to its own success). So is the answer to the current social ills accepting the social status quo and seeking only to reform it? Or are there some deeper lessons that one could glean from the dogmatic, unimaginative, and at times stifling socialism of early Zionists?

In a critical analysis of Sternhell's book, Mitchell Cohen has argued that Sternhell's assessment of Labor Zionism was indicative of a more general crisis that inflicted the Israeli/Zionist left.[74] What Cohen has called for is a new form of post-Zionism that understands the historical conditions that necessitated the emergence of Zionism and the unique synthesis of nationalism and socialism in the *Yishuv*, while reconfiguring them to the new technological and political realities of the twenty-first century. Cohen's analysis of the origins of the post-Zionist critique in the general crisis that inflicted the left with the dismantling of the welfare state and the overwhelming victory in the West of neoliberalism is very powerful. As for his suggestion with regard to the future course of a post-Zionist agenda that draws on the legacy of the early Zionists, one might choose to be more circumspect. What Cohen calls for is adaptation to the current political and social reality, the diminishing role of the state in a globalized world—not to change them, but to improve them. Early Zionism was revolutionary at its core; it analyzed the material conditions that governed Jewish life and sought to radically transform them in opposition to the prevailing logic of the time. Perhaps *this* is a worthy legacy for a time beyond post-Zionism and an area in which the Zionist left can once again become a constructive political force.

EPILOGUE

> The only currency I value is the coin of the spirit. That's very important in my life.
>
> —Kinky Friedman

> Money, then, appears as this distorting power both against the individual and against the bonds of society, etc., which claim to be entities in themselves. It transforms fidelity into infidelity, love into hate, hate into love, virtue into vice, vice into virtue, servant into master, master into servant, idiocy into intelligence, and intelligence into idiocy.
>
> Since money, as the existing and active concept of value, confounds and confuses all things, it is the general confounding and confusing of all things—the world upside-down—the confounding and confusing of all natural and human qualities.
>
> —Karl Marx, "The Power of Money"

Earlier in this book I mentioned Etgar Keret as one of the prime representatives of a certain post-Zionist moment in Hebrew literature, as a member of the "thin-language" generation that emerged in the 1990s. Keret's short stories are highly personal, they tend to reduce politics to childish games, and they project a certain detachment from the social reality. In Keret's literary universe, a story titled "Rabin's Dead" refers to a cat that was found in Rabin's Square, while the legendary Israeli intelligence agencies are reduced to a grotesque, yet apolitical, depiction in a story titled "The Son of the Head of the Mossad." But although certain themes in Keret's work can certainly be viewed as a reflection of the post-Zionist condition, as a product of a (perceived) post-ideological and post-political time, there are certain elements in Keret's work that can also suggest a hint of the promises, struggles, or perhaps even politics that a time beyond post-Zionism may offer. And one story in particular, "Lishbor et ha-Hazir" (Breaking the Pig), from the collection of short stories *Missing Kissinger* that was published in Israel in 1994, may offer the most vivid path there yet.

Like the majority of Keret's stories, "Breaking the Pig" is a very short story—a mere two and a half pages—yet it contains some very powerful themes that grant it rather ambitious dimensions that defy its meager, or economic, proportions. The story's protagonist is a young boy named Yoav who eagerly wants his parents to buy him a Bart Simpson doll (a rather typical Keretian pop culture reference). The boy's mother agrees to buy the doll, but his father refuses. The father declares that the boy is too pampered and has no sense of the true value of money; in fact, the father asserts, assuming for a moment the role of a moralistic prophet, if kids do not learn the true meaning of money at a young age, they will surely grow up to be hoodlums. So instead of buying his son a Bart Simpson doll, the father decides to buy him a piggy bank; or, as Keret describes it from the vantage point of the little boy, "Instead of a Bart doll, he bought me an ugly porcelain pig with a flat hole on his back, and now I will grow up to be OK, I will not become a hoodlum."[1]

After Yoav's father introduces the piggy bank, father and son reach an agreement: The boy will have to complete simple tasks, like drinking hot chocolate in the morning (without throwing

up immediately afterward, Yoav adds!), for which he will be paid money. Yoav will then insert the coins in the back of the pig so the pig will make a rattling sound. And the boy knows—so the agreement stipulates—that when the pig is filled up with coins so that it no longer makes the rattling sound, he will get a Bart doll on a skateboard because that, his father said, was the properly educational thing to do. The Bart Simpson doll has a price (not the price at the store, but a price set up by the father), and there is a clear-cut way how this price can be paid.

As Yoav goes on to stuff his pig with money, he grows fonder and fonder of the pig. He comes to like the pig more than his other toys, and he even gives the pig a name, Pesachsohn, after, as the boy describes it, a man who used to live in their mailbox but whose name Yoav's father was unable to scratch off the box. (Not only does Yoav not understand the true value of things, even the simple categories of time and space seem to escape him.)

With time, Yoav begins to see the pig as a fellow living creature. He thinks that the pig smiles at him when he inserts coins in its back, and he pleads with the pig not to jump off the table. Then, one morning, the father rattles Pesachsohn quite violently—the boy fears that the pig will get a stomach ache—and since the pig doesn't make a sound, Yoav's father declares that the next day he will get Yoav the Bart Simpson doll. The father then brings a hammer and instructs Yoav to smash the pig because the father tells his son, "You've earned your Bart Simpson, you've worked hard enough for him." Then Yoav surprises his father and declares that he no longer wants the Bart doll; as far as he is concerned, holding on to Pesachsohn is quite enough. And when Yoav's father volunteers to break the pig himself, the son pleads with his father to give him one more day with the pig. That night, after his father has gone to bed, Yoav sneaks out of the house and takes Pesachsohn to a field filled with thorns and leaves him there because, he reassures Pesachsohn, "Pigs love fields, especially fields with thorns." "You'll be fine here," he promises his pig, and leaves Pesachsohn there in the open field with a belly filled with coins.

"Breaking the Pig" could be read as a story about the innocence of childhood, about the follies of the modern world, or about a stern father and the Oedipal complex. It could also be interpreted as a tale about the limits of representation and the possibilities that lie beyond it. Moreover, while at a first glance the story might seem to be an attack on materialism and consumerism, in some sense it might be perceived as a quintessentially materialistic tale about the possibilities of redemption, one that rejects simplistic spiritualism—the moralistic supplement of free-market capitalism—and instead posits love and relationship as real material bonds.

At the core of Keret's story is the relationship between father and son. The son wants to fulfill his immediate desire (the Bart Simpson doll), but his father decides that it is time to educate the son: to transition him from the childish state in which all of his wants and desires are immediately fulfilled by the parents to the realm of adulthood and responsibility where desires are suppressed and controlled. And the way the father seeks to attain this goal is by teaching his son about the true value of money—the means to realize things. In order to elevate his son (conceptually, epistemologically) from the naiveté of youthfulness where everything is simply what it seems to be—a toy is something to play with and enjoy; hot chocolate is a drink to satisfy one's thirst—the father feels that his son needs to understand the higher meaning of things, their true value in the world. And in order to achieve this goal, the father wants his son to understand the value of money, the ultimate means of representation, where everything has absolute worth that can be openly and transparently exchanged. So, for the father, educating his son involves two steps: discipline (not to satisfy his wants instantly) and learning to understand and appreciate the true cost (meaning value) of things—a Protestant ethics for an advanced capitalist world,

indeed.

Jean-Joseph Goux has drawn a compelling parallel between the emergence of money in the Greek polis and the development of the alphabet as a system of representation. To Goux, the transition from barter economics (where things are just what they are and can be exchanged for other things based on their sheer utility) to a system in which money represents universally the value of objects was similar to the transition from myth to philosophy; it entailed the acceptance of a rational system that governed an exchange system. This was a transition from language as an instinctive natural entity (it relied on symbols that resembled natural things and sounds) into a structure that relied on arbitrary signs and symbolization.[2] It was also a process of maturing, as society moved from its youthful, natural state that was shrouded in myth into rational, responsible adulthood.

According to Goux, at the basis of this logic of exchange isn't a simple dual (barter) relationship—between buyer and seller, father and son—but rather a third agent becomes dominant: the "universal symbolic product," the ultimate incarnation of the common measure, money. And what we realize under the logic of money is that social relations (in the case of "Breaking the Pig," the relationship between father and son) are replaced by the authority of the common measure.[3] So the father wants to educate Yoav; he wants his son to grow up. He does not want him necessarily to be useful or productive (the tasks Yoav has to fulfill are silly; they do not contribute to the family as a social unit); he wants him to understand the power of exchange, to realize that products are immediately thrown into the logic of being commodities—that their value isn't natural (they have no real use value) but determined by some external, rational system. And isn't that a classic illustration of commodity fetishism (the coins that mysteriously become the doll riding a skateboard—metal that is transmuted into a shiny plastic object)?

But what is the son's reaction to the father's mission in Keret's story? He accepts the laws set forth by his father, but he refuses to be educated. Yoav does follow his father's instructions: He lives up to his obligations and fills Pesachsohn with coins while imbued with a great sense of mission; he is a good boy (citizen), indeed. What he refuses to do is to accept the logic of monetary representation. As opposed to seeing Pesachsohn as an empty vessel, as some kind of transitory tool or condition whose sole purpose is ultimately to deliver to Yoav the desired doll, he views it as a living thing, as a real body. And instead of treating the money he is paid by his father as a symbol of value, he sees it as something that is consumed by the now-living pig. This is a very forceful act of resistance by the son. A simple act of resistance would have been to refuse the father's plan altogether, to refuse to fulfill his daily obligations and get paid for them. But Yoav's defiance is more subtle, yet at the same time, it gives the story its powerful conclusion: He is willing to follow the rules set up by his father (he has no choice; the father has power and authority), but he refuses to accept their logic and meaning.

In an acerbic and witty analysis of the Michael Jackson trial from 2005, Terry Eagleton commented on Jackson's desire to achieve immortality (in the most literal sense),

> It is hardly surprising that he has expressed a wish to live forever, given that death is the final victory of nature over culture. If the U.S. sanitises death, it is because mortality is incompatible with capitalism. Capital accumulation goes on forever, in love with a dream of infinity. The myth of eternal progress is just a horizontalised form of heaven. Socialism, by contrast, is not about reaching for the stars but returning us to earth. It is about building a politics on a recognition of human frailty and finitude. As

such, it is a politics which embraces the reality of failure, suffering and death.[4]

At the climax of "Breaking the Pig," the father demands that Yoav smash the pig. For the father this is the rational thing to do: The pig (bank) has outlived its usefulness; what cannot outlive its use is money, which can always be accumulated and exchanged for other things. For the father, then, the value of money transcends the life of the thing that contains it, but for the boy, the very life of the object, the pig, gives meaning—and it is this that he refuses to sacrifice. The idea of pain and suffering and empathy toward the weakness of another is what separates the son from the (logic of) the father. The aim of the father's educational project was not for Yoav to be weaned off his childish consumerism, his desire for objects, but rather to teach him the true value of things. (This is what spiritualism in the capitalist system aims for: to supplement the constant battle to accumulate in the marketplace with a sense of purpose and meaning. This is how the Kabbalah Centre advertizes its core mission: Through the Kabbalah Centre, the practical tools and spiritual teachings of Kabbalah are accessible to everyone for personal change and transformation. Or, in other words, work on Wall Street during the day and come to the Centre to be a better person at night.) In that respect, Yoav has indeed been educated: He has learned the value of things by rejecting the very foundation of the father's educational project.

The lesson Yoav has learned is a materialistic one. Not in the common use of the word—that we should strive for material gain as a sign of success or maturity—but in learning that our humanity is not determined by an abstract, subject-oriented system, but rather by our encounter with objects that lie beyond our rational, immediate control. In the story, Yoav humanizes his pig. He thinks of the pig as a fellow creature with emotions, pain, and fears. To Yoav, the act of feeding the pig with coins isn't a symbolic gesture of accumulation of wealth; it is literally seen as feeding the pig, as making it grow. But at the same time, Pesachsohn also humanizes Yoav: Through his pig (a material object), Yoav is able to assert himself and resist the logic of his father. The father meant to educate his son by teaching him to think rationally, as if life is governed by simple, identifiable laws, to become a part in a great, rational machine. Yoav's lesson was that things that reside beyond the simple system of representation are the way to assert his mature humanity.

And perhaps there is a greater lesson here about our experiences in a late capitalist society. One of the undeniable achievements of postmodern thought has been its ability to expose the limits of representation and the problematic nature of any system of universal meaning. However, postmodernism has been unable to account for the broader social and historical forces (capitalism) that underlie the epistemology of modern systems of representation (the stock exchange as the purest system of arbitrary signs and symbols) and instead only enhanced capitalism's own internal drive—it rendered everything part of a virtual, symbolic order, thus only magnifying the very mechanisms of late capitalist society (hyperreality as a consumer's paradise). The same holds true with regard to post-Zionism. While post-Zionist studies have made incredible contributions to or understanding of modern Zionist and Jewish history, they failed to account critically (what I described in an earlier chapter as ideological blindness) for the very social and economic forces that created the post-Zionist condition. And moreover, the post-Zionist conclusions, such as the ending of sovereignty or the abolishing of borders, were themselves propelled by the logic of late capitalism. The important revolutionary aspect of Zionism's founders was their understanding that the Jewish problem in Europe was not a question of identity or of cultural assimilation, but rather that it was a structural problem caused by the social and economic forces that shaped modern European civilization. Therefore, their

solution could only be a materialistic one—to create the conditions that would allow the Jews in Europe to resist the system that would ultimately lead to the destruction of European Jewry and reverse its logic (which rendered the Jew as the absolute outsider of the European system). And perhaps this should be one of the keys in our attempts today to think beyond post-Zionism.

One of the questions we are faced with today is should politics in the twenty-first century be concerned with generating more and more identities, voices, and narratives, which in the current political climate also (and perhaps most important) intensify tribal and ethnic rivalries? Should contemporary politics focus on localized political projects, thereby only affirming the hegemony of the prevailing general economic logic? Should we, perhaps, embrace what Žižek has called "liberal communism,"[5] or what Bill Gates has described as "creative capitalism," in which corporations in their pursuit of profit will make contributions to humanitarian causes, thereby accepting the third-way's logic that the current order is here to stay and all we can do is try to render it more philanthropic and ethical?[6] Is all we can hope for today that general prosperity will spill over to the less privileged members of society? Are the only differences between left and right the ways we interpret the meaning of supply-side economics (allowing corporations to pursue profit without any sort of regulation or mandate them to give up some of their profits)? Or is there, perhaps, another way? Is there a way for us today to take the pig and leave it in a thorny field? Can we resist the logic of the father?

The founders of Zionism attempted to do exactly that by offering to radically alter the course of Jewish history, not by creating muscular Jews or by negating their Jewishness, but by understanding that the only course of action available for the most marginalized member of the social structure is to upend it—by making that very element the basis of a universalizing order, what Jameson described as the emergence of a new collective ontology.[7] What if instead of accepting the dictates of the marketplace, we revived some of the basic principles that were espoused by Zionism's founders—collectivism, workers' right to a dignified living, effective sovereignty—and applied them universally to all the members of society within a given territory? What if we refused to view accumulation as the end all of all human activities and instead empathized with the sufferings and fears of the less privileged among us?

Earlier in this volume, I quoted Ben-Gurion, who described Zionism as not only an uprising against a system but as a revolt against destiny.[8] But what could the contours of this revolt be? In his critique of *Altneuland*, which was also addressed earlier in this book, Ahad ha-Am criticized some of the universalizing themes of Herzl's text, which Ahad ha-Am felt emptied Herzl's work, and his overall Zionist vision, of any true Jewish content. Ahad ha-Am pointed, for example, to a section in *Altneuland* in which one of the leaders of Herzl's imaginary New Society had suggested that the success of the Jews in Palestine might serve as a model for a future liberation movement of blacks in Africa. As Ahad ha-Am put it,

> I assume, and I will not be exaggerating if I say that with only minor changes the author of the book in front of us [Herzl] could have turned it entirely into a "black" book. … Imitate others without any unique talent; to distance himself from national chauvinism until there is hardly any remnant of the national characteristics of the people, its language, its literature and its spiritual inclinations.[9]

To Ahad ha-Am, Herzl was willing to renounce the unique qualities of the Jewish spiritual tradition for a simplistic general solution that aims to imitate others rather to embrace and

accentuate the particular nature of the Jewish people. This, as we have seen, was also Boyarin's charge against Herzl. The Jews, from this position as the radical other, as the eternal outsider and wanderer, were the singular element that resisted the logic of the system and therefore held a privileged ethical position. But wasn't it the very logic of the system that reduced the Jew to the position of the outsider? This was Herzl's fundamental insight—the uniqueness or "otherness" of the Jews was forced on them and exposed them to persecution and violence. But Herzl, as opposed to how his opponents and critics have portrayed him, refused ultimately the easy universal solution to the Jewish problem (mass assimilation or conversion). What he, in fact, tried to achieve in his Zionist program was a synthesis of the particular—the unique Jewish condition—with the universal: a just, sovereign state. Herzl refused to fetishize the "otherness," the exotic quality of the detached Jewish condition (which from the safety of the 1990s was easy to do). He understood the real dangers that the Jews faced because of their marginality and tried to draw on their unique condition in order to solve the Jewish problem by adhering to universal principles.

The Zionist writer and critic Avigdor Hame'iri, in a 1926 article about Hebrew theater in Palestine, argued that,

> The mission of the Hebrew theater is a Jewish one: to improve and exalt the humanity in us, without concessions and without aberrations. Since prophecy is no longer practiced in our midst, the theater is our only recourse to influence the masses and win their hearts. We must seize the moment and start defending our Hebrew heritage in the land of the prophets. We must cultivate conscientious and ethical authors and, through them, a healthy, moral Hebrew society. … As for learning from others, it is basically a question of how far we have come from the time of the Exodus to the era of Reinhardt, Mayerhold and Tairov. How should we use European techniques and dramatic devices for our own purposes, for the creation of a Hebrew theater inspired by the Prophets? This generation of individual talent and superior intellect must have a collective goal and a readiness to sacrifice itself for the general good. Such a theater cannot be realistic and cannot employ naturalistic devices. Heroism demands a broad vision, not fussy attention to picayune details. It must follow the example of the Prophets.[10]

What Hame'iri called for was to draw on the great energy generated by the distressful condition of modern Jewry, which fueled the pioneering spirit of early Zionism, and to connect it to a broader, collectivist, and universal ethos that draws its inspiration from the prophetic tradition of the Old Testament. What Hame'iri wanted to do was to use the particular condition of the Jews in order to create a universal solution.

Yitzhak Elazari-Volcani (Wilkanski) was an agronomist and later a professor of agricultural economics at the Hebrew University who wrote a series of essays and reportages on the collectivist communities in Palestine between 1912 and 1923.[11] Today Wilkanski is quite obscure, but in the 1920s, he was one of the first (Labor!) activists to challenge the prevailing ideological platform among Labor Zionists at the time: collectivism. And from this critical perspective, he formulated an ideological position that foreshadowed some of the later post-Zionist critique of Zionist/Israeli collectivism.

Wilkanski was a supporter of *Ha-Poel ha-Tza'ir*, the anti-Marxist Zionist Labor movement. Like some of the other members of the movement (most notably Chaim Arlosoroff, who we discussed in the previous chapter), Wilkanski accepted the materialistic analysis of history that

was inspired by Marxist insights, how economic forces and interests are the predominant factors in human history. (For Wilkanski, the end of the Jewish ghetto in nineteenth-century Europe was brought about strictly by the forces of modern capitalism that eliminated the traditional, medieval economic functions of the Jews.[12]) But he rejected the Marxist conclusions. Namely, Wilkanski rejected the Marxist and Zionist Laborite insistence on collectivism, and instead he embraced a Proudhonist position that called for "idealistic Anarchism."[13]

As Wilkanski put it,

> Proletarianism is not an end in itself; it is not followed from choice but from necessity, through force or circumstances. It is a narrow strait to be traversed on the voyage, not the broad haven of rest. … Our final haven is not collectivism. This is but the storm-tossed vessel which crowds multitudes into its narrow confines, taking from the individual his freedom of choice. … In industry collectivism is a necessary evil. The subjection of the individual is a necessary transition stage. One day perhaps science will make new discoveries which will completely change accepted forms in industry.[14]

Wilkanski, as I indicated earlier, was a critic of the prevailing ideology of the time. He wrote that "Zionism signifying as it does the regeneration of a people, does not only want to create a Jewish social entity but a better one. … And in order to prevent disorders and commotion … we cannot do better than to mould all our work in the form of the future—that is to say collectivism." But Wilkanski warned, "The thought underlying this idea is great and lofty in itself when it lies in the realm of the abstract. In practice it reveals itself in another light. In industry it is impracticable, and in agriculture it is not lofty."[15] To Wilkanski, collectivism was a naïve and immature dream. To paraphrase the tired neoconservative cliché that conservatives are liberals who were mugged by reality, Wilkanski was a collectivist who, based on his observations and analysis of existing settlements in Palestine, became a champion of individualism. Real, existing society, he held, should be based on rationality—and to him, rationality entailed individualism, which allows human beings to maximize their potential.

Wilkanski could be an early hero of post-Zionists, or he can identify with Yoav's father: Wilkanski the harsh realist, as opposed to the more Marxist Laborites of his time who were childish dreamers. But is individualistic satisfaction a greater force in human life than (at times irrational) collective sacrifice and care for the other? Is idealistic anarchism, the dismantling of all oppressive political institutions, the only way to accommodate human needs? This certainly became, by the 1990s, the prevailing sentiment in Israel (and elsewhere in the West). Indeed, at the turn of the twenty-first century, Baruch Kimmerling suggested that the ultimate way to relieve Israel of its social and political ills was to bring the long process by which the powerful state was being replaced by a civil society based on voluntary human bonds (as opposed to the coercive means of the state) to its conclusion: a society where the individual precedes the collective.[16] But now that the optimism of the 1990s is giving way to the harsh realism of the twenty-first century, it is perhaps Wilkanski's form of utopia (technology that would relieve us from the need to work and sacrifice collectively) that is no longer relevant—but rather the opposite kind of utopia, that of the revolutionary spirit that was cultivated by Herzl and later adopted and reformulated by the founders of Labor Zionism, that might carry greater currency.

The 1990s saw the all-but-final disintegration of this dependency between the particular and the universal: The post-Zionist condition has promoted an individualistic, particularistic ethos of

privatization and deregulation of the collective, while the post-Zionist critique has championed a political vision that abolishes borders and limits of sovereignty (and with it the very protections that they provide). Perhaps, one path to the thorny field in which Yoav placed his pig lies in rediscovering this fusion between the particular and the universal by expanding our understating of who is the particular and weak—the Arab, the foreign guest worker, the unemployed single mother—and granting all the particulars in the territory under Israeli sovereignty not simply an opportunity to culturally express themselves, to tell their story, but true access to the same universal protections and rights.

One of the crucial questions that has haunted the left in the West since the 1980s is why the working poor (Mizrahi Jews in Israel, "ethnic whites" who became Reagan democrats in the United States) have abandoned the left and embraced the conservative camp? Why have the lower classes abandoned the Labor movement and joined forces with the business elite and its economic agenda? Or, as Thomas Frank phrased it in the title of his famous 2004 book, *What Is the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America.*[17] Frank's answer is twofold: On the one hand, for the left after the 1960s, cultural issues (women's and gay rights) replaced economic causes. The workers who were abandoned by the left found comfort in the conservative camp, who did not offer them a better economic future, but a sense of greater meaning by emphasizing traditional family and community values. What Frank also lays out is a condemnation of the right for diverting the poorer voters from their true interests. To him, the conservatives used cultural values to create false consciousness: to rally the masses around common cultural causes (to oppose gay marriages or abortion rights) and against the liberal elite, which espouses radical values, while upholding a radical free-market platform that ultimately has a devastating effect on the lives of poorer voters.

A similar process, as we have seen, has been happening in Israel. The left has abandoned its socialist tenets and became the political home of the predominantly Ashkenazi, secular, coastal, and urban—Tel Aviv—upper middle class, while the lower classes found comfort among more conservative parties. As we have seen earlier, Uri Ram has described this as the growing rift between a post-Zionist Israel, whose symbolic capital is Tel Aviv, and a neo-Zionist Israel, whose symbolic center is Jerusalem. As Ram phrased it, "The retreat of nationalism; the rise of individualism; the spread of pluralism; and the overarching hegemony of capitalism—all centered actually and symbolically in Tel Aviv rather than in Jerusalem. All the while, the neo-Zionist nationalist, ethno-centric, and fundamentalist backlash—an orientation centered in and on Jerusalem—is also on the rise."[18] But is that the only possible political course in the current century? Are we doomed to analyze everything as a dichotomy between the olive and the Lexus, or Ram's preferred metaphor, which was also the title of one his books, *The Globalization of Israel: McWorld in Tel Aviv, Jihad in Jerusalem?*

In the summer of 2011, thousands of young Israelis, frustrated with the high costs of housing, erected tent cities in the heart of Tel Aviv and elsewhere around the country. They organized rallies that drew hundreds of thousands of Israelis to the streets. What those Israelis wanted was both immediate economic relief from escalating costs (of everything from cottage cheese, to university tuition, to day-care facilities) and a return to the sense of security that the much-derided (in the 1990s) welfare state provided in the past. The slogan that was heard in Tel Aviv in the summer of 2011 again and again was "We want social justice!" The protestors did not make the argument that if there is peace more money would be devoted to social causes (and the market could continue its uninterrupted flow the way the business elite made that argument in the 1990s); rather, they said, address the social issues immediately, and one would assume that

peace would be part of this overall change in policy.

A common feature of the postmodern world has been the diversion of political action from the here and now to the (unapproachable) other. As Žižek put it, an ideology of tolerance of the other (her identity, story) has assumed a hegemonic place (as *the* ideology in our alleged post-ideological age), while refusing to create any real change in the material fabric of society (any change might impact the other, infringe upon his space and privacy).[19] What the protestors in Tel Aviv were in effect saying is that they, the young generation lacking economic security and opportunities, are the other—not some exotic group that should be tolerated but never fully engaged; they wanted remedy and change. They did not want a new discourse or cultural values—they wanted the most basic and universal things: housing and education. And they want new political policies that would reverse decades of privatization and deregulation and instead reconstitute government-run social programs.

What the protesters in Tel Aviv tried to show was that they were not yet another middle-class Ashkenazi protest movement (like Peace Now), seeking to dethrone a right-wing prime minister. They took great pains to show that they speak on behalf of all Israelis, secular and religious, Ashkenazi and Mizrahi, urban and rural, Jews and Arabs—and indeed alongside the main rallies in Tel Aviv, smaller rallies were held in what Israelis refer to as "the periphery" (anywhere outside the greater Tel Aviv area). Yet, it remains to be seen whether their movement will have a broad appeal or remain a predominantly student-led movement. (So far, the political impact of the protests has been minimal. In the 2103 elections, some of the leaders of the protest movement—Stav Shafir and Itzik Shmuli, who was the president of the national student union at the time—were elected to the Israeli Knesset as part of the Labor party, but the leader of Labor in 2011, Shelly Yechimovich, who championed the social agenda of the protesters and wanted to return Labor to its social roots, was ousted in 2013 and replaced by Yitzhak Herzog, a leader in the mold of the New Labor and very much part of the country's economic and business elite.) But by looking at other sectors of Israeli society, the students might find interesting inspiration, if not potential political allies.

The ultra-Orthodox Israeli editor and writer Moshe Grylak has offered the following observations in answering the criticism that has been repeatedly leveled at the *haredi* (ultra-Orthodox) community in Israel that chooses to remain isolated from the rest of mainstream Israeli society. True, *haredi* society in its essence keeps itself shut off from the general society, according to Grylak. It wants to preserve itself and this requires isolation. It is fearful of the hurricane that is Western promiscuity that is blowing now outside, bringing down fences, uprooting homes, tearing apart families; dismantling societies and communities that are now awash with drugs, hedonism, and orgies; that creates a globalized society that leads many to poverty and a select few to riches. This reality forces a *haredi* society that wants to survive to keep to itself until the storm passes. Any change today puts it in danger. It is hard, and it pays greatly for this isolation. But it has no choice. It has the right to defend itself.[20]

One of the fascinating achievements of the *haredim* in Israel has been their ability to shut themselves off from the temptations and promises of modern society. The *haredim* are not the Amish. They do not shun technology or other features of modernity. But they do reject the cultural values of modernity—the promise of absolute freedom (sexual and otherwise). Instead they adhere (more and more) to strict laws that curtail one's wants and desires. As Grylak put it, "Judaism places limitations. For the believer this is culture. … Culture begins at the point in which human beings start to impose limits on themselves."[21]

As we have seen, Shenhav (as well as Gutwein), in his analysis of contemporary Israel,

viewed the *haredim* alongside Mizrahim and new immigrants as the marginalized (Jewish) groups in Israeli society who are the victims of Israeli neo-liberal policies. Indeed, the majority of *haredim* and *haredi* towns and communities are extremely poor. But is this poverty the direct result of social policies in Israel? Or is it also tied to their overall relationship with modern culture? Could their poverty also be voluntary?

Traditionally, the ultra-Orthodox held anti- or a-Zionist positions. For a host of theological and cultural reasons, they opposed the creation of an independent, secular Jewish state. As secular Zionists were creating the state, *haredim* developed their own autonomous social and educational institutions. Over the years, *haredim* became more and more involved in Israeli politics and came to rely increasingly on state funds—but they continued to run their own autonomous networks outside the scope of the Israeli government. Thus, the collapse of the Israeli welfare state, which had a profound impact on many sectors of Israeli society, changed relatively little among the ultra-Orthodox—they continue to rely on their own communal organizations that are receiving government funds, but they are not impacted by the general process of privatization and deregulation in Israel. In this regard, *haredi* society was always privatized and deregulated vis-à-vis the state. *Haredim* in Israel did not become poor because of government policies; they remain poor in a community that ultimately values chastity, modesty, and conformity over ostentatiousness and individualistic expression.

As we have seen earlier, the *haredi* resistance to the state and politics has made traditional Judaism a symbol for the rejection of modernity among postmodern and post-Zionist critics: the wandering Jew as the negation of the rigidity of modern rationalism and its techniques of power. But the risk with this postmodern position is that it can fetishize the traditional Jew as some romantic figure who can be admired from a far, but not as someone whose lifestyle we want to emulate—the ultimate other who evades representation or meaning. The *haredi* is reduced to a keeper of a textual tradition that challenges modernist principles—but the actual *mitzvoth* (commandments) that define the everyday *haredi* experience are not posited as some viable alternative to modernity. But what if the very act of choosing not to participate in the consumerist marketplace would become a model to emulate? What if the social networks that exist within the *haredi* community were to serve as a model for broader Israeli society? This could create a new coalition, not only of the poor and underprivileged, but also of those who say no to the dictates of the marketplace. In Uri Ram's division of Israeli society and politics into the post-Zionist and neo-Zionist camps, into those who seek liberal values in a globalized world and those who prefer tribalism and narrow nationalist interests, the *haredi* political parties in recent years have certainly fallen into the latter category. In fact, in recent years they have shed their anti-Zionism and have adopted hawkish, militaristic positions (though they did not go so far as to suggest that their voters serve in the military). The Israeli right has been able to count on them as natural allies in political coalitions. But if, as I have described before, Israeli politics were to overcome the left-right divide that came to characterize Israeli politics after 1967 (the peace camp and the Greater Israel camp) and instead bring social and economic questions back to the forefront of Israeli politics, maybe new coalitions and political alliances can be formed based on mutual interests and concerns. Maybe in the time beyond post-Zionism Judaism can once again be a light unto the nations—as a model of social justice and equality.

NOTES

INTRODUCTION

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CHAPTER ONE

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27.Perry Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* (London, 1998) 69.

28.S. Yizhar, "About Uncles and Arabs," *Hebrew Studies* 47 (2006) 322–23.

29.Hanoch Levin, "Shishah Meruba'im," (Six Squares) in Hanoch Levin, *Ma Ichpat la-Tzipor, Ma'archonim ve-Pizmonim 1* (What does the Bird Care, Songs, Sketches and Satires 1) (Tel Aviv, 1987) 28.

30.Levin, *Ma Ichpat la-Tzipor* 92–97.

31.On Levin's satirical revues, see Haim Nagid, *Al Mahazot Hanoch Levin* (On the Plays of Hanoch Levin) (Tel Aviv, 1998) 48–59.

32.Hanoch Levin, "Bo Hayal shel Shokolad," *Mita'am* 19 (2009) 62–63.

33.See Shimon Levy, "Queen of a Bathtub: Hanoch Levin's Political, Aesthetic and Ethical Metatheatricality," in Gerhard Fischer and Bernard Greiner (eds.) *The Play within the Play: The Performance of Meta-Theatre and Self-Reflection* (New York and Amsterdam, 2007) 145–66, esp. 165.

34.Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley, 2000) 123.

35.The poem was first published in *Davar*, 19 December 1947. The English translation is by Derek Penslar in Eran Kaplan and Drek Pensalr (eds.) *The Origins of Israel, 1882–1948: A Documentary History* (Madison, WI, 2011) 345–46.

36.See Nisim Kalderon, “Zach mi-Hutz le-Kufsah,” (Zach Outside the Box) Ynet February 2, 2009. http://www.ynet.co.il/articles/1,7340,L-3663960,00.html. Accessed December 15, 2013.

37.Nathan Zach, “Hirhurim al Shirat Alterman,” (Thoughts on Alterman’s Poetry) *Achshav* 3–4 (1959). This critique was later crystallized into a more general poetic stance in Zach’s 1966 book *Zeman ve Ritmus etzel Bergson u-va-Shira ha-Modernit* (Time and Rhythm in Bergson and Modern Poetry). See Eli Eshed, “Ha-Yekum shel Nathan Zach,” (Nathan Zach’s Universe) in the online journal *Eretz Ha-Tzvi* July 12, 2003. http://www.faz.co.il/story_1504. Accessed November 25, 2013.

38.Nathan Zach, *Tzfonit Mizrahit: Shirim 1967–1978* (North East: Poems 1967–1978) (Tel Aviv, 1979) 124.

39.Alon Gan, “Anatomia shel Hahmatza Historit,” (An Anatomy of a Historical Missed Opportunity) *Haaretz* September 19, 2008. In 2008, the Israeli government, which wanted the remaining two Beatles to perform in Israel as part of Israel’s 60th anniversary celebrations, sent the remaining Beatles and relatives of the two late ones letters of apology for the cancellation of the 1965 concert. Finally, in September 2008, Paul McCartney gave a concert before 40,000 fans in Tel Aviv.

40.According to Tom Segev, the introduction of television was the decisive moment when Israelis began to see themselves as individuals and not as part of a collective. See Tom Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem: Post-Zionism and the Americanization of Israel* (New York, 2002) 68.

41.Jabotinsky, “Al-ha Hah (Al ha-Alef Bet ha-Hadash)” (The Fireplace [On the New Aleph Bet]) in *Ketavim, Ba-Derech la-Medinah* (Writings, On the Way to the State) (Tel Aviv, 1950) 89–90.

42.Ze’ev Jabotinsky, “Ma’amad,” (Class) in *Ketavim, Umah ve-Havrah* (Writings, Nation and Society) (Tel Aviv, 1950) 247.

43.See Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli* 232–33.

44.As Michael Shalev has shown, the function of the state and the Histadrut was so engrained into Israeli political economy that it took several phases of liberalization to integrate Israel into the global, neoliberal world economic order. See Michael Shalev, “Have Globalization and Liberalization ‘Normalized’ Israel’s Political Economy?” *Israel Affairs* 5 (2–3), (1999) 121–55.

45.Oz Almog, *Preida mi-Srulik:Shnui Arachim ba-Elita ha-Israelit* (Farwell to Srulik: Changing Values Among the Israeli Elite) (Haifa, 2004) 27.

46.The process by which more and more Israelis owned private cars (in older Israeli colloquial Hebrew, the term for car was “private,” denoting its status as a luxury item) was also gradual, owing to the deep structural hold of older economic patterns in the Israeli political economy. As the Likud government began to lower import taxes on cars, it set an arbitrary bar—cars with engines of 1.3 liters or bigger were considered luxury cars and were taxed more heavily than smaller cars. This meant that small European cars were more affordable, but the new Israeli bourgeoisie wanted sedans, the true symbol of a mobile middle class. Until the 1990s, most Japanese car makers, acquiescing to the Arab boycott, did not sell their products in Israel. The one exception was the smaller company Subaru. In the 1980s, Subaru began selling a 1.298 liter sedan, which soon became the biggest seller in Israel. The journalist Yossi Melman described it as Israel’s Subaru Syndrome (see Yossi Melman, *The New Israelis: An Intimate View of a Changing People* [New York, 1992] 207). By the 1990s, other Japanese makers entered the Israeli market and the tax code was reformed, thus dethroning Subaru from its 1980s dominance over the Israeli car market and presenting the Israeli consumer with a growing number of options.

47.Oz Almog, “The Globalization of Israel: Transformations,” in Shapira *Israeli Identity in Transition* 235.

48.Shlomo Ben Ami, “Israel ke-Hevra Rav-Tarbutit,” (Israel as a Multi-Cultural Society) in Yoav Peled and Adi Ophir (eds.) *Israel: Mi-Hevra Meguyeset le-Hevra Ezrahit?* (Israel: From a Mobilized Society to a Civil Society?) (Tel Aviv, 2001) 22.

49.Louis Menand, “Browbeaten: Dwight Macdonald’s War on Midcult,” *The New Yorker* (September 5, 2011) 75.

50.Alain Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism* (Stanford, 2003) 9–11.

51.On the social role of radio in Israel’s early years, see Derek Penslar, “Transmitting Jewish Culture: Radio in Israel,” in *Israel in History: The Jewish State in Comparative History* (London, 2007) 187–206.

52.Tamar Liebes, “Performing a Dream and Its Dissolution: A Social History of Broadcasting in Israel,” in James Curran and Myung-Jin Park (eds.) De-Westernizing Media Studies (London, 2000) 305–23.

53.Quoted in Oz Almog, *Preida mi-Srulik* 139.

54.Yaron Peleg, *Israeli Culture between the Two Intifads: A Brief Romance* (Austin, TX, 2008) 62.

55.Amalia Ziv, “Dana International,” in Adi Ophir (ed.) *Hamishim le-Arba’im u-Shmoneh* (Fifty to Forty Eight) (Jerusalem, 2008) 401.

56.Peleg, *Israeli Culture between the Two Intifadas* 3.

57.Gafi Amir, “By the Time You’re Twenty-One You’ll Reach the Moon,” in Michael Gluzman and Naomi Seidman (eds.) *Israel: A Traveler’s Literary Companion* (San Francisco, 1996) 52.

58.Etgar Keret, “Cocked and Locked,” in *The Bus Driver Who Wanted To Be God and Other Stories* (New York, 2001) 38.

59.See Eagleton, *The Illusions of Postmodernism* vii.

60.Jean Francois Lyotard, “Universal History and Cultural Differences,” in *The Lyotard Reader* (Oxford, 1989) 321.

61.Fredric Jameson, *The Cultural Turn: Selected Writings on the Postmodern 1983–1998* (London, 1998) 6.

62.Benny Morris, “The Eel and History,” *Tikkun* 5 (1) (January-February, 1990) 19.

63.Lawrence J. Silberstein, *The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture* (New York, 1997) 7.

64.Charles Jencks, “The Death of Modern Architecture,” in *The Language of Post-Modern Architecture* (New York, 1991)

23.

65.Ophir, “The Identity of the Victims,” 197.

66.See Meira Weiss, *The Chosen Body: The Politics of the Body in Israeli Society* (Stanford, 2002) 1.

67.Gabriel Piterberg, “Erasures,” *The New Left Review* 10, (July-August, 2001), reproduced in Adam Shatz (ed.) *Prophets and Outcasts: A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing about Zionism and Israel* (New York, 2004) 148.

68.Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, “100 Years of Zionism, 50 Years of a Jewish State,” *Tikkun* 13 (2) (March-April, 1998) 68.

69.Azoulay and Ophir, “100 Years of Zionism,” 71.

70.Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, *Yamim Ra’im: Bein Ason le-Utopia* (Bad Days: Between Catastrophe and Utopia) (Tel Aviv, 2002) 205.

71.Yossi Yona, “Ha-Hesder ha-Shlishi,” (The Third Arrangement) in Rubik Rosenthal (ed.) *Kav ha-Shesa: Ha-Hevra ha-Israelit bein Kri’a ve-Ihuy* (The Split Line: Israeli Society between Tearing and Fusion) (Tel Aviv, 2001) 332, quoted in Ilan Gur-Ze’ev, *Likrat Hinuch le-Galutiyut: Rav-Tarbutityut, Post-Colonialism ve-Hinuch she-ke-Neged be-Idan Post Moderni* (Toward a Diasporic Education: Multi-Culturalism, Post-Colonialism and Counter-Education in a Post-Modern Era) (Tel Aviv, 2004) 46.

72.Uri Ram, “Zicaron ve-Zehut: Sotziologia shel Vicu’ah ha-Historionim be-Israel,” (Memory and Identity: A Sociology of the Historians’ Debate in Israel) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 8 (Summer, 1996) 23.

73.Ram, “Zicaron ve-Zehut,” 23.

74.Daniel Gutwein, “Posttzionut, Mahapechat ha-Hafrata ve-ha-Smol ha-Hevrati,” (Postzionism, the Privatization Revolution and the Social Left) in Tuvia Friling (ed.) *Teshuva le-Amit Post-Tziono* (An Answer to a Post-Zionist Colleague) (Tel Aviv, 2003) 254.

75.Sami Shalom Chetrit, “Mizrahi Politics in Israel: Between Integration and Alternative,” *Journal of Palestine Studies* 29 (4) (Autumn, 2000) 64.

76.See Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* 46.

77.See Margaret Lock, “Cultivating the Body: Anthropology and Epistemologies of Bodily Practice and Knowledge” *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22 (1993) 133–55.

78.Weiss, *The Chosen Body* 11.

79.Eagleton, “Where Do Postmodernists Come From?” 25.

80.See Seliktar, “The Changing Political Economy of Israel” 213–15.

81.See Paul Rivlin, *The Israeli Economy from the Foundation of the State Through the 21st Century* (New York, 2011) 110–11.

82.Anderson, *The Origins of Postmodernity* 136.

83.Jean Francois Lyotard, *The Postmodern Condition: A Report on Knowledge* (Manchester, 1984) 82.

84.Adam Tennenbaum, “Hilmi Shusha—Hesped Lelo Milim,” (Hilmi Shusha–A Eulogy without Words) in Ariella Azoullay and Haim Dauel Lusky (eds.) *Hilmi Shusha—Magash ha-Keseph* (Hilimi Shusha the Silver Platter) (Tel Aviv, 1997) 43–44.

85.Benny Morris, “The New Historiography: Israel Confronts Its Past,” *Tikkun* 4 (November-December 1988) 6. See also Laurence J. Silberstein, *Postzionism: A Reader* (New Brunswick, NJ, 2008) 3.

86.Arendt covered the trial for *The New Yorker*; her reportings were later published as a book, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil*, first published in 1963.

87.Anita Shapira, Mishpat Eichmann: Devarim sh-Ro’im mi-Kan Lo Ro’im mi-Sham,” (The Eichmann Trial: Things that You See from Here You Do Not See from Over There) in *Yehudim, Tzionim u-Ma she-Beinehem* (Jews Zionists and in Between) (Tel Aviv, 2007) 124–25.

88.See Yoav Gelber, *Historia. Zicharon ve-Ta’amula: Ha-Disiplina ha-Historit ba-Olam u-va-Aretz* (History Memory and Propaganda: The Historical Discipline in the World and Israel) (Tel Aviv, 2007) 153.

89.See, for example, Gabriel Piterberg, “Zionism’s Rebel Duaghter: Hannah Arendt on Palestine and Jewish Politics,” *New Left Review* 48 (November-December, 2007).

90.See Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York, 2005) 76–77.

91.Idith Zertal, *Israel’s Holocaust and the Politics of Nationhood* (Cambridge, 2005) 158–59.

92.Gershon Shafir, for example, has described the Zionist settlement in Palestine as a “pure settlement colony” that was similar to other such settlements of Europeans in other parts of the globe outside Europe (South Africa, Australia, North America). See Shafir, *Land, Labor* 8. Yehuda Shenhav has argued that Zionism was formed by a colonialist worldview that explains, for example, why European Zionists regarded Mizrahi Jews as “others” and suppressed their (Arab) cultural character. See Yehuda Shenhav, *Ha-Yehudim ha-Aravim: Le’umiut, Dat ve-Etniut* (The Arab Jews: Nationalism, Religion and Ethnicity) (Tel Aviv, 2003) 16.

93.Francis Fukuyama, “After Neoconservatism,” *The New York Times*, February 19, 2006.

94.Max Silverman, “Re-Figuring ‘the Jew’ in France,” in Bryan Cheyette and Laura Marcus (ed.) *Modernity, Culture and ‘the Jew’* (Stanford, 1998) 201.

95.Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “Galut betoch Ribonut: Le-Bikoret “Shlilat ha-Galut” ba-Tarbut ha-Israelit,” (Exile within Sovereignty: A Critique of the “Negation of the Exile” in Israeli Culture) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 4 (Fall 1993) 51.

96.Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, “Ein Moledet le-Israel: Al ha-Makom shel ha-Yehudim,” (Israel Has No Homeland: On the Place of the Jews) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 5 (Fall 1994) 96.

97.See Yoav Peled, “Galut Delux: Al ha-Rehibilitatzia shel ha-Galut etzel Boyarin ve- Raz-Krakotzkin,” (Deluxe Exile: On the Rehabilitation of the Exile in Boyarin and Raz-Krakotzkin) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 5 (Fall 1994) 133–39.

98.Amnon Raz-Krakotzkin, “Galut betoch Ribonut: Le-Bikoret “Shlilat ha-Galut ba-Tarbut ha-Israelit, Helek Sheni” (Exile within Sovereignty: A Critique of the “Negation of the Exile” in Israeli Culture, Part Two) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 5 (Fall, 1994) 130.

99.Rather tellingly, the collection of essays in Adam Shatz’s *Prophets and Outcasts: A Century of Dissident Jewish Writing about Zionism and Israel* that relates to the Holocaust is called “The Use and Misuse of Holocaust Memory.”

100.Fredric Jameson, “Globalization as Philosophical Issue,” in Fredric Jameson and Masao Miyoshi (eds.), *The Cultures of Globalization* (Durham, NC, 1998) 60.

101.Richard Rorty, *Achieving our Country* (Cambridge, MA, 1998) 85.

102.Uri Ram, “Zicaron ve-Zehut,” 25.

103.Ram, “Zicaron ve-Zehut,” 26.

104.Roger S. Gottlieb (ed.), *An Anthology of Western Marxism: From Lukács and Gramsci to Socialist-Feminism* (Oxford, 1989) 113.

105.Gottlieb, *An Anthology of Western Marxism* 121.

106.Uri Ram, “Post-Zionist Studies of Israel: The First Decade,” *Israel Studies Forum* 20 (2) (Winter, 2005) 38.

107.See Uri Ram, “Historiographical Foundations of the Historical Strife in Israel,” in Anita Shapira and Derek Penslar (eds.) *Israeli Historical Revisionism: From Left to Right* (London, 2003) 59; Ephraim Nimni, *The Challenge of Post-Zionism: Alternatives to Fundamentalist Politics in Israel* (London, 2003) 29; Asima A. Ghazi-Bouillon, *Understanding the Middle East Peace Process: Israeli Academia and the Struggle for Identity* (London, 2008) 8.

108.Slavoj Žižek, “Tolerance as an Ideological Category,” Critical Inquiry (Autumn, 2007) http://www.lacan.com/Žižek-inquiry.html. Accessed December 16, 2013.

109.See Ben-Dror Yemini, “Ha-Hitnatkut Hayta Ason” (The Disengagement Was a Disaster) *Ma’ariv* August 22, 2008.

110.Benny Morris, “Why Israel Feels Threatened,” *The New York Times* December 30, 2008.

111.Benny Morris, *One State, Two States: Resolving the Israel/Palestine Conflict* (New Haven, CT, 2009) 187.

112.Anita Shpira, “Mi-Dor ha-Palmach le-Dor ha-Nerot—Zehut Israelit be-Hishtanut,” (From the Palmach Generation to the Candles Generation—Israeli Identity in Transition) in *Yehudim, Tzionim u-Ma she-Beinehem* 258.

113.Susannah Heschel, “Should Jews Relinquish the Right of Return? No!” in Tony Kushner and Alisa Solomon (eds.) *Wrestling with Zion: Progressive Jewish-American Responses to the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York, 2003) 294–95.

114.Silberstein, *The Postzionist Debates* 109.

CHAPTER TWO

1.Thomas Lask, “Publishing Amos Oz” *New York Times* May 19, 1978.

2.*The Jewish News* May 19, 1978.

3.Talma Yigol, “Al Amos Oz ba-Olam,” (On Amos Oz in the World) *Yedioth Aharonot* January 9, 1972.

4.Victoria Radin, “The Wizard of Oz,” *Jewish Chronicle* March 24, 1981.

5.Oz Almog, *The Sabra: The Creation of the New Jew* (Berkeley, CA, 2000) 78.

6.Ella Shohat, “Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Stand Point of Its Jewish Victims,” in Anne McClintock and Ella Shohat (eds.) *Dangerous Liaisons: Gender, Nation, and Postcolonial Perspectives* (Minneapolis, 1997) 59.

7.“Elik who was born from the sea” is the opening sentence of Moshe Shamir’s book *With His Own Hands: Stories of Elik* from 1951, which was a literary tribute to Shamir’s fallen brother, Elik. This powerful image has come to be associated with the entire Sabra generation—the notion of being born from the sea as a radical break from the Diasporic, European past.

8.Gershon Shaked, “Matzeva le-Avot ve-Siman le-Banim: Ha-Otobiographia shel Oz al Reka ha-Otobiographiot shel Guri, Kaniuk ve-Applefeld,” (A Monument for the Fathers and a Mark for the Sons: Oz’s Autobiography in the Background of the Autobiographies of Guri, Kaniuk and Applefeld) *Israel* 7 (Spring, 2005), 19.

9.Anita Shapira, “Ha-Sipur ha-Tzioni shel Amos Oz,” (The Zionist Narrative of Amos Oz) *Israel* 7 (Spring, 2005), 164.

10.Shapira, “Ha-Sipur ha-Tzioni shel Amos Oz,” 168.

11.See Laurence Silberstein, “Historionim Hadashim ve Sotziologim Bikortiyim: Bein post-Tzionut le Postmodernism” (New Historians and Critical Sociologists: Between post-Zionism and Postmodernism) *Teoria u-Vikoret* vol. 8 (Summer 1996) 109.

12.Uri Ram, “Zicaron ve-Zehut,” 20.

13.Motzafi-Haller, “A Mizrahi Call,” 52.

14.Baruch Kimmerling, *Ketz Shilton ha-Ahusalim* (The End of Ashkenazi Hegemony) (Tel Aviv, 2001) 11–12.

15.In a paper titled "The Founding of Israeli Literature: '1948 Generation' Revisited" (given at UCLA on March 12, 2007), Avner Holtzman has argued that already in the writings of Moshe Shamir and other members of the 1948 generation, it is hard to discern a unified image of the Sabra.

16.Amos Oz, *Where the Jackals Howl* (New York, 1981) 46.

17.Yair Mazor, *Somber Lust: The Art of Amos Oz* (Albany, 2002) esp. 31–32.

18.Avraham Balaban, *Between God and Beast: An Examination of Amos Oz's Prose* (University Park, PA 1993) 179.

19.Amos Oz, My Michael (New York, 1972) 204–5. Quoted in Balaban, *Between God and Beast* 177. See also Yair Mazor's analysis of the way Oz undermines the ethos of the Zionist national heroes in "The Way of the Wind." Yair Mazor, *Somber Lust* 31–32.

20.David Remnick, "The Spirit Level: Amos Oz Writes the Story of Israel," *The New Yorker* November 8, 2004.

21.Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, "100 Years of Zionism," 68.

22.See U. Ram, "Zionist Historiography and the Invention of Modern Jewish Nationhood: The Case of Ben Zion Dinur," *History and Memory* 7/1 (1995): 91–124. See also Laurence Silberstein, The Postzionism Debates: Knowledge and Power in Israeli Culture (New York, 1999) 22–23. For a critical assessment of this post-Zionist argument see: Anita Shapira, "Le'an Halcha Shlilat ha-Galut," (Where has the Negation of the Diaspora Gone) *Alpayim* vol. 25 (2003): 9–54.

23.Yael Zerubavel, *Recovered Roots: Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition* (Chicago, 1997) 17.

24.Etienne Bonnot, Abbé de Condillac (1714–1780). According to Condillac, our language is riddled with frivolous elements that remove us from the true origin and meaning of our ideas. Mathematics provides a purer form of symbolic organization that comes closer to the true nature of ideas. In his "The Language of Calculus," Condillac wrote that, "Languages are all the more imperfect since they seem more arbitrary … Algebra is a well-made language, and it is the only one: nothing there appears arbitrary." Quoted in Jacques Derrida, *The Archeology of the Frivolous: Reading Condillac* (Lincoln NE, 1980) 82–83.

25.Terry Eagleton, *Holy Terror* (Oxford, 2005) 107.

26.Yona Bechler, "Olam shel Sin'ah" (A World of Hate) *Haaretz* May 28, 1965.

27.An interview with Amos Oz, *Dvar ha-Shavu'ah* July 9, 1965.

28.The article appeared in English as: Amos Oz, "An Autobiographical Note" in *Under this Blazing Light* (Cambridge, 1995) 168–170.

29."A Profile of Amos Oz," *Australian Israel Review* March 1981.

30.See Shapira, "Le'an Halcha Shlilat ha-Galut," 12.

31.Amos Oz, *The Hill of Evil Counsel* (New York, 1991) 8–9.

32.Oz, "An Autobiographical Note," 170.

33.Tom Segev *1967* (Jerusalem, 2005) 359.

34.Segev *1967*, 378.

35.Erik Cohen, "Israel as a Post-Zionist Society, "in Robert Wistrich and David Ohana (eds.) *The shaping of Israeli identity: myth, memory, and trauma* (London, 1995) 204.

36.*Al ha-Mishmar*, May 5, 1972.

37."Siha im Oz," (A Conversation with Oz) *Hedim* February 1973.

38.Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin, 2001) 91.

39.Doron Rosenblum, "Dyukan ha-Sofer ke-Ish ha-Havrah le-Hagant ha-Tevah," (The Portrait of the Author as a Member of the Society for the Preservation of Nature) *Koteret Rashit* May 11, 1983.

40.Amos Oz, *In the Land of Israel* (New York, 1983) 4.

41.Oz, *In the Land of Israel* 9.

42.See Shapira, "Le'an Halcha Shlilat ha-Galut," 41–2.

43.Amos Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* (translated by Nicholas de Lange) (Orlando FL, 2004) 296.

44.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 290.

45.Yigal Schwartz, "Nichnasta le-Armon Mechushaf ve-Shihrartah Oto me-ha-Kishuf: Al Sipur al Ahava ve-Hoshech ke-Sefer Pulchan," (You Entered a Cursed Palace and Released it of Its Curse: On a Tale of Love and Darkness as a Ritual Book) *Israel* 7 (Spring, 2005) 188.

46.Ibid., 194–95.

47.Sharon J. Macdonald, "Museums, National, Postnational and Transcultural Identities," *Museum and Society* 1 (1) (2003): 1–16, esp. 12, nn. 16.

48.Sharon Macdonald, "On 'Old Things': The Fetishization of Past Everyday Life," in Nigel Rapport (ed.) *British Subjects: An Anthropology of Britain* (Oxford, 2002) 89.

49.Yigal Schwartz, "Nichnasta le-Armon," 180.

50.Yaron Peleg, *Orientalism and the Hebrew Imagination* (Ithaca NY, 2005) 140.

51.Yigal Schwartz, "Nichnasta le-Armon," 180.

52.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 425–26.

53."Siha im Oz."

54.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 327.

55.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 329.

56.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 329.

57.Anita Shapira also described the political implications of this scene, "Is this a simple story or an analogy to Jewish-Arab relations in the Land of Israel? Jews come and aid the Arabs, a friendship is struck, but as a result of a misunderstanding, incitement, caprice, inappropriate pride, and perhaps unacceptable behavioral norms, the friendly encounter ends up in disaster." Shapira, "Ha-Sipur ha-Tzioni shel Amos Oz," 167.

58.The article was published in English as "Strange City," in Reuven Hammer (ed.) *The Jerusalem Anthology: A Literary Guide* (Philadelphia, 1995) 309.

59.Oz, "A Strange City," 311.

60.Amos Oz, *Where the Jackals Howl* 35.

61.Terry Eagleton, "Local and Global," in Obrad Savic (ed.) *The Politics of Human Rights* (London, 1999) 263.

62.Remnick, "The Spirit Level."

63.Amos Oz, "The Meaning of Homeland," in Carol Diament ed. *Zionism the Sequel* (New York, 1998) 254. The essay was first published in Hebrew as a series of articles in *Davar* on October 10, 15, 17, 1967.

64.Silberstein, *The Postzionism* 57.

65.Amos Oz, "A Monologue; Behind the Sound and the Fury," *Tikkun* 13 (2) (March/April 1998) 57–59.

66.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 359–60.

67.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 384.

68.Morris, *One State, Two States* 69.

69.If in his earlier work, as discussed earlier in the book, Morris tended to focus on the aggressive Jewish/Israeli behavior in the 1948 War, recently he has shifted his focus to the motives and means of the Arab side, describing the 1948 War as part of a Muslim jihad against the infidels. See Benny Morris, "The 1948 War Was an Islamic Holy War," *The Middle East Quarterly* 17 (3) (Summer, 2010) 63–69.

70.Benny Morris, "Peace? No Chance," *The Guardian* February 21, 2002.

71."Aggression is the Mother of All Wars" Thoughts about Germany: Amos Oz's Speech Receiving the City of Frankfurt's Goethe Prize," *Kulturjournal* (of the Goethe Institute) 3 (5) 8.

72.Oz, *A Tale of Love and Darkness* 23.

73.Amos Oz, "The Lost Garden," in *Under this Blazing Light* 156.

74.Balaban, *Between God and Beast* 179.

75.Remnick, "The Spirit Level."

76.Many of the reviews of Black Box at the time of its publication described it as outright racist. See Dror Mishani, *Be-Chol he-Inyan ha-Mizrahi Yesh Eizeh Absurd: Hofa'at ha-Mizrahiyut ba-Sifrut ha-Ivrit bi-Shnot he-Shmonim* (The Ethnic Unconscious: The Emergence of 'Mizrahiyut' in the Hebrew Literature of the Eighties) (Tel Aviv, 2006) 99–100.

77.Amos Oz, *Black Box* (New York, 1988) 53–55.

CHAPTER THREE

1.Ella Shohat, *Israeli Cinema: East/West and the Politics of Representation* (Austin, TX, 1989) 1.

2.Shohat, *Israeli Cinema* 115.

3.Shohat, *Israeli Cinema* 9.

4.Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "Ma'amad," (Class) in *Umah ve-Hevrah* 247.

5.On Kishon's social satire see: Gidi Nevo, "Arbinka, Shtucks and Co.—The Makings of Kishon's Social Satire" *Israel Studies* 10 (2) (Summer, 2005) 129–46.

6.Nevo, "Arbinka, Shtucks and Co.,"141.

7.See Oren Yiftachel and Erez Tzfadia, "Between Periphery and 'Third Space': Identity of Mizrahim in Israel's Development Towns," in Adriana Kemp, David Newman, Uri Ram and Oren Yiftachel (eds.) *Israelis in Conflict: Hegemonies, Identities, and Challenges* (Brighton, UK 2004).

8.Shohat, *Israeli Cinema* 135–36.

9.Yosefa Loshitzky, *Identity Politics on the Israeli Screen* (Austin, TX, 2001) 73.

10.Loshitzky, *Identity Politics* 82–83.

11.Loshitzky, *Identity Politics* 89.

12.In the book's preface, Loshitzky writes that her book, "aspires to fill those gaps left by Shohat's otherwise very

comprehensive book." Loshitzky, *Identity Politics* xiii. Loshitzky, then, regards her study as a continuation of the project that Shohat has begun, which is the "treatment of Israeli cinema as a representational system through which Israeli-Zionist ideology has been reproduced and perpetuated."

13.Louis Menand, "All that Glitters: Literature's Global Economy," *The New Yorker*, December 26, 2005.

14.Yossi Yonah and Yhouda Shenhav, *Rav Tarbutiyut Mahi? Al ha-Politika shel ha-Shonut be-Israel* (What is Multiculturalism: The Politics of Difference in Israel) (Tel Aviv, 2005) 68–69.

15.George Carlin on Bill Maher's HBO show *Real Time with Bill Maher*, October 1, 2004.

16.Ella Shohat, "Reflections by an Arab Jew," See also Yehouda Shenhav, *The Arab Jews: A Postcolonial Reading of Nationalism, Religion, and Ethnicity* (Stanford, 2006).

17.See Peter Rainer, *New York Magazine* May 20, 2002; Lisa Schwatzbaum, *Entertainment Weekly* May 17, 2002.

18.See Shimon Peres and Arye Naor, *The New Middle East* (New York, 1993).

19.Segev, *Elvis in Jerusalem* 13.

20.Jacques Ranciere, *On the Shores of Politics* (London, 2007) 23.

21.Ranciere, *On the Shores of Politics* 24.

22.Slavoj Žižek, *The Universal Exception* (London, 2007) 162.

23.Eagleton, "Michael Jackson."

24.Slavoj Žižek, "Afterword: Lenin's Choice," in Slavoj Žižek (ed.) *Revolution at the Gates: Žižek on Lenin, the 1917 Writings* (London, 2002) 202–3.

25.Quoted in Ehud Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother: Violence in Israeli Politics from Altalena to the Rabin Assassination* (New York, 1999) 130.

26.Quoted in Sprinzak, *Brother Against Brother* 138.

27.Quoted in Zion Zohar, "Sepharadim and Oriental Jews in Israel: Rethinking the Sociopolitical Paradigm," in Zion Zohar (ed.) *Sepharadic and Mizrahi Jewry: From the Golden Age of Spain to Modern Times* (New York, 2005) 314.

28.See Shafir and Peled, *Being Israeli* 89–90.

29.The speech is available online at: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4qd5DplnjSU. Accessed November 25, 2013.

30.See Soeren Kern, "The Failure of British Multiculturalism" Hudson New York, February 10, 2011.

CHAPTER FOUR

1.Slavoj Žižek, "On 9/11, New Yorkers Faced the Fire in the Minds of Men" *The Guardian* September 11, 2006.

2.Yitzhak La'or, "The Place Where Even Jews Can Be As White As Paul Newman," Jessie and John Danz Lecture Series, University of Washington May 8, 2008.

3.Lewis Mumford, "Herzl's Utopia," *Menorah Journal*, IX (August 1923), 155–69.

4.Russell Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age* (New York, 2005) ix.

5.Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect* xiv–xv.

6.Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect* 89–90.

7.Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect* 92.

8.Jacoby, *Picture Imperfect* 95.

9.Michael Gluzman, *Ha-Guf ha-Tzioni: Le'umiut, Migdar u-Miniyut be-Sifrut ha-Ivrit ha-Hadasha* (The Zionist Body: Nationalism, Gender and Sexuality in Modern Hebrew Literature) (Tel Aviv, 2007) 66.

10.See Slavoj Žižek, "The Iraqi MacGuffin," *Lacan.com*, 11 April 2004. http://www.lacan.com/iraq1.htm Accessed December 10, 2013.

11.Gabriel Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism: Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel* (London, 2008) 37.

12.Piterberg, *The Returns of Zionism* 42.

13.One important exception is Ali Khalidi, who tied the utopian elements of Herzl's work to his anti-Arab (from Khalidi's perspective) position. See Muhammad Ali Khalidi, "Utopian Zionism or Zionist Proselytism? A Reading of Herzl's Altneuland," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 30 (4) (Summer, 2001) 55–77. See also Derek Pensalr, "Historians, Herzl and the Palestinian Arabs," in *Israel in History* 55–57.

14.Rachel Elboim-Dror, *Ha-Mahar shel ha-Etmol* (Yesterday's Tomorrow) (Jerusalem, 1993).

15.Boris Shatz's "Rebuilt Jerusalem," in Elboim-Dror, *Ha-Mahar shel ha-Etmol*, vol. 2, 253.

16.Elboim-Dror, *Ha-Mahar shel ha-Etmol* vol. 2, 238.

17.Elhanan Leib Lewinsky "A Journey to the Land of Israel in the 800th Hundred Year of the 6th Millennium," in Elboim-Dror, *Ha-Mahar shel ha-Etmol*, vol. 2, 67.

18.Sigfried Bernfeld, "The Jewish People and Its Youth," in Elboim-Dror, *Ha-Mahar shel ha-Etmol*, vol. 2, 203–4.

19.Stefan Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* (Lincoln NE, 1964) 104.

20.Theodor Herzl, *The Jewish State* (Minneapolis, 2006) 23.

21.Raphael Patai (ed.) *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* (New York, 1960) vol. I, 236.

22.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. III, 1071.

23.Zweig, *The World of Yesterday* 104–5.

24.See Frank E. Manuel and Fritzie P. Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* (Cambridge, MA, 1979) 766–67.

25.Theodor Herzl, *Old-New Land* (New York, 2000) 8.

26.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 42.

27.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 86–87.

28.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 123–24.

29.On the etymology of the name utopia, see: Manuel, *Utopian Thought in the Western World* 1.

30.Yitzhak Tabenkin, "Ha-Mekorot," (The Origins) in Yoseph Gorny and Yitzhak Greenberd (eds.) *Tenu'at Ha-Avodah ha-Yisraelit: Ha-Yesodot ha-Ra'ayonyim, ha-Megamot ha-Havratiut ve-ha-Shitah ha-Kalkalit* (The Israeli Labor Movement: Ideological Principles, Social Tendencies and Economic Methods) (Tel Aviv, 1997) 87.

31.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 128.

32.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 152.

33.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 195–96.

34.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 205.

35.Fredric Jameson offered this observation with regard to Fourier's utopian project: "What I have designated by the word ontological in Fourier is, then, precisely this coordination of base and superstructure, so to speak: in other words the ways in which the individual passions (cultural) themselves take charge of and organize the figures of the mode of production itself (the 'infrastructure' or shape or size and dynamic of various groups)." Fredric Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* (London, 2007) 245.

36.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 78. Derek Penslar has argued that *Altneuland* is the embodiment Zionist ideal of Jewish occupational transformation. See Derek Pensalr, *Zionism and Technocracy: The Engineering of Jewish Settlement in Palestine* (Bloomington IN, 1991) 50.

37.Jacques Kornberg has shown that in the early 1890s Herzl flirted with the idea that socialism might be the way to solve the Jewish question. Herzl drew parallels between the Jews and the French proletariat and believed that radical politics might benefit both groups. He was awed by the power and great discipline of the socialist party in France. See Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl: From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington IN, 1993) 122–24.

38.Karl Marx and Fredriech Engels, *The Communist Manifesto* (London, 2008) 78–79.

39.Herzl, *The Jewish State* 5.

40.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. I, 237.

41.Herzl, *The Jewish State* 21–2.

42.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. I, 225–26. See also Michael Stanislawski, *Zionism and the Fin de Siecle: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalsim from Nordau to Jabotinsky* (Berkeley, 2001) 14.

43.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. I 336–7.

44.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. II 720.

45.Herzl, *Old-New Land*, 28.

46.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 15.

47.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 202.

48.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 104.

49.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 54. See Gluzman, *Ha-Guf ha-Tzioni* 49.

50.Altneuland was not the first instance that Herzl referenced the Cook Islands. In an address from 1896, Herzl mentioned that the head of the Cook's Trade Company was an Austrian by the name of Kohn. According to Herzl, this was an indication that you could find Jews anywhere, but nowhere (excluding a future Jewish State, presumably) can they escape the social and economic mechanisms that haunt them. See Theodor Herzl, *Zionist Writings* (New York, 1973) vol. I, 53.

51.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 145–47.

52.This was Herzl's view in his Zionist period. Earlier, he did believe the general social improvement would also solve the Jewish problem. See Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl* 20.

53.Shlomo Avineri has offered a rather problematic analysis of this passage in *Altneuland.* He claims that it shows that the 19th-century socialist utopians were the true forerunners of Herzl's worldview. He writes, "It is clear that not the political, revolutionary socialism of the militant working class is Herzl's paradigm, but the utopian, humanitarian, and reformist brand …" See Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York, 1981) 97. If anything, this passage in *Altneuland* represents Herzl's rejection of the utopian model (as opposed to the utopian genre).

54.Frederick Engels, "Socialism: Utopian and Scientific," in Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works* (Moscow, 1970) vol. III, 126.

55.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. I, 237.

56.Uri Zlibersheid, in an article on *Altneuland*, drew a parallel between Herzl and Marx. He argued that Marx's thought contained two phases in the realization of the socialist goal: a revolutionary phase and a utopian one (when a classless society becomes a living reality) and that similarly, Herzl's thought contained a revolutionary phase (the creation the Jewish state) and then a utopian stage that is depicted in *Altneuland.* While certainly making a compelling argument, Zilbersheid does not show where in Marx's writings the utopian stage of socialism is expressed (if he were able to, he would have achieved indeed something quite revolutionary)—in fact, Marx's writings are fraught with anti-utopian themes. While I wholeheartedly accept the analogy between Marx and Herzl, it is their scientific anti-utopianism, I contend, that stands out. See Uri Zilbersheid, "The Utopia of Theodor Herzl" *Israel Studies* 9 (3) (Fall, 2004) 80–114, esp. 85.

57.Yigal Schwartz, "Human Engineering and Shaping Space in the New Hebrew Culture," *Jewish Social Studies* 11 (3) (Spring/Summer, 2005) 103.

58.Theodor Herzl, "Leroy-Beaulieu on Anti-Semitism," in *Zionist Writings* (New York, 1973) vol. I, 113.

59.Herzl, "Leroy-Beaulieu on Anti-Semitism" 113.

60.Theodor Herzl, "From the Week (June 17, 1897) [The Social Democrats and the Jewish Question]," *Zionist Writings* vol. I, 87.

61.In 1897, Herzl described the different elements within the Jewish world who posed the greatest threat to the Jewish national community: "There is the financier who has so many skeletons in his closet … the blackmailing journalist … There is the lawyer with a clientele that moves on the periphery of the law. There is the pinko politician who currently pursues, exploits, and cheapens Socialism." Theodor Herzl, "Mauschel," in *Zionist Writings* vol. I, 168.

62.Slavoj Žižek, "A Leftist Plea for 'Eurocentrism' "*Critical Inquiry* 24(4) (Summer, 1998) 988.

63.Jacques Kornberg, "Ahad ha-Am and Herzl," in Jacques Kornberg (ed.) *At the Crossroads: Essays on Ahad ha-Am* (Albany, 1982) 107.

64.Kornberg, "Ahad ha-Am and Herzl," 111–12. Ahd ha-Am's (and the post-Zionist) criticism of Herzl brings to mind Marx's infamous assertion in "On the Jewish Question" that, "The social emancipation of the Jew is the emancipation of society from Judaism." In "On the Jewish Question," Marx criticized Bruno Bauer's argument that postulated that the only way to solve the Jewish problem (in its European context) was to eliminate religion as the dividing factor between Jews and Christians from the political sphere. In his critique, Marx countered that the elimination of state-sponsored religion is part of a greater process of the breakdown of older social structures and the rise of a more alienated, egotistic civil society where money is the only arbiter of value and law (and rights) is the only form of social relations. In such social setting, Marx contended, the practical function of Judaism in the Christian world, as the ultimate manipulators of money (Judaism is reduced by Marx to the religion of practicality and law) is enhanced, not reduced as Bauer had hoped. Therefore, according to Marx, only a radical restructuring of the social order, which would render the historical function of the Jew redundant, would solve the Jewish problem. One could easily allege that Herzl's solution shares some of the characteristics of Marx's argument—that only a radical new social context would solve the Jewish problem—and therefore accept Ahd ha-Am's contention that Herzl's ultimate goal is the abolition of the particular nature of Judaism. Yet, one could also argue that Herzl's solution is even more radical than that of Marx. For Herzl identifies within Judaism itself the radical elements (class consciousness?) that could bring about a radical restructuring of Judaism, which would eliminate its particular economic functioning within the global economic order (and isn't that a more properly Marxist solution to the Jewish problem? Herzl, then, is closer to the later Marx than to the one who wrote the "Jewish Question"). Thus, while Ahad ha-Am only sees Jewish particularism from a cultural perspective, Herzl (and Marx) views it from a socioeconomic perspective. And Herzl's plan, ultimately, does view Judaism as a particular group, whose very historical condition, could turn it into the bearer of a universal plan for social redemption.

65.Ahad ha-Am, "Altneuland," in *Al Parashat Derachim* (Berlin, 1921) vol. III, 159.

66.Gluzman, *Ha-Guf ha-Tzioni* 43.

67.Joe Lockard, "Israeli Utopianism Today: Interview with Adi Ophir," *Tikkun* 19 (6) (November-December, 2004) 18.

68.Azoulay and Ophir, "100 Years of Zionism," 71.

69.Jameson, *Archaeologies of the Future* 243–47.

70.Martin Buber, *Paths in Utopia* (Boston, 1960) 130–31.

71.Buber, *Paths in Utopia* 143.

72.See *The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. I, 427.

73.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. II, 720.

74.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 146.

75.Herzl, *Old-New Land* 144.

76.Ahad ha-Am, "Ha-Tzionut ve-Tikkun ha-Olam," (Zionism and the Mending of the World) in *Al Parashat Derachim* vol. III, 170.

77.Theodor Herzl, "Solon in Lydia," in Rëuben R Hecht and Ohad Zemorah (ed.) *When the Shofar Sounds: Herzl—His Image, Achievements and Selected Writings* (Haifa, 2006) 678.

78.Ze'ev Jabotinsky, "Tristan Da Runha," in *A Pocket Edition of Several Stories Mostly Reactionary* (Paris, 1925) 171.

79.Jabotinsky, "Tristan Da Runha," 173.

80.See Jacques Kornberg, "Ahad ha-Am and Herzl," 112–13.

81.Slavoj Žižek, "Revenge of Global Finance," *In These Times* May 21, 2005.

82.*The Complete Diaries of Theodor Herzl* vol. IV, 1357–358.

83.Daniel Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct: The Rise of Heterosexuality and the Invention of the Jewish Man* (Berkeley, 1997) 276.

84.Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* 282.

85.Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* 305.

86.Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* 293.

87.Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl* 190.

88.Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* 295.

89.Boyarin, *Unheroic Conduct* 307.

90.Azoulay and Ophir, "100 Years of Zionism," 68.

91.Louis Althusser, *For Marx* (London, 1995) 47.

92.Etienne Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* (London, 2007) 30.

93.Throughout his Zionist writings, Herzl made the case that earlier solutions to the Jewish problem that were inspired by the promises of the Enlightenment (assimilation, conversion) were a product of a certain period in human development. His Zionist ideas, on the other hand, reflect the material reality of turn-of-the-century Western civilization, of a time when technology has reduced the time both people and information can travel. For example, see Theodor Herzl, "Zionism," in *Zionist Writings* vol. II (New York, 1975) 122.

94.Tom Segev, *Ha-Tzionim ha-Hadashim* (The New Zionists) (Tel Aviv, 2001) 16–17.

95.Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* 122.

CHAPTER FIVE

1.*Ze'ev Sternhell, Binyan Umah o Tikkun Hevrah: Le'umiyut ve-Sotzyalism be-Tnu'at ha-Avodah ha-Yisraelit 1904–1904* (Nation-Building or a new Society: Nationalism and Socialism in the Zionist Labor Movement) (Tel Aviv, 1995). An English translation, titled *The Founding Myths of Israel: Nationalism, Socialism, and the Making of the Jewish State*, was published in 1997.

2.See Neil Caplan, "Talking Zionism, Doing Zionism, Studying Zionism," *The Historical Journal* 44 (2001) 1096; and Deborah L. Wheeler, "Does Post Zionism Have a Future?" in Laura Eisenberg, Neil Caplan, Naomi Sokoloff and Mohammed Abu-Nimer (eds.) *Traditions and Transitions in Israel Studies* (Albany NY, 2003) 166.

3.Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 9.

4.See Michele Battini and Nadia Urbinati, "Divorce within Modernity," *Archives Européennes de Sociologie* 48(3) (2007) 448–57.

5.See Michael Shalev, "Time for Theory: Critical Notes on Lissak and Sternhell," *Israel Studies* 1(2) (1996) 181–82.

6.Steven Zipperstein, "Eyeless in Zion," *The New Republic* May 4, 1998.

7.See, for example, Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 39.

8.Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 32.

9.Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 127.

10.Zeev Sternhell, "Zionism's Secular Revolution," *Le Monde Diplomatique* May 1998.

11.On the ahistorical approach that Sternhell employs, see Derek Penslar, "Ben-Gurion's Willing Executioners," *Dissent* (Winter, 1999) 114–18.

12.Ber Borochov, "Our Platform," Quoted in: Shlomo Avineri, *The Making of Modern Zionism: The Intellectual Origins of the Jewish State* (New York, 1981) 146.

13.Nahman Syrkin, *The Jewish Problem and the Socialist-Jewish State in Arthur Hertzberg, The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader* (Philadelphia, 1997) 339.

14.The Zionists of the first *aliya* were highly motivated Jews who were ill prepared for the challenges of creating agricultural communities in Palestine. The *moshavot* (agricultural settlements) that they created floundered, and they were only saved when Baron Edmond de Rothschild (1845–1934) of the Paris branch of the banking family stepped in to save them. He created a bureaucracy that administrated the settlements while relying heavily on cheap Arab labor.

15.David Ben-Gurion, "The Strike at Kineret Farm," in Kaplan and Penslar, *The Origins of Israel* 49. See also David Ben-Gurion, "Avodah Ivrit," (Hebrew Labor) in *Mishmarot* (Tel Aviv, 1935) 82–3.

16."Po'alei Zion Platform," in Kaplan and Penslar, *The Origins of Israel* 44.

17.Balibar, *The Philosophy of Marx* 107–8.

18.Ber Borochov, "Milhemet ha-Ma'amadot ve-ha-She'elah ha-Leumit," (Class Struggle and the National Question) in *Ktavim* (Writings) (Tel Aviv, 1955) vol. I, 180.

19.Ber Borochov, "Ha-Platforma Shelanu," (Our Platform) in *Ketavim* vol. I, 265.

20.Berl Katznelson, "Be-Mivhan," (Being Tested) in Baruch Aznia and Yoseph Rappaport (eds.) *Perakim be-Mishnat B.*

Katznelson (Selections of B. Katznelson's Thought) (Tel Aviv, 1967) 46.

21.David Ben-Gurion, "The Imperatives of the Jewish Revolution," in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* 607.

22.Syrkin, "The Jewish Problem," in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* 344.

23.Borochov, "Our Platform" in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* 366.

24.Katznelson, "Be-Mivhan," 50.

25.Katznelson, "Be-Mivhan," 51.

26.David Ben-Gurion, "Likrat ha-Ba'ot," (Anticipating Things to Come) in *Mima'amd le-Am* (From Class to Nation) (Tel Aviv, 1974) 27.

27.David Ben-Gurion, "Milhemet ha-Ma'amad," (Class Struggle) in *Mima'amd le-Am* 135.

28.David Ben-Gurion, "Ha-Po'el ve-ha-Umah," (The Worker and the Nation) in *Mima'amd le-Am* 207.

29.Mitchell Cohen, "A Preface to the Study of Modern Jewish Political Thought," *Jewish Social Studies* 9 (2) (Winter, 2003) 13.

30.Vladimir Ilyich Lenin, *What is to Be Done?* Section I (Dogmatism and "Freedom of Criticism" Part A What Does "Freedom of Criticism" Mean?). The text, which appeared in volume 5 of Lenin's *Collected Works*, is in the public domain and can be accessed through http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1901/witbd/i.htm Accessed December 5, 2013.

31.Interestingly, some of Labor Zionism's most ardent critics in the 1920s and 1930s, the Revisionist Zionists, attacked the Laborites for adopting the teachings of Max Adler and the attempt to combine Kantian thought with socialism. See Abba Achimeir, "Be-Shetak Shiltonah shel ha-Askanut," (Under the rule of Functionaries) *Hazit ha-Am*, November 18, 1932.

32."Chaim Arlosoroff to Chaim Weizmann," 30 June 1932. Central Zionist Archive, Microfilm AM 1012/795.

33.Anthony Giddens summarized the principles of the "Third Way" thusly, "Among the emphases of third-way thinking are two prime elements: reform of labour markets and welfare systems, to place an emphasis on job creation."Anthony Giddens, "The Third Way Can Beat the Far Right," *The Guardian* May 3, 2002.

34.Christopher Hitchens, "A Sense of Historical Irony: Leszek Kolakowski, 1927–2009," *Slate* July 20, 2009. http://www.slate.com/articles/news_and_politics/fighting_words/2009/07/a_sense_of_historical_irony.html Accessed December 17, 2013. On Kolakowski's embrace of Marx's early writings as part of his "revision" of orthodox Marxism, see also Shlomo Avineri, "Leszek Kolakowski, 1927–2009—Kemo Tipot Ma'im Le-Even Bazelet," (Leszek Kolakowski, 1927–2009—Like Water Drops to a Basalt Rock) *Haaretz* July 24, 2009.

35.Tony Judt, "Louis Althusser, The Paris Strangler," *The New Republic* 210 (1994).

36.The Bund was a Jewish socialist party that operated mainly in Eastern Europe. For a while, the Bund, which was anti-Zionist, was part of the Russian Social Democratic Movement.

37.This is also apparent in the prevailing tendency among academic postmodernists to add the category of class, as a marker of leftist identity, alongside those of race and gender, which are much more naturally associated with postmodern theory. But this "holy trinity" of contemporary theory is rather curious, if not outright vacuous. Although gender and race are depicted in contemporary theory as social constructs, meaning that gender- and race-based differences are not real, one would hardly claim that class differences are not real (based on real social conditions rather than cultural constructs). Also, although one can certainly hope for more racial and gender diversity—in neighborhoods, workplaces, schools—does one also want to promote more class diversity? Or does this only mean that we want to see and spread more poverty?

38.Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 405.

39.Sternhell, *Binyan Umah* 29.

40.Anita Shapira, "Black Night-White Snow: Attitudes of the Palestinian Labor Movement to the Russian Revolution, 1917–1929" in Jonathan Frankel, Peter Y. Medding and Ezra Mendelsohn (eds.) *Studies in Contemporary Jewry, vol. IV: The Jews and the European Crisis 1914–21* (New York, 1988) 165.

41.Zachary Lockman, "Exclusion and Solidarity: Labor Zionism and Arab Workers in Palestine, 1897–1929," in Gyan Prakash (ed.) *After Colonialism: Imperial Histories and Postcolonial Displacements* (Princeton, 1995) 220.

42.Lockman, "Exclusion and Solidarity," 236.

43.Kimmerling, *Ketz Shilton ha-Ahusalim* 21.

44.For a concise overview of Shafir's argument, see Gershon Shafir, "Israel Society: A Counterview," *Israel Studies* 1 (2) (1996) 189–213.

45.Gershon Shafir, *Land, Labor and the Origins of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict, 1882–1914* (Berkeley, 1996) 78–9.

46.Shafir, *Land, Labor* 82.

47.Shafir, *Land, Labor* 87.

48.Executive Committee of the General Federation of Labour in Palestine, "Memorandum on the August Disturbances, Submitted to the British Labour Party and the Socialist International," in *Documents and Essays on Jewish Labour Policy in Palestine* (Tel Aviv, 1930), 71–2.

49.Ben-Gurion, "Memorandum on the August Disturbances," 73.

50.Ben-Gurion, "Memorandum on the August Disturbances," 74.

51.Ben-Gurion, "Memorandum on the August Disturbances," 74.

52.David Ben-Gurion to Amos Ben-Gurion, October 5, 1937 in Kaplan and Penslar, *The Origins of Israel* 241.

53.Shafir, *Land, Labor* xv–xvi.

54.According to the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, the Jewish population in the Territories in the mid-1990s was 146,000 and in 2006 it was nearly 261,000 (the numbers are available at http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Peace/settlepop.html Accessed December 6, 2013). These are the official Israeli statistics that do not include areas that are part of the municipal borders of Jerusalem.

55.See Horit Herman Peled and Yoav Peled, "Post-Post-Zionism: Confronting the Death of the Two-State Solution," *New Left Review* 67 (January-February, 2011) 102.

56.The clearest presentation of this position is Gadi Taub, *The Settlers, and The Struggle Over the Meaning of Zionism* (New Haven, 2010).

57.See Ishay Rosen Zvi, "Zman ha-Mitnahlim," (The Time of the Settlers) *Teoria u-Vikoret* 31 (Winter, 2007) 272–282.

58.Idith Zertal and Akiva Eldar, *The Lords of the Land: The War for Israel's Settlements in the Occupied Territories, 1967–2007* (New York, 2007).

59.Taub, *The Settlers* 15–18, 152.

60.Moti Golani, "Hem Lo Halutzim," (They Are Not Pioneers) *Haaretz*, August 28, 2005.

61.Zvi Bar'el, "Israel Is Fulfilling Settlers' Expansionist Dream" *Haaretz.com* July 17, 2011 http://www.haaretz.com/print-edition/opinion/israel-is-fulfilling-settlers-expansionist-dream-1.373630 Accessed December 6, 2013.

62.See Zertal and Eldar, *The Lords of the Land* 63–5.

63.Daniel Gutwein, "Some Comments on the Class Foundations of the Occupation." The article first appeared in Hebrew in *Teoria u-Vikoret* 24 (2004) 203–11. The quotes here are from an English version that appeared in *MR ZINE* http://mrzine.monthlyreview.org/2006/gutwein160606.html Accessed December 5, 2013.

64.Yehouda Shenhav, *Be-Malkodet ha-Kav ha-Yarok: Masa Politit Yehudit* (The Green-Line Trap: A Jewish Political Treatise) (Tel Aviv, 2010) 42–43.

65.Shenhav, *Be-Malkodet ha-Kav ha-Yarok* 121.

66.Shenhav, *Be-Malkodet ha-Kav ha-Yarok* 35.

67.Shenhav, *Be-Malkodet ha-Kav ha-Yarok* 158.

68.Shenhav, *Be-Malkodet ha-Kav ha-Yarok* 163.

69.Gutwein, "Some Comments on the Class Foundations of the Occupation."

70.Benni Gaon, "Duty to Privatize the Peace," *Jerusalem Post* June 20, 1997. Quoted in Tzachi Zach, "Political Events and the Stock Market: Evidence from Israel," *International Journal of Business* 8 (3) (2003) 246. See also Michal Frenkel, "Benni Gaon: From Soialist to Capitalist Tycoon," in Mark Levine and Gershon Shafir (eds.), *Struggle and Survival in Palestine/Israel* (Berkeley, 2012) 369.

71.Yehuda Amichai, "Jerusalem, 1967," in Yehuda Amichai, Chana Bloch, and Stephen Mitchell *The SelectedPoetry of Yehuda Amichai* (Berkeley, 1996) 48.

72.In a speech before the UN General Assembly on September 23, 2011, The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu made the argument that "President Abbas just stood here, and he said that the core of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the settlements. Well, that's odd. Our conflict has been raging for—was raging for nearly half a century before there was a single Israeli settlement in the West Bank. So if what President Abbas is saying was true, then the—I guess that the settlements he's talking about are Tel Aviv, Haifa, Jaffa, Be'er Sheva. Maybe that's what he meant the other day when he said that Israel has been occupying Palestinian land for 63 years. He didn't say from 1967; he said from 1948. I hope somebody will bother to ask him this question because it illustrates a simple truth: The core of the conflict is not the settlements. The settlements are a result of the conflict." A full transcript of the speech is available at http://www.haaretz.com/news/diplomacy-defense/full-transcript-of-netanyahu-speech-at-un-general-assembly-1.386464. Accessed December 18, 2013.

73.See Noam Sheizaf, "Kablu et ha-Hazon ha-Mafti'ah shel ha-Yamin ha-Israeli le-Pitron ha-Sichsuch ha-Israeli-Palestini," (Here is the Surprising Vision of the Israeli Right for the Solution of the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict) *Haaretz* July 16, 2010.

74.Mitchell Cohen, "A Preface to the Study of Modern Jewish Political Thought," esp. 22.

EPILOGUE

1.Etgar Keret, *Ga'agu'ay le-Kisinger* (Missing Kissinger) (Tel Aviv, 1994) 7.

2.Jean-Joseph Goux, *Symbolic Economies, After Marx and Freud* (Ithaca, NY, 1990) 92.

3.Jean-Joseph Goux, "Subversion and Consensus: Proletarians, Women and Artists," in Jean-Joseph Goux and Philip R. Wood (eds.) *Terror and Consensus: Vicissitudes of French Thought* (Stanford CA, 1998) 38–39.

4.Eagleton, "The Ultimate Postmodern Spectacle."

5.Slavoj Žižek, "Nobody Has to Be Vile," *London Review of Books* April 6, 2006.

6.As Gates put it, "Creative capitalism isn't some big new economic theory. And it isn't a knock on capitalism itself. It is

a way to answer a vital question: How can we most effectively spread the benefits of capitalism and the huge improvements in quality of life it can provide to people who have been left out?" See Bill Gates, "Making Capitalism More Creative" *Time* July 31, 2008.

7.Fredric Jameson, "Lenin in the Postmodern Age" in Sebastian Budgen, Eustache Kouvélakis, Slavoj Žižek (eds.) *Lenin Reloaded: Toward a Politics of Truth* (Durham, NC, 2007) 67.

8.David Ben-Gurion, "The Imperatives of the Jewish Revolution," in Hertzberg, *The Zionist Idea* 607.

9.Ahad ha-Am, "Altneuland," 158.

10.Avigdor Hame'iri, "Ha-Bamah ha-Ivrit: Moriah ve-lo Akropolis," (The Hebrew Stage: Moriah, not Acropolis) in *Teatron ve-Omanut* 4–5 (Jerusalem, 1926).

11.The essays were collected in: I. Elazari-Volcani, *The Communistic Settlements in the Jewish Colonisation in Palestine* (Tel Aviv, 1927) and were preprinted by Hyperion in 1976.

12.Elazari-Volcani, *The Communistic Settlements*, 121.

13.Elazari-Volcani, *The Communistic Settlements*, 121.

14.Elazari-Volcani, *The Communistic Settlements*, 119–20.

15.Elazari-Volcani, *The Communistic Settlements*, 109.

16.Kimmerling, *Ketz Shilton ha-Ahusalim* 90.

17.Thomas Frank, *What is the Matter with Kansas? How Conservatives Won the Heart of America* (New York, 2004).

18.Uri Ram, "Jerusalem, Tel Aviv and the Bifurcation of Israel" *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 19 (1/2), *The New Sociological Imagination II* (2005) 32.

19.See Daniel Webb, "The Unbearable Truth of the Image: Žižek's Re-Reading of Iconoclasm and Peter Brown's Holy Man," *International Journal of Žižek Studies* vol. 4 (4) 2010.

20.Moshe Grylak, *Ha-Haredim: Mi Anhnu be-Emet?* (The Haredim: Who Are We Really?) (Tel Aviv, 2002) 30–1.

21.Grylak, *Ha-Haredim* 53.

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POLITICAL SCIENCE / JEWISH STUDIES

POST-ZIONISM EMERGED AS AN INTELLECTUAL AND CULTURAL movement in the late 1980s when a growing number of people inside and outside academia felt that Zionism, as a political ideology, had outlived its usefulness. The post-Zionist critique attempted to expose the core tenets of Zionist ideology and the way this ideology was used to justify a series of violent or unjust actions by the Zionist movement, making the ideology of Zionism obsolete. In *Beyond Post-Zionism* Eran Kaplan explores how this critique emerged from the important social and economic changes Israel had undergone in previous decades, primarily the transition from collectivism to individualism and from socialism to the free market. Kaplan looks critically at some of the key post-Zionist arguments (the orientalist and colonial nature of Zionism) and analyzes the impact of post-Zionist thought on various aspects (literary, cinematic) of Israeli culture. He also explores what might emerge, after the political and social turmoil of the last decade, as an alternative to post-Zionism and as a definition of Israeli and Zionist political thought in the twenty-first century.

ERAN KAPLAN is Richard and Rhoda Goldman Chair in Israel Studies at San Francisco State University. He is the author of *The Jewish Radical Right: Revisionist Zionism and Its Ideological Legacy* and coeditor (with Derek J. Penslar) of *The Origins of Israel, 1882–1948: A Documentary History.*

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