CONTINENTAL PHILOSOPHY AND THE PALESTINIAN QUESTION

BEYOND THE JEW AND THE GREEK

ZAHI ZALLOUA

BLOOMSBURY

Continental Philosophy and the Palestinian Question

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Series Foreword

Poets, artists, theologians, philosophers, and mystics in the Middle East and Islamicate world have been interrogating notions of desire, madness, sensuality, solitude, death, time, space, etc. for centuries, thus constituting an expansive and ever-mutating intellectual landscape. Like all theory and creative outpouring, then, theirs is its own vital constellation—a construction cobbled together from singular visceral experiences, intellectual ruins, novel aesthetic techniques, social-political-ideological detours, and premonitions of a future—built and torn down (partially or in toto), and rebuilt again with slight and severe variations. The horizons shift, and frequently leave those who dare traverse these lands bewildered and vulnerable.

Consequently, these thinkers and their visionary ideas largely remain unknown, or worse, mispronounced and misrepresented in the so-called Western world. In the hands of imperialistic frameworks, a select few are deemed worthy of notice and are spoken on behalf of, or rather about. Their ideas are simplified into mere social formulae and empirical scholarly categories. Whereas so-called Western philosophers and writers are given full leniency to contemplate the most incisive or abstract ideas, non-Western thinkers, especially those located in the imagined realms of the Middle East and Islamicate world, are reduced to speaking of purely political histories or monolithic cultural narratives. In other words, they are distorted and contorted to fit within hegemonic paradigms that steal away their more captivating potentials.

Contributors to this series provide a counterpoint to the reigning canons of theory, theology, philosophy, literature, and criticism through investigations of the vast experiential typologies of such regions. Each volume in the series acts as a "suspension" in the sense that the authors will position contemporary thought in an enigmatic new terrain of inquiry, where it will be compelled to confront unforeseen works of critical and creative imagination. These analyses will not only highlight the full range of current intellectual and artistic trends and their benefits for the citizens of these phantom spheres, but also argue that the ideas themselves are borderless, and thus of great relevance to all citizens of the world.

Jason Bahbak Mohaghegh and Lucian Stone

Acknowledgments

Continental Philosophy and the Palestinian Question has multiple origins, or rather beginnings. One, shared by hundreds of thousands of Palestinians, is the Nakba, which led both of my parents to flee Palestine to Lebanon, where I was born along with my three older brothers. My family had to flee yet again during the outbreak of the Lebanese civil war in 1976; I was not quite five years old—another beginning. Moving from Beirut to Paris to San Diego to Princeton to Walla Walla, I have experienced throughout my life something of an exilic journey. Growing up I've struggled with feelings of (not) belonging: I didn't really consider myself Lebanese (I left when I was so young and, given my Palestinian background, did I really count as a citizen in the eyes of Lebanese nationals?); I was not French (legally, nor psychically); I was not (yet) a U.S. citizen: for the first thirty-five years of my life I had, at best, a precarious immigration status; at worst, I was marked as an illegal other, subject to the whims of immigration agents.

So was I Palestinian? My parents were not political, nor did they like to dwell on their traumatic past; rather, they preferred that their sons assimilate to their new environment. As a result, growing up I knew very little of my Palestinian "origins." But still the question of Palestine persisted; it kept haunting me. I remember as an undergraduate being moved by Jo Franklin-Trout's documentary, *Days of Rage: The Young Palestinians*, which aired on PBS under a cloud of controversy, documenting, fairly—that is, accurately—the first Intifada and the injustices suffered by the Palestinians. This compelled me to organize a session with international Palestinian students about the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and marked the beginning of my thinking philosophically about the Palestinian question. As I pursued my graduate studies in philosophy and literature, I worked more and more on questions of identity and meaning, on the politics and ethics of difference, but not explicitly on the Palestinian question. It was not until I read and reread Levinas—with a growing disappointment and anger at his reflections on the Sabra and Shatila massacre—that, in another beginning, I started to think more generally and conceptually about Continental philosophy's dealings with the Palestinian question. What does philosophy have to say about the Palestinian? Can it help give any insights on

this tragic conflict? Or is it somewhat complicit with the problem, given its concern with the older question—the Jewish question?

I am lucky to have been able to pursue these questions explicitly and implicitly at Whitman College. The work has benefited from the research assistance of Tara McCulloch. My thinking about the Palestinian question sharpened through my engagement with my Literary Theory students. My Whitman peers and colleagues have been very encouraging and supportive of this project. I wish to thank Shampa Biswas, Chetna Chopra, Tarik Elseewi, Heather Hayes, Kazi Joshua, Tim Kaufman-Osborn, Lee Keene, Bruce Magnusson, Lynn Sharp, and, especially, Gaurav Majumdar for his meticulous reading of the manuscript.

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Introduction: From the Jewish Question to the Palestinian Question

Whatever happens, I am with Israel. I am with Israel when Israel suffers. I am with Israel when Israel suffers from inflicting suffering. I cannot say anything more. Certainly, I have my political preferences. I am for Peres. I think Begin was wrong, very wrong, to encourage colonization. But I do not feel I have the right to preach, when what is closest to me is at stake.

Maurice Blanchot[1]

From Sartre to Levinas, Continental philosophers throughout the second half of the twentieth century have turned to the example of the Jew as the paradigmatic model for ethical inquiry. What came to be known as "the Jewish question," discussed with interest in the Enlightenment and the nineteenth century, gets full attention only after World World II, or, more precisely, after the Holocaust, or the Shoah (the preferred Hebrew term, signifying catastrophe). Common questions about the Jews of Europe—Is their commitment or loyalty to Judaism or to their nation? Can an individual be a Jew *and* French? for example. Can Jews remain religious only in private and thus be sufficiently de-Judaized in the eyes of the public? Is their biblically chosen status irremediably particularist, at odds with any form of national or humanistic universalism?, for example—take on a whole different meaning in the context of the "final solution," the most brutal of the anti-Semitic responses to the Jewish question.

To put it in a different way, the Jewish question after Auschwitz ceased to be taken simply as a symptom of a larger philosophical problem, as it was for Karl Marx, or an occasion to reaffirm France's Republican ideals, as it served in the Dreyfus affair (1894–1906). Enlightenment philosophers typically drew on the Jewish question to warn against religious obscurantism.[2] In "On the Jewish Question" (1843), Marx altered somewhat this mode of argument, taking issue with his contemporary Bruno Bauer's provocative solution to the issue of Jewish discrimination in Prussia. When lawmakers were considering granting Jews the same legal rights as Christians, the radical liberal Bauer objected to these new initiatives, not because he thought that Jews were inherently inferior to

Christians, but rather because he did not want them to become like Christians: "If they want to be free, the Jews should not embrace Christianity but Christianity in dissolution, religion generally in dissolution—enlightenment, criticism and its results, free humanity."[3]

For Bauer, in an Enlightenment spirit, political emancipation required transcending religious difference, or rather, transcending religion itself. He viewed political freedom for all as incompatible with a defense of religious difference. Despite his own resistance to religion, Marx questioned the truly liberating potential of the secular state that Bauer championed. For Marx, arguing for universal rights at the level of the state (the ideological sphere), while bracketing the question of private property from analysis, and, thus, neglecting to address the true cause of people's alienation at the level of civil society (the economic base), proved at best a partial, insufficient remedy. At worst, however, it functioned as an ideological barrier, an obstacle to what Marx termed "universal emancipation." Marx denounced the false universality of rights-based discourse, since it preserved the "sphere of egoism," encouraging people to lead what he called "a double life, a heavenly and an earthly life."[4] While all members of society were encouraged to see themselves phantasmatically as communal beings (this is the fantasy, he argued, that the state promotes as an ideal), in their everyday existence—in civil society—each particular individual confronted a quite hostile world, in which competition with others only increased a sense of alienation, thus denying communal being in practice. The liberal support of universal human rights—while noble in its intent—worked ideologically to the extent that it obscured the fundamental antagonism between the state and civil society.

Diagnosing the Jewish question as a symptomatic problem of capitalism, however, did little to deter others from returning to it. The Dreyfus affair, which began in 1894, reignited the debate about Jews' loyalty, framing the question as an existential choice between Jewish particularity or French universality. Alfred Dreyfus, a French Jewish military captain, was convicted of treason for selling military secrets to the Germans (his conviction, based on documents later shown to be forged, was eventually overturned). With his famous letter "J'Accuse!," Émile Zola intervened in the public debate, exposing the scapegoating of Dreyfus, and the ways his Jewishness was read anti-Semitically, with suspicion, as evidence of his disloyalty. (Zola asserted that it was Dreyfus's *race* as a Jew, rather than his *religion*, that made him disloyal in the eyes of his detractors.) Zola and the *Dreyfusards*—proponents of Dreyfus's innocence—did not defend Dreyfus as a Jew; rather, they bracketed this question from

their commentary, focusing instead on the exemplarity of Dreyfus as a French national.[5] As Jonathan Judaken observes: "Dreyfus was a symbol of and for the Republic and its values, specifically construed as rational and universal, forged in the struggle of the Revolution of 1789, and elaborated by the France of the Third Republic. […] [T]he injustice of the Affair was the corruption of a 'True France'"[6] and of its "timeless" Republican ideals: freedom, equality, and fraternity (and not diversity).

After Auschwitz: Philosophy and the Jew

After Auschwitz, the Jewish question took on a decisively different meaning in Continental philosophy.[7] The figure of the Jew came to shape the ethical landscape of Continental thought, if not to dominate its interpretive horizon.[8] Theodor Adorno famously wrote that "it is barbaric to write poetry after Auschwitz";[9] likewise, it became obscene to philosophize as usual after Auschwitz.[10] Modernity's phantasms of progress and reason met the traumatic *real* of the concentration camps, the devastating effects of modern technology and instrumental rationality.

In his 1946 *Réflexions sur la question juive*, translated into English as *Anti-Semite and Jew*, Jean-Paul Sartre was arguably the first twentieth-century philosopher to elevate and romanticize the Jew, setting the figure in opposition to France's inauthentic bourgeois self. For Sartre, the Jew's identification as Jewish rightly defied France's assimilative Republican ideal and outmoded bourgeois values: "Jewish authenticity consists in choosing oneself as Jew—that is, in realizing one's Jewish condition. The authentic Jew abandons the myth of the universal man … he ceases to run away from himself and to be ashamed of his own kind."[11]

More than a figure of subversive marginalization, the Jew gained in Emmanuel Levinas's work far greater rhetorical and analytical force. Levinas dedicated his 1974 book *Otherwise than Being* to the victims of the Shoah: "To the memory of those who were closest among the six million assassinated by the National Socialists, and of the millions on millions of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other man, the same anti-Semitism." Like many, Levinas took stock of the precarious state of philosophy after Auschwitz.[12] Though he never carried out a sustained engagement with the disaster, his philosophy needs to be seen as a response or testimony to this unprecedented event, to the crisis of philosophy that it provoked, and to the unfathomable task of coming to terms with the horrors of history.[13]

This new Levinasian ethics, rooted in the biblical ethos of Jerusalem, foregrounded responsibility, peace, and respect for the other's opacity. Against Martin Heidegger's fundamental ontology, which aimed to return to the roots of philosophy and the question of Being, to return to the Greeks, or to be more precise to the pre-Socratics, Levinas wanted to break fully from ontology and its inherent logic of assimilation. Unambiguously answering the question "Is Ontology Fundamental?" in the negative, Levinas posited ethics as that which transcends the Greek *logos* and its hermeneutic violence (its "ontological imperialism"[14]), and the figure of the Jew as the quintessential figure of alterity. Levinas's ethics, haunted by the Shoah, radically challenged philosophy's debt to Greek thought.

But how does such an ethics of the other translate into everyday life? What is at stake in thinking the other exclusively as Jew? Maurice Blanchot's words, which serve as this introduction's epigraph—"Whatever happens, I am with Israel. I am with Israel when Israel suffers. I am with Israel when Israel suffers from inflicting suffering"—capture the *parti pris* of many intellectuals after Auschwitz. The categorical support of Israel's Jews/the State of Israel forecloses any obligation toward or potential identification, however momentary, with the non-Jew. It unambiguously aligns its sympathies with the Jews, not only when Israel suffers aggression but perversely even when Israel is inflicting the suffering on its other.[15] What, we may ask, becomes of the Arab[16] or Muslim,[17] the other of the other, so to speak, within such a philosophical framework? *Continental Philosophy and the Palestinian Question* turns to the example of the Palestinian as a way to interrogate our ethical and philosophical debt to, and reliance on, Jerusalem and Athens. Raising the Palestinian question alongside the Jewish question helps us to reframe the relationship between philosophy and history, as well as ethics and politics, so as to question the tendency to ontologize the other, to abstract the other from the earthly, historical, and dynamic field of power.

The pitting of Jerusalem against Athens informs much of Levinas's ethical thinking, and represents a dominant strain in contemporary Continental philosophy. In Eurocentric fashion, Levinas reduces human history, if not humanity itself, to these dual origins: "I often say, although it is a dangerous thing to say publicly, that humanity consists of the Bible and the Greeks. All the rest can be translated: all the rest—all the exotic—is dance."[18] In *Totality and Infinity*, Levinas describes our impulse for translation, our hunger for sameness as Greek in nature, arguing that the origins of the "'egoism' of ontology"[19] lie in Athens. But, as we know, this attraction to a Hebraic alterity becomes the

subject of a sustained deconstruction in Jacques Derrida's 1967 essay "Violence and Metaphysics." The essay itself is framed by two references to Athens and Jerusalem, to the Greek and the Jew. Derrida's sole epigraph is from Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*:

> Hebraism and Hellenism—between these two points of influence moves our world. At one time it feels more powerfully the attraction of one of them, at another time of the other; and it ought to be, though it never is, evenly and happily balanced between them.

And the last sentence is drawn from James Joyce's *Ulysses*:

> And what is the legitimacy, what is the meaning of the *copula* in the proposition from perhaps the most Hegelian of modern novelists: "Jewgreek is greekjew. Extremes meet"?[20]

While Derrida never engages with Arnold's text in any explicit fashion, his use of the quote sets the interpretive horizon: both Athens and Jerusalem complement, or ought to complement, each other in "our" Western cultural formation. We are, for Arnold, clearly indebted to both civilizations. In contrast to the complementary identities of Athens and Jerusalem, Derrida's Joyce arguably paints a far less harmonious complementarity, or we might say he represents a difficult unity, a complementarity that simultaneously works to destabilize both given identities. While Derrida's reference to Joyce as the "most Hegelian" of the modernists might be questionable (since for Derrida Hegel is usually a figure for closure, totality, and synthesis), what Derrida is highlighting here is Joyce's friction or tension-making prose: his openness to cross-pollination and his embrace of the intertwined.

Derrida's general critique of Levinas centers around the face of the other, that which, for Levinas, is experienced "without mediation,"[21] as a kind of revelation. For Derrida, the face cannot simply by-pass conceptual mediation and the language of ontology. He reminds Levinas that "the founding concepts of philosophy are primarily Greek, and it would not be possible to philosophize, or to speak philosophically, outside this medium."[22] Not unlike his critique of Michel Foucault on the question of madness, Derrida takes Levinas to task for his reliance on ontology all the while claiming to have left it behind. The Greek *logos*, with its "unlimited power of envelopment,"[23] is much too cunning and accommodating of its conceptual adversaries. Moreover, otherness—which Levinas aligns with Judaism, the *matter* of what one critic has called his "Judeosophy"[24]—also falls under the production of Western philosophy, beginning with Plato's *The Sophist*.

Levinas's opposition between the Jew and the Greek, then, turns out to be false. The desire for a pure heterology as an antidote to Greek philosophy's pretension to overcome difference is premised on an incorrect picture. There are no pure Jews, nor pure Greeks, but JewGreeks and GreekJews.[25] We can perhaps even include Derrida under this hybrid category. In a conversation with Richard Kearney, Derrida expresses his desire to speak from a site that is neither simply Jewish, nor simply Greek:

> In short, the ultimate site (*lieu*) of my questioning discourse would be neither Hellenic nor Hebraic *if such were possible*. It would be a non-site beyond both the Jewish influence of my youth and the Greek philosophical heritage which I received during my academic education in the French universities.[26]

This yearning to speak from elsewhere informs his deep suspicion of identity politics and communities:

> "I am not one of the family" means: do not consider me "one of you," "don't count me in," I want to keep my freedom, always: this, for me, is the condition not only for being singular and other, but also for entering into relation with the singularity and alterity of others.[27]

Derrida declines all forms of integration, refusing a certain type of indebtedness, a debt not to a concrete other but to any interpellative belonging—be it biological or ideological. Likewise, Derrida's "debt" or "fidelity" to either Hellenism or Hebraism is never blind or absolute. Yet we should be careful to note that he insists that breaking free from the twin sources of his cultural and intellectual formation remains a dream, a fantasy—"*if such [a thing] were possible*" one should do it, but it is not.

If there is, strictly speaking, no going beyond the Jew and the Greek that is not in some way impossible or phantasmatic, we must ask what is left. Must the deconstruction of the opposition between Jew and Greek leave unaltered our reliance on Jerusalem and Athens? Do these poles still condition, if not determine, our ethical and political horizons? Raising the Palestinian question attests to the need for more. It seeks to unsettle further the Jew/Greek opposition by bringing deconstruction's insights to Zionism itself. As a powerful narrative that frames the terms of the conflict among Israelis and Palestinians, Zionism—the claim that there exists a "natural" bond between the Jewish people and the Promised Land—often shores up the view of the Jew as exceptional and vulnerable, as the timeless victim of History, incapable, in turn, of any wrongdoing. Simply put, Zionism, in its secular and religious versions, tends to foreclose the Palestinian question as such.

Deconstructing Zionism: The Palestinian question in the breach

To deconstruct Zionism is not, however, to critique any and all Jewish attachments to the land of Israel. Rather, it is about a certain type of exclusive and exclusionary attachment (a commitment to a national homeland for Jews *only*), one that rules out the attachment of others as with settler colonialism and its distorted and distorting slogan, "A land without a people for a people without a land."[28] Derrida himself has on numerous occasions resisted the condemnation of Zionism *tout court*. At the same time, he scrutinizes the logic of exclusion that frequently underpins the rhetoric of Zionism. This is why Derrida insists on using the plural term Zionisms:[29] "[T]here is not only one Zionism … there has been a number of Zionisms and one of them has prevailed. There were Zionists who were ready to have another politics with Palestinians, and so on and so forth. So I'm not anti-Zionist; I'm against this kind of Zionism which prevails in the violent way that we know."[30] This latter, violent Zionism is essentially racist and neocolonial in its orientation, positing the ideal identity of a self rooted in a phantasmatic Land, in an eternal relation to Israel (and, of course, at the expense of uprooting others).

Deconstruction, antithetical to this dominant type of Zionism, underscores the relational, fragmented, and excessive character of the self, uncontainable under the master signifiers of State, Nation, Chosen People, and the like. Against the self-assurance of this brand of Zionism, deconstruction foregrounds "the diasporic condition of all beings."[31] Diaspora, of course, also marks Jewish history, and serves as an alternative Jewish model to political Zionism. The exemplarity of the Jew in this model becomes no longer associated with the certitude of *being* but with the contingency of *becoming*.

This is precisely the thought that led Edward Said, in one of his last interviews, to reply boldly to his Israeli interlocutor, who had observed that "[he] sound[ed] very Jewish": "Of course. I'm the last Jewish intellectual. You don't know anyone else. All your other Jewish intellectuals are now suburban squires. From Amos Oz to all these people here in America. So I'm the last one. The only true follower of Adorno. Let me put it this way: I'm a Jewish-Palestinian."[32] Here, being Jewish denotes a lack of fixity or rootedness; a modality of being at odds with any form of organic community. Most importantly, being Jewish becomes a position available to all, even, or especially, to Palestinians—*the others of the "eternal" other*.

Gianni Vattimo and Michael Marder, in their incisive edited volume *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics*, are equally committed to enlarging the scope of what and who can count as "Jewish." They make clear that they aim to dislodge the signifier "Jew" from its totalizing and (to Palestinians and other Jews) damaging Zionist narrative, to look at its violent beginnings, and to re-inscribe its religious and secular meanings within specific relations of power: "To deconstruct Zionism," they put it, "is, therefore, to demand justice for its victims—not only the Palestinians who are suffering from it, but also for the anti-Zionist Jews, 'erased' from the officially consecrated account of Zionist history."[33] The interpretive call to deconstruct Zionism is, then, a call to intervene in the politics and ethics of Jewishness, that is, to weaken Zionism's monopolizing voice in Israel and abroad (especially in the U.S.). "If Zionism continues to control the meaning of Jewishness," Judith Butler writes, "then there can be no Jewish critique of Israel and no acknowledgement of those of Jewish descent or formation who call into question the right of the State of Israel to speak for Jewish values or, indeed, the Jewish people."[34]

Seeing that "Zionism was a historical construction"[35] is a first step to seeing it as an ideological concept. For instance, such a shift calls into question Zionism's claim of origins and script of openness, encapsulated in the Israeli Law of Return, a law recognizing as legitimate any potential return of any Jew to his or her "historical Homeland"—while simultaneously denying Palestinians their own, internationally sanctioned, "right of return."[36] For Said, Zionism produces two diametrically opposed economies of relationality, displaying an "extraordinary unevenness … between care for the Jews and an almost total disregard for the non-Jews or native Arab population."[37] Deconstruction's endless work[38] of unsettling all narratives of origins (including those of Palestinians—since those who study the Palestinian question must also learn from the essentializing pitfalls of the Jewish question) reveals "origins" to be historically contingent *beginnings*.[39] To be sure, deconstruction itself is hardly *the* solution to Israeli brutality and illegal occupation of Palestinian territories. It does, however, short-circuit Zionism's "logic of coloniality," as Walter D. Mignolo calls it[40]—a logic that justifies and thus perpetuates Israel's violence—and lays the ground for thinking through the Palestinian question.

Postcolonial theory, with Edward Said at the forefront, has also functioned as a dangerous "supplement" to Continental philosophy. With its eye for power, postcolonial theory adopts an antagonistic stance vis-à-vis philosophy's yearning for universal and disinterested knowledge. It provincializes the Greek.[41] It even questions the effects of philosophy's long commitment to

the Delphic injunction: Know thyself. That injunction, which recognizes the elusive nature of the self and the inability to fully master it, yields a rich body of knowledge, but leaves the non-Western other unproblematized, authentically given. There is indeed something alarming when critical sensibility does not extend beyond the confinements of the self. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak makes this point succinctly: "The person who *knows* has all of the problems of selfhood. The person who is *known*, somehow seems not to have a problematic self. These days … only the dominant self can be problematic; the self of the Other is authentic without problem … This is frightening."[42] Whether it takes the form of *heterophilia* (love of the non-Western, putatively authentic other) or *heterophobia* (fear of the non-Western other seen as backward and threatening), taking the other as given reflects a failure to engage with that other. Recognition of the complexity of the self, paradoxically, goes hand in hand with the homogenization of the non-Western other.[43]

We see this troubling self/other binary in Steven Spielberg's 2005 film *Munich*. In his commentary, Slavoj Žižek exposes the complexity of the film as a false veneer, showing how its masquerade of realism and psychological depth portrays a dubious account of the events:

> In contrast to the simplistic opposition of good guys and bad guys, spy thrillers with artistic pretensions display all the "realistic psychological complexity" of the characters from "our" side. Far from signaling a balanced view, however, this "honest" acknowledgment of our own "dark side" stands for its very opposite, for the hidden assertion of our supremacy: we are "psychologically complex," full of doubts, while the opponents are one-dimensional fanatical killing machines. Therein resides the lie of Spielberg's *Munich*: it wants to be "objective," presenting moral complexity and ambiguity, psychological doubts, the problematic nature of revenge, of the Israeli perspective, but what its "realism" does is redeem the Mossad agents still further: "look, they are not just cold killers, but human beings with their doubts—*they* have doubts, whereas the Palestinian terrorists …" One cannot but sympathize with the hostility with which the surviving Mossad agents who really carried out the revenge killings reacted to the film ("there were no psychological doubts, we just did what we had to do") for there is much more honesty in their stance.[44]

Ideology is far more effective when it declines excessively Manichaean narratives of good and evil. The Mossad agents are no angels, but their flaws are (invited to be) reread as moral virtues, the result of legitimate internal struggle. This is however predicated on the flattening of the other: the Israeli self is *identified with* only when it is juxtaposed with the hollow, bloodthirsty Palestinian.

A similar logic of identification informs Dror Moreh's *The Gatekeepers* (2012). A widely acclaimed documentary film,[45] nominated for an Oscar and several other film awards around the globe, *The Gatekeepers* tells the story of the Israeli Internal Security Service, Shin Bet, from the perspective of its surviving former heads. In an interview, Moreh asserts that his pedagogical purpose for the documentary was to bring more awareness to his Israeli audience about the complexity of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict through the optics of Shin Bet: "If there is an organization in Israel that understands the Israeli–Palestinian conflict better than anybody else, it is the Shin Bet. These are the men that walked in the alleys of the refugee camps, and they know the conflict, as they say, from the bottom of the sewers. I'm trying to tell the story of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict from their point of view."[46]

What we ultimately get from *The Gatekeepers* is the redeeming of the Shin Bet heads (reminiscent of Spielberg's phantasmatic portrayal of the Mossad agents), whose testimony and retrospective insights are putatively put to the service of reviving the Oslo Peace Accords (1993–5).[47] Though the film calls for dialogue with the enemy (Hamas, Islamic Jihad), it ultimately does not do so itself. The Palestinians, depicted through still photos and silent or muted archival film footage, appear mainly voiceless, and come to serve as foils for Israeli self-exploration; they matter to the extent that the self's misdeeds are directed against them, but the Palestinians' motivations and political claims are left unexplored.

While *The Gatekeepers* makes a strong case for the unsustainability of Israel's brutal occupation,[48] and shows the danger of religious zealots at home (those responsible for Yitzhak Rabin's assassination), the documentary—with its monological prism—falls short of asking some of the decisive questions about what led to the current state of affairs. As in *Munich*, the multiple reasons for Palestinian violence are left out of the documentary. Here, we might take up Derrida's distinction between "understanding" and "justifying" the violence of others.[49] In the aftermath of 9/11, Derrida rigorously rejected the dubious conflation of "comprehending and justifying"[50] when dealing with certain acts of terrorism, arguing that understanding is not tantamount to rationalizing its violence, that one, as a public intellectual, can both unconditionally condemn acts of terrorism *and* seek to understand "the situation that might have brought them about or even legitimated them."[51] To attempt to understand the basis or "root causes" of Palestinian terrorism or resistance to occupying forces we must confront not only the current abhorrent realities of Palestinians but also Israel's "original sin"[52]—the Nakba, the Arabic word for "catastrophe," denoting the forced expulsion of 800,000 Palestinians between 1948 and 1949.[53]

We must resist a myopic account of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict and block the ideological lure of focusing *only* on suicide bombers and the rockets being launched into Israel, or the spectacle of the conflict. Benjamin Netanyahu and his international sympathizers insist that the latest invasion and destruction of Gaza results primarily from Palestinians' irrational aggression and disrespect for peaceful (co)existence. Their slogan, "We're using missile defense to protect our civilians, and they're using their civilians to protect their missiles,"[54] deflects attention from the brutality of Israeli occupation, its devalorization of Palestinian lives, and serves to distract the West from the material conditions of daily existence in the Occupied Territories. Yet, the narrative of the conflict does not necessarily begin here, that is, with a starting point that posits Palestinians as initial aggressors and Israelis as self-defensive.[55] Accordingly, a more expansive account of Israel's most recent invasion of Gaza takes into consideration its nine-year Gaza blockade and the increase in Israeli settlements on Palestinian land (which makes the moderate voices in Palestinian leadership seem all the more impotent: peace with Israelis translates into more land confiscation). If the historical causes for the conflict are many, and less than self-evident, the solution is not any simpler or clearer.

What is taking place in historic Palestine is what Saree Makdisi describes as an "occupation by bureaucracy."[56] It is a form of violence that normalizes Israel's unique structure of apartheid—which, unlike apartheid South Africa, is not after the exploitation of its colonized people but their ultimate expulsion—and is largely unrecognized as such by Western publics.[57] Žižek warns of the ways the eruption of violence helps to make invisible this alternative and more pernicious modality of violence:

> When Israeli peace-loving liberals present their conflict with Palestinians in neutral "symmetrical" terms, admitting that there are extremists on both sides who reject peace, etc., one should ask a simple question: What goes on in the Middle East when *nothing goes on there* at the direct politico-military level (i.e., when there are no tensions, attacks, negotiations)? What goes on is the incessant slow work of taking the land from the Palestinians on the West Bank, supported by a Kafkaesque network of legal regulations.[58]

The moral platitude that the two sides both have their extremes—and that these extremes are exceptions to the norm—masks the normalization of state bureaucratic violence.

To raise the Palestinian question means troubling the status quo by making visible this structural form of violence, by insisting on scrutinizing the

normalization of the quotidian. In this respect, it is to perform the "task of criticism" ("to be able to make distinctions, to produce differences where at present there are none"[59]—exposing the different types of violence that the Palestinians are subject to, for example), to practice a form of ideological critique, a critique that will undoubtedly be met with expected, but not any less effective, charges of anti-Semitism. Political Zionism conflates Jewishness with Israeli state policy and coercively frames the matter as one of a fraught choice: either you are for the State of Israel or you are against the Jews. The task of criticism must start by demystifying this conflation. It must also trouble a second, powerful claim: that *Israel is the only democracy in the Middle East*. Étienne Balibar rightly challenges this view by pointing out how Israel as a Jewish state "is not only relentlessly expanding at the expense of Palestinians, but, within its own borders, it reduces them to second-class citizens deprived of numerous rights and symbolically excluded from equality with 'real Israelis' in owning their common land."[60] A Jewish nation (an ethnocracy that bases citizenship and rights on ethno-religious identity) and a democratic state (one that accords equal rights to all citizens) are mutually exclusive. Palestinian intellectual and former member of the Knesset, Azmi Bishara, describes Israel as a "tribal democracy"; it "is the most fanatically 'communitarian' democracy—it is a democracy with very definite borders to the community … The community is Jewish, the limits of the community are Jewish and democracy only functions inside these limits … It is a tribal democracy where your rights … are deduced from the fact that you are a member of the tribe." [61]

As a necessary complement to this hermeneutic negativity (the undoing of narratives and practices that foreclose the legibility of Palestinians, that foreclose ways of seeing them as victims or wronged subjects), the Palestinian question also seeks to open up an interpretive space for reimagining new solutions to persistent and familiar problems. As they did in debates over the Jewish question, the rhetoric and shadow of identity loom large here. Is the plight of the Palestinians best heard through a universalist discourse or a particularist one? It is again to Said that I turn. As with his self-designation as the last Jewish intellectual, Said, in *Freud and the Non-European*, gestures to a modality beyond the Greek and the Jew, beyond the fetishization of identity as reified universality or difference. Freud, who from a postcolonial point of view might appear suspect, provides Said with a hybridizing identity. Said first presents Freud's reflections on the other as firmly governed by his European tradition:

> Freud was deeply gripped by what stands outside the limits of reason, convention, and, of course, consciousness: his whole work in that sense is about

> the Other, but always about an Other recognizable mainly to readers who are well acquainted with the classics of Graeco-Roman and Hebrew Antiquity and what was later to derive from them in the various modern European languages, literatures, sciences, religions and cultures with which he himself was well acquainted.[62]

Then, Said shows how Freud, in his last work *Moses and Monotheism*, surprisingly opens up to what is in excess of Europe and its Judeo-Christian culture, offering us a remarkable account of a non-European identity. Such an identity is without an essence; it is never self-contained or complete but always shot through with otherness, exposed to a foreign alterity at its core:

> Freud's meditations and insistence on the non-European from a Jewish point of view provide, I think, an admirable sketch of what it entails, by way of refusing to resolve identity into some of the nationalist or religious herds in which so many people want so desperately to run. More bold is Freud's profound exemplification of the insight that even for the most definable, the most identifiable, the most stubborn communal identity—for him, this was the Jewish identity—there are inherent limits that prevent it from being fully incorporated into one, and only one, Identity.[63]

Freud's startling claim that Moses, the exemplary founder of Judaism, was an Egyptian reveals for Said an opportunity for coexistence between Jews and Arabs—an opportunity that Israel missed in 1948, when the trace of an "Egyptian and Arabian" difference was suppressed and ultimately erased by Zionism and its claims of Jewish exceptionalism.[64] But this claim—Moses, the paradigmatic Jew, was always already other to himself—also opens up an alternative way of imagining the current Israeli–Palestinian conflict, a way of disrupting Israel's biopolitical practice of separating "Jews from non-Jews" in both Israel and the Occupied Territories.[65] What would have happened—or might yet still happen—to the Palestinian question if identity were not assumed to be identical to itself, pure or exclusive, but seen "as a troubling, disabling, destabilizing secular wound—the essence of the cosmopolitan, from which there can be no recovery, no state of resolved or Stoic calm, and no utopian reconciliation even within itself"?[66] In other words, what happens to the Palestinian question if we go beyond the phantasms of the Jew and the Greek?

In the chapters that follow, I will take up this question in different contexts and through different theoretical lenses. Chapter 1, "Levinas and Trauma: The Rhetoric of the Timeless Victim," examines Levinas's model of ethics, looking more closely at the logic of victimhood that pervades his ethical theory. I turn to

Levinas's discussion of the Sabra and Shatila massacre, and discuss his refusal to characterize the Palestinian as the Israeli's other/neighbor. The massacre at the Sabra and Shatila camps serves as a test case for Levinas and Levinasian ethics. Readers sympathetic to Levinas have struggled with the philosopher's comments. A common line of defense has been to clarify that the Levinasian other is not to be confused with the postcolonial other: the former is an ontological condition and never the result of a historically contingent process of othering. On one level, this "corrective" philosophical reading is quite compelling. It reorients our attention to Levinas's relation to the phenomenological tradition, a tradition that he seriously questions by challenging the powers of consciousness to grasp the meaning of its enigmatic object (the face of the other). As a result, any self/other relation is always (at some level) asymmetrical, involving both a joining and disjoining, proximity and distance. So the Palestinian cannot lay any special claim to being the other of the Jew/Israeli. Yet, on another level, any "faithful" reading of Levinas's other minimizes the cognitive investment in the image of the Jew as a figure of radical alterity (the Jew after Auschwitz), a depoliticized image of the singular Victim that Levinas and his followers do much to perpetuate and disseminate. Conversely, claiming the Palestinian as the other of the Israeli might be seen less as a constative utterance, describing the philosophical situation on the ground, than as a performative statement, aimed at transforming the ideological frame of the victim and the victimizer.

In Chapter 2, "The Gaza Wars: Palestinians as *Homines Sacri,*" I explore an alternative to the Levinasian account of radical alterity, which is at once ahistorical and historically biased when it comes to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Philosophers and critics have effectively turned to the notion of "homo sacer" in their discussion of the postcolonial situation and abject condition of the Palestinians. *Homo sacer* is a legal concept brought back to contemporary ethical and political debates by Giorgio Agamben. In ancient Roman jurisprudence, "homo sacer" referred to the excluded other. *Homo sacer* is excluded by and from the law, abandoned by the community, and *made* utterly vulnerable to others; indeed, *homo sacer* could be killed with impunity by anyone. Living in the occupied territories, the rightless Palestinians ostensibly occupy the precarious position of the *homines sacri*. Palestinians have become non-citizens dwelling in zones of exclusion, perpetually robbed of their dignity, reduced to "bare life," and made to appear to an international public as less than human. Israel's Gaza wars crystallize the Palestinians' status as *homines sacri*. This chapter argues that these wars' failure to generate outrage among Western audiences cannot be attributed solely to Israeli censorship. What contributed

greatly to this indifference, or failure to empathize with an all-too-distant other, to see their lives as "grievable," as Judith Butler puts it, was again the relatively unchallenged Orientalist narrative—the Israelis as "true" victims, and the Palestinians as blood-thirsty, irrational terrorists—that pre-existed the Gaza wars and continues to inform if not determine the West's (mis)understanding of the Palestinian question. This Orientalizing way of interpreting the Gaza offensives puts the blame for civilian casualties squarely on Hamas and thus helps to preserve the self-proclaimed moral superiority of the Israeli military. This mythic view of the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), however, faced serious objections from within, not only from Israel's human rights groups but more significantly from some of its own veterans: Israel's *refuseniks*, those Israeli soldiers who refuse to engage in military service in the West Bank and Gaza. Seeing the possibility of war crimes in the actions of the "world's most moral army"[67] in effect demystifies Israel's exclusive claim to victimhood, "humanizes" the enemy, disrupts the Zionist framework of meaning, opening the possibility of perceiving the Palestinian as a neighbor—a grievable *homo sacer*.

Chapter 3, "'A People Like Any Other People': Palestinians as Example," takes up the exemplarity of the Palestinian people. Declining the language of exceptionalism, Elias Sanbar, founder of *La Revue d'études palestiniennes*, opts for the formulation "a people like any other people," as best expressing the universal cry of the Palestinian people. This chapter looks at the ways a growing number of Continental philosophers have turned to the Palestinian, or the Palestinian question, as a figure of and for universality. Balibar, for instance, provocatively titles a 2004 essay "Palestine: A Universal Cause," and links the question of Palestine to democracy and its claims of universality. The plight of the Palestinian is not merely a local matter, a regional dispute; it touches all of us, he argues, to the extent that we are all compelled to imagine and invent the conditions for justice and equality in a post-colonial era. Alain Badiou approaches the question of universality more obliquely through a critique of Jewish exceptionalism (its exception to international law, democracy, the Enlightenment). Jewish exceptionalism serves multiple ideological functions: it is used to legitimize and normalize the State of Israel's subjugation of the Palestinians, and to stigmatize *all* critics of the Israeli government as anti-Semites involved in what Israel and its sympathizers dubiously call "the delegitimation project."[68] Consistent with the thrust of his Marxist philosophy, Badiou also favors an "indifference to difference" (a philosophy of difference is politically irresponsible), a philosophy of sameness that *invents* the Palestinian as otherwise than victim, as a Pauline subject freed from the affective pull of identitarian politics.

Re-examining the dangers of fetishizing difference, Chapter 4, "The Exilic Palestinian: Difference Otherwise than Being," also pursues the shortcomings of identitarian politics but without adopting a universalist stance. It contests the hasty dismissal of difference as politically ineffective, and resists the impulse to by-pass difference manifested in the statement that "All Lives Matter." Against this synthesizing and totalizing perspective, it returns to the historically sensitive claim that "*Palestinian* Lives Matter," to the specificity of the Palestinian condition, not as a mere dismissal of the former claim but as a necessary slowing of its dialectical logic. To insist on difference is to reject the choice between a dehistoricized ethics of alterity and an abstract politics of humanity. In forging a path beyond the Jew and the Greek, advocates of Palestinian difference have adopted and adapted an anti-Zionist narrative of exilic Jewishness. Perhaps no one has done this more successfully than Edward Said, the "last of Jewish intellectuals."

The concluding chapter, "The Nation Which Is Not One, or Israel's Autoimmunity," considers bi-nationalism, or a one-state solution, as an ethico-political solution to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. Ever since the failure of the Oslo Peace Accords to yield a just resolution to the Palestinian question—which at the time meant a two-state solution—a one-state solution has been gathering momentum among Palestinian intellectuals and Continental philosophers. Against the cynical objection that this is an idealist dream, they argue that a one-state solution is the current reality in Israel and the Occupied Territories. The ethico-political challenge is to make this one-state democratic and egalitarian, the site where the lives of both Israelis and Palestinians are seen as livable and grievable. This transformation must involve a radical decolonization and deracialization of Israeli policies. For Derrida, it begins with a recognition on Israel's part of its "suicidal behavior," its autoimmune condition. Israel's "defense" measures—the Wall in the West Bank, the blockade of Gaza, collective punishment, annexation of Palestinian land, etc.—all aim to immunize the state of Israel. But, as Derrida argues, the desire for pure immunity is a deeply dangerous fantasy. The self-enclosure of any identity—be it collective (the Nation) or conceptual (the Jew or the Greek)—is not possible, nor is it desirable. The future of Israel is ineluctably tied to that of the Palestinians. No political guarantees come with bi-nationalism. On the contrary, there is genuine exposure and risk involved. The other as neighbor can be a friend (life) or a foe (death). But still, being certain of the other's "malevolent" intentions has not gotten Israelis and Palestinians any closer to peaceful existence. The idea of bi-nationalism is an opportunity rendered possible by Israel's autoimmunity.

It rests on a political commitment to co-existence, on an ethical belief that only when the effects on the self are not known in advance can one truly encounter the other as a neighbor, as a necessarily dangerous but indispensable supplement to oneself.

1

Levinas and Trauma: The Rhetoric of the Timeless Victim

The traumatic experience of my slavery in Egypt constitutes my very humanity, a fact that immediately allies me to the workers, the wretched, and the persecuted people of the world.

Emmanuel Levinas[1]

The conquerors had just suffered the worst genocide in history. The Zionists turned this genocide into an absolute evil. But turning the worst genocide in history into an absolute evil is a religious and mystic approach, not a historical one. It does not stop the evil. On the contrary, it propagates it, inflicting it on other innocents. It demands reparations that cause others to suffer some part of what the Jews suffered (exile, ghettoization, disappearance as expulsion, restriction to ghettos, disappearance as a people). With "colder" means than genocide, they want to achieve the same ends.

Gilles Deleuze[2]

Any reader of Emmanuel Levinas realizes almost immediately that the pull toward abstraction in his work is strong. How, readers may well wonder, does his infinitely demanding ethics of alterity translate in everyday life? We can take one cue from the specific examples of the other—the stranger, the widow, the orphan—to which Levinas does sometimes make recourse to illustrate his thought. Among these multiple figures of otherness, it is the Jew that seems to exemplify best the perplexities of his ethics, for the Jewish tradition provides a foundational myth that serves as a powerful counter to philosophy's Greek heritage of violence.[3] In establishing his ethics of alterity, Levinas turns for inspiration to Abraham, the first Jew and patriarch of Judaism, whose act of "leaving his fatherland forever for a yet unknown land" provides an alternative model to Greek thought, epitomized by the figure of Odysseus, whose long journey merely returns him to Ithaca, his home and starting point.[4] Positing

an encounter with otherness that does not result in a return to the already known, in the subjugation and transformation of the strange into the familiar, Levinas's affirmation of *ethics as first philosophy* seeks to wake philosophy from its prolonged Odyssean slumber: "Philosophy's itinerary remains that of Ulysses, whose adventure in the world was only a return to his native island—a complacency in the Same, an unrecognition of the other."[5] More than a myopic or self-centered orientation, this "unrecognition of the other" is at the root of tremendous violence, including the horrors of the Holocaust. Levinas makes this connection explicit in a late interview from *Le Monde*, where he asserts that "the absence of concern for the other in Heidegger and his personal political adventure are linked."[6] Levinas sees Heidegger's short involvement with Nazism as coupled with his philosophy, a philosophy of power and mastery.

The suffering caused by this unrecognition of the other has been most tragically experienced by the Jews, who come to represent in Levinas's work at once a generalizable condition and a specific historical position. This unique exemplarity is at work in the dual dedication of *Otherwise than Being*, which Levinas first dedicates "to the memory of those who were closest among the six million assassinated by the National Socialists, and of the millions on millions of all confessions and all nations, victims of the same hatred of the other man, the same anti-Semitism," and also, in a second line written in Hebrew, to the memory of his father, mother, brothers, father-in-law, and mother-in-law. As Robert Bernasconi suggests, the more personal dedication, which often goes unread, "guards against losing touch with the particularity of a strictly Jewish destiny. [...] [T]he concept of persecution to which Levinas appeals is not a generalization but is always rooted in a certain specificity."[7] The personal and impersonal victims of the Shoah foreground the ethical horizon of *Otherwise than Being*. It is what Levinas calls elsewhere the Jews' "useless suffering"[8] that provokes his call for an ethics of alterity, for a philosophy that transcends Greek ontology and its offshoots from Spinoza to Heidegger.

With this call, a host of other questions, however, arise: what is at stake in thinking the other/victim as Jew? In bearing witness to the paradigmatic subject of suffering—in his attempt to come to terms with the subject after Auschwitz—does Levinas bracket from analysis present operations of power? Is a rhetoric of exceptionalism or exemplarity, with its unavoidable ontological residue, at odds with shifting political realities? Within this paradigm, what then becomes of the Palestinian? What might a sensitive historical approach, which exposes the Palestinian as the other of the Israeli, bring to philosophy's understanding of alterity, ethics, and politics?

This chapter looks at Levinas's own struggle to articulate a philosophy of the other that is not simply formal and abstract—a philosophy that genuinely attends to the face of the other, or better yet to the *politics* of the face. Levinas's struggle to establish such a philosophy is brought to light most clearly—and for many of his sympathetic readers, most disappointingly—in Shlomo Malka's radio interview with Levinas and Alain Finkielkraut broadcast shortly after the massacre of hundreds of Palestinians between September 16 and 18, 1982 at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in West Beirut, Lebanon, at the hands of Lebanese Christian Phalangist militia in Israeli-occupied Lebanon. The entry of Phalangist militia into the camps was an Israeli-sanctioned operation aimed at purging the camps of remaining Palestinian fighters—after the Palestine Liberation Organization's (PLO) forced evacuation from Beirut in August 1982—who were thought to have been responsible for the killing of Lebanon's president, Bashir Gemayel. The interview turns back to Levinas's own assertions about the need to care for the other to question his articulation of ethics and politics. Following his own line of questioning, we might ask: To what extent are the absence of concern for the non-European (the Palestinian) in Levinas's philosophy and his political comments on the Sabra and Shatila massacre linked? Is their room for the Palestinian other in a Levinasian ethics of alterity? What bearing can such an ethics have on the politics of everyday life?

Testing Levinas

An ethics of the other worthy of its name must pass through the test of politics; an ethical philosophy of absolute alterity must invariably confront the material realities of politics. Yet, such a test always risks distortion if it ends up merely transposing ethics into politics in a formulaic fashion. Cautious of the (non) translatability of his approach, Levinas underscores the irreducibility of ethics to any other field. He makes ethics—neither politics, nor ontology—*first philosophy*. But why does Levinas insist on this? Where is the danger in conceptualizing the other, the self or the rest of the world? Isn't this after all the business of philosophy? Yes, it is, and that is the problem. For Levinas, the danger lies in subordinating the other to the philosopher and reducing him to a matter for cognition, that is, in transforming a care for the other into a knowledge of the other; in short, in treating the human other like any other object in the world.

Levinas's critique of Western philosophy never translates into an anti-philosophy, however. He remains firmly anchored within the European

philosophical tradition. What he objects to are philosophy's insufficiencies, its inability to think alterity from *within*. This is why Levinas turns to Jerusalem—away from Athens—for a sense of the ethical. The Jew and the Greek, the Judeo-Christian tradition and Western philosophical thought, complement each other, and are constitutive of Levinas's European identity:

> For me the essential characteristic of philosophy is a certain, specifically Greek, way of thinking and speaking. Philosophy is primarily a question of language; and it is by identifying the subtextual language of particular discourses that we can decide whether they are philosophical or not. Philosophy employs a series of terms and concepts—such as *morphe* (form), *ousia* (substance), *nous* (reason), *logos* (thought) or *telos* (goal), etc.—which constitute a specifically Greek lexicon of intelligibililty. French and German, and indeed all of Western philosophy is entirely shot through with this specific language; it is a token of the genius of Greece to have been able to thus deposit its language in the basket of Europe. But although philosophy is essentially Greek, it is not exclusively so. It also has sources and roots which are non-Greek. What we term the Judeo-Christian tradition, for example, proposed an alternative approach to meaning and truth.[9]

Levinasian ethics hybridizes the Jew and the Greek, producing a philosophy that is otherwise or more than Greek. His ethics contests "the urge to possess and annex that underlies Western thought,"[10] though it, too, never fully traverses the bounds of Eurocentrism (since it considers everything else besides the Jewish and the Greek to be "dance"[11]). For Levinas, philosophers are colonizers of difference; they are, in the words of François Laruelle, "junkies of Being"[12]—they cannibalize difference, assimilating it to the already known. Against the hegemony of intellectualism, Levinas asserts the priority of sensibility over cognition, attending to the ways the other moves me to action—to the ways ethics happens.

Levinas's ethics calls into doubt the validity of prior notions of autonomy and comprehension—two key concepts for traditional ethical philosophy.[13] The challenge to comprehension comes from a desire to respect the opacity of the other, from a recognition of the dangers of hermeneutic violence; that is, it comes from the recognition that my relation to the other does not obey a consumptive logic—it is not a relation of *knowledge*. The other as a singularity takes precedence over ontology. Alterity precedes sociality or community: "'Community' is … the search for unity, for the coincidence of what is common among us. Seeking the place and position where one founds society on knowledge is Greek. Knowledge, common knowledge, is 'community.'"[14] The

movement from the self to alterity will remain non-dialectizable, recalcitrant to the unity of the One, the coincidence of thinking and being: "The dialectic these developments may contain is in any case not Hegelian. It is not a matter of traversing a series of contradictions, or of reconciling them while stopping history. On the contrary, it is toward a pluralism that does not merge into unity that I should like to make my way and, if this can be dared, break with Parmenides."[15] Unlike the Greek's "tyranny of the universal and of the impersonal,"[16] Levinasian hermeneutics is attentive to the concreteness of the other, to his or her affectivity and precariousness.

For Levinas, the figure of the Jew best exemplifies the vulnerability of the other, because "among the millions of human beings who encountered misery and death, the Jews alone experienced a total dereliction. They experienced a condition inferior to that of things, an experience of total passivity, an experience of Passion."[17] Doing justice to the experience of the Jews requires what we might call an ethics of trauma. But such an ethics cannot simply manifest as an interpretive attitude; it is not something that leaves my self and my interpretive capacity intact, as if I could choose to adopt or refuse it. Rather, ethics, as Levinas describes it, is something that traumatizes me, terrorizes or persecutes me, interpellates me, takes me hostage, and compels me to act.[18] My sovereignty, my subjectivity, is wounded and demoted: "Subjectivity is not the Ego [*le Moi*], but me [*moi*]."[19] In this respect, ethics is a profoundly heteronomous condition—we might speak, then, also of a *trauma of ethics*.

The Levinasian story of a traumatic ethics might run something like this: In the beginning, there was enjoyment in the material world. At the level of sensibility—a level more primordial than that of consciousness[20]—the self appropriates his or her surroundings ("the transmutation of the other into the same … an energy that is other … becomes, in enjoyment, my own energy, me"[21]) for the purposes of nourishment, comfort, and familiarity. Then, the exposure to the human other—to the face of the other—changes, or at least holds the promise of changing, all of this. "The vision of the face is not an experience, but a moving out of oneself, a contact with another being,"[22] writes Levinas. This contact with the other uproots me. The self's experience of sufficiency gives way to an experience of the other unexplainable within the strict parameters of phenomenology. The other—who "remains infinitely transcendent, infinitely foreign,"[23] refractory to my intentionality—interrupts the self's *conatus*:

> In the *conatus essendi*, which is the effort to exist, existence is the supreme law. However, with the appearance of the face on the inter-personal level, the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" emerges as a limitation of the *conatus*

> *essendi*. It is not a rational limit. Consequently, interpreting it necessitates thinking it in moral terms, in ethical terms. It must be thought of outside the idea of force.[24]

Ethics names this disturbance, this excess or surplus of (non)meaning:

> A calling into question of the same—which cannot occur within the egoist spontaneity of the same—is brought about by the other. We name this calling into question of my spontaneity by the presence of the Other ethics. The strangeness of the Other, his irreducibility to the I, to my thoughts and my possessions, is precisely accomplished as a calling into question of my spontaneity, as ethics.[25]

The face of the other thus jolts the self out of his or her comfort and egoistic life, giving rise, in turn, to the latter's ethical self.

So, in principle, the other *as other* is for Levinas any human being whose face resists my identification and cognitive domestication; the other "exceed[s] *the idea of the other in me*."[26] Cultivating an eye for the face, responding to its demands, Judith Butler notes, "means to be awake to what is precarious in another life or, rather, the precariousness of life itself."[27] Such an "understanding" of the other gets put to the test, however, when one encounters particular others in the context of political conflicts. It is with this view of an ethics of alterity and of the question of its political ramifications that Shlomo Malka prompts Levinas to comment in his 1982 interview for Radio Communauté (September 28, 1982) on the Sabra and Shatila massacre and, more generally, on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. News of the tragedy shocked the world and deeply affected the Jewish community in Israel and the Diaspora.[28] Malka wonders whether the State of Israel has failed to be responsive to, and responsible for, its vulnerable Arab neighbor, asking, "Emmanuel Levinas, you are the philosopher of the 'other.' Isn't history, isn't politics the very site of the encounter with the 'other,' and for the Israeli isn't the 'other' above all Palestinian?" Levinas's response disappoints:

> My definition of the other is completely different. The other is the neighbor [*prochain*], who is not necessarily my kin [*proche*] but who may be. But if your neighbor attacks another neighbor, or treats him unjustly, what can you do? Then alterity takes on another character, in alterity we can find an enemy, or at least we are faced with the problem of knowing who is right and who is wrong, who is just and who is unjust. There are people who are wrong.[29]

Levinas refuses—at least, where it concerns the Palestinian—to historicize and culturalize the neighbor, flatly rejecting the ontical nature of his interlocutor's

question. One might say, with Slavoj Žižek, that "what Levinas is basically saying is that, as a principle, respect for alterity is unconditional (the highest sort of respect), but, when faced with a concrete other, one should nonetheless see if he is a friend or an enemy. In short, in practical politics, the respect for alterity strictly means nothing."[30]

Ironically, in his earlier essay, "Transcendence and Height," Levinas had made the opposite argument, insisting that the ethical other is not just any and every other, but rather those who are very different from the people we might normally think of as neighbors and kin (the people whom we live among every day, and who are similar to ourselves): "Transcendence is only possible when the Other [*Autrui*] is not initially the fellow human being [*semblable*] or the neighbor [*prochain*]; but when it is the very distant, when it is Other, when it is the one with whom initially I have nothing in common, when it is an abstraction."[31] Here, Levinas apparently renounces the Torah's narrower definition of the neighbor as a "fellow Israelite," as a fellow member of the covenant of Leviticus 19:18.[32] Yet in the wake of the massacres, this distant, different neighbor is an *autrui* who can be a friend or a foe, and my obligation and responsibility to him or her seem to be predicated on knowing who is right and who is wrong. Isn't this a far cry from the promised affectivity and infinite debt that I owe to the captivating image of the other?

Levinas tries to explain this discrepancy through his distinction between ethics and politics, through the notion of the third [*le tiers*]:

> I don't live in a world in which there is but one single "first comer"; there is always a third party in the world: he or she is also my other, my neighbor. Hence it is important to me to know which of the two takes precedence. Is the one not the persecutor of the other? Must not human beings, who are incomparable, be compared? Thus justice here takes precedence over the taking upon oneself of the fate of the other. *I must judge where before I was to assume responsibilities.* Here is the birth of the theoretical; here is the birth of the concern for justice, which is the basis of the theoretical. But it is always starting from the face, from the responsibility for the other that justice appears, calling in turn for judgment and comparison, a comparison of what is in principle incomparable, for every being is unique.[33]
>
> The third party is other than the neighbor [*prochain*], but also another neighbor, and also a neighbor of the other, and not simply his fellow [*semblable*].[34]

The dyadic relation between self and other constitutes the realm of ethics, whereas the introduction of the third brings the self into the realm of justice

or politics: the art of comparing the incomparable. All others are "on an equal footing as before a court of justice."[35] Levinas underscores the intertwined nature of the two realms. The political is not an afterthought or of secondary importance but is there from the start: "The third party looks at me in the eyes of the Other."[36] Or, in Derrida's apt formulation, "the third does not wait."[37]

We can see in Levinas's response to Malka an attempt at translating the distinction between ethics and politics, an application of his meaning of "justice" to the Sabra and Shatila massacre: this is how he *judged* the event (determining "who is right and who is wrong, who is just and who is unjust"), while simultaneously abdicating from the start a critical posture toward the State of Israel, as he puts it elsewhere: "I forbid myself to speak about Israel, not being in Israel, not living its noble adventure and not running this great daily risk."[38] Needless to say, Levinas's judgment did not go unchallenged by his readers, sympathetic and hostile alike. Martin Jay sums up concisely what came to be a common reading of Levinas's stance on the massacre, on what distinguishes a good neighbor (neighbor as kin) from bad neighbor (neighbor as enemy): "Here the infinity of alterity, the transcendence of mere being by ethical commands, the hostage-like substitution of self for other, are abruptly circumscribed by the cultural-cum-biological limits of permissible kinship alliance."[39] Levinas apparently suspends his "aversion to community,"[40] aligning himself with the *collective identity* of the Jewish people:

> For me this is the essence of Zionism. It signifies a State in the fullest sense of the term, a State with an army and arms, an army which can have a deterrent and if necessary a defensive significance. Its necessity is ethical—indeed, it's an old ethical idea which commands us precisely to defend our neighbours. My people and my kin are still my neighbours. When you defend the Jewish people, you defend your neighbour and every Jew in particular defends his neighbour when he defends the Jewish people.[41]

David Campbell decries Levinas's uncritical reliance on borders, which dictates his understanding and ethics of alterity: "[T]he border *between* societies, the state border that is enabled by the transformation of alterity into enmity (and especially those borders that separate Israel from its neighbors), permits the responsibility for the Other as neighbor to be diminished."[42] Howard Caygill puts the matter even more forcefully, describing Levinas's infamous response as disclosing "a coolness of political judgement that verged on the chilling, an unsentimental understanding of violence and power almost worthy of Machiavelli."[43] The Palestinian as destitute other remains invisible (faceless, or

better yet, defaced) for Levinas; what matters, in the final analysis, is a default sameness (Levinas's kin takes ethical precedence over the Palestinian other), functioning as the arbitrator of conflicting ethical demands.

On this reading, it is not Levinas's philosophy of the other (the affirmation of *ethics as first philosophy*) itself that is questioned, but rather its vexed relationship to politics, its erratic or "misguided"—but not any less devastating (it "opens a wound in his whole œuvre," Caygill asserts[44])—application. That is, a Levinasian ethics does not necessarily require that the needs of the State of Israel trump the rights of Palestinians; indeed, what could be more contrary to Levinasian ethics than a chauvinistic appeal to religious and national sameness as the basis for political action?[45] Moreover, Levinas's comment that "there are people who are wrong" seems to confuse the victim and the perpetrator. In the context of an answer addressing the massacre at Sabra and Shatila, it is clear that the persecuted, fragile, vulnerable others here are the Palestinian refugees, not the Israeli occupiers, the ones complicit with the Phalangist murderers.[46]

Yet, Robert Bernasconi cautioned that this line of inquiry is misleading in that it risks distorting Levinas's actual *philosophical account* of the other. According to Bernasconi, Levinas refuses "to treat the notion of alterity as a sociological category that might be applied as a cultural or ethnic designation."[47] In other words, the Levinasian other is resolutely not a postcolonial other.[48] Levinas's other transcends the realm of identity politics; it is not about the advocacy for the political rights of socially marginalized or excluded people—those who have been *made* other. Alterity is never the by-product of a process of othering. On one level, Bernasconi is absolutely right; Levinas's philosophy of the other must be situated within the phenomenological tradition, a tradition that Levinas seriously questions by challenging the powers of consciousness to grasp the meaning of its enigmatic object (the face of the other). As a result, any self/other relation is always (at some level) asymmetrical, involving both a joining and a disjoining, proximity and distance, a "relation without relation" (*rapport sans rapport*), as Levinas calls it elsewhere.[49] So the Palestinian cannot lay any special claim to being the other of the Jew/Israeli. Yet, on another level, Bernasconi's careful (one could say faithful) reading of Levinas's other minimizes the phantasmatic investment in the image of the Jew as a figure of radical alterity, an image that Levinas, as we have seen, does much to perpetuate.[50] Evoking the Palestinian as the other of the Israeli might be interpreted less as a descriptive account of the ethico-political situation than a rhetorical move aiming at disrupting an ideologically captivating image of the perpetrator and the victim.

The making of the singular victim

A typical gesture among readers sympathetic to Levinas who would prefer to de-emphasize the tension or friction between ethics and politics while still alluding to their significant differences is to argue for the incommensurability of the two realms.[51] But there is always a risk here of fetishizing the difference of the victim "under the rubric of incommensurability."[52] To question Levinas's grammar of victimology, and the phenomenology of the enemy that it makes possible, is, following Caygill, to entertain a "harder thought"[53] concerning Levinas's response to Malka. No philosophical gymnastics—of the form: do not confuse the empirical with the transcendental other—will do.[54] Levinas's reply touches on a greater political problem: the rhetoric of the Jew as timeless, singular Victim. That is, Jewish victimhood becomes an identity out of time (and thus de-politicized) rather than the result of a particular, historical harm; aggressors are similarly assimilated to one another, linked under the category of anti-Semite. The category of victim is retroactively imputed to all Jews after the Shoah, making all contemporary Jews always already Victims.

Levinas's phenomenology of the enemy is predicated on such an investment in the figure of the Jew as the ultimate victim of history. He places the Shoah *among* the great tragedies of human history:

> This is the century that in thirty years has known two world wars, the totalitarianisms of right and left, Hitlerism and Stalinism, Hiroshima, the Gulag, and the genocides of Auschwitz and Cambodia. This is the century that is drawing to a close in the obsessive fear of the return of everything these barbaric names stood for: suffering and evil inflicted deliberately, but in a manner no reason set limits to, in the exasperation of reason become political and detached from all ethics.[55]

However, Levinas also underscores the Shoah's *exemplary* status. To speak of extreme human suffering is to speak of Auschwitz:

> Among these events the Holocaust of the Jewish people under the reign of Hitler seems to us the paradigm of gratuitous human suffering.
>
> I think that all the dead of the Gulag and all the other places of torture in our political century are present when one speaks of Auschwitz.[56]

The State of Israel serves as a remedy to this unprecedented evil done to the Jewish people, and gains its legitimacy from this premise of unprecedence, understood not simply as unique, or unlike other events, but as uniquely

deserving of redress. The harm done in the Shoah stands not only among but also above other harms, and thus remedying this harm gains priority over other imperatives. After Auschwitz, the idea of Israel, for Levinas and many others, makes perfect sense: "I would only say that now, under the given circumstances, … a State is the only form in which Israel—the people and the culture—can survive."[57] There is no hesitation about its manifestation, no real concern for its impact on others, that is, on non-Jews, but rather certainty that this form of statehood is the only possible option available.[58] Yet, comparing Levinas's myopic perspective with Martin Buber's conscientious position shows that such a logic is not self-evident:

> Independence of one's own must not be gained at the expense of another's independence. Jewish settlement must oust no Arab peasant, Jewish immigration must not cause the political status of the present inhabitants to deteriorate, and must continue to ameliorate their economic condition.[59]

Though also a committed Zionist, Buber did not bracket the Palestinian from ethico-political considerations. This Zionism asserts that Jews cannot claim exclusivity to the land of historic Palestine. Yet such a view was lost as Zionism found political expression in the form of the State of Israel, which transformed the Palestinian from an indigenous inhabitant of the land into an enemy of the Promised Land.[60]

For Levinas, what makes the Palestinians an *a priori* enemy[61] is what he deems their lack of generosity toward the seemingly eternal other, the way they turned a blind eye to the plight of the victims of the Shoah.[62] While Levinas does not hold the Palestinians directly responsible for the moral catastrophe, he does indict them for failing to be hospitable or responsive to the call of the Jews, for not accepting them as brothers and thus initiating a rapprochement with this unique other. Conscience demanded that the Palestinians welcome Israel (and not vice versa), that they succeed where Europeans had failed:[63]

> The Arab peoples would not have to answer for German atrocities, or cede their lands to the victims of Hitlerism! What deafness to the call of conscience! […] But can the call of the land silence the cries of Auschwitz which will echo until the end of time? […] A gesture of recognition offered to Israel by the Arab peoples would no doubt be answered by a surge of fraternity that would allow the problem of refugees to lose its unknown quantity.[64]
>
> Of course, it is the West, not the Arab world, which bears the responsibility for Auschwitz. Unless one accepts that the responsibility of men cannot be divided, and that *all men are responsible for all others*.[65]

Simply put, either you support Zionism (and become a brother of Israel/the Jews) or you lack moral conscience (and become an enemy of Israel/the Jews).

This line of argumentation posits Jewish victimhood as both a timeless condition and a moral priority above others. As Alain Badiou has objected, however, the moral immunity typically ascribed to the signifier "Jew" (epitomized, for example, in Menachem Begin's refusal to inquire into the IDF's culpability in the Sabra and Shatila massacre on the grounds that nothing could be learned, for "No one will preach to us ethics and respect for human life"[66]) indiscriminately brackets all actions undertaken by Jews from moral judgment by virtue of the Jewishness of the actor, an inherited and inherent identity:

> Today it is not uncommon to read that "Jew" is indeed a name beyond ordinary names. And it seems to be presumed that, like an inverted original sin, the grace of having been an incomparable victim can be passed down not only to descendants and to the descendants of descendants but to all who come under the predicate in question, be they heads of state or armies engaging in the severe oppression of those whose lands they have confiscated.[67]

Though there are no explicit references to Levinas in this essay, "Uses of the Word 'Jew,'" Levinas's thought is far from absent. In fact, it is precisely the following type of passages from Levinas's *Difficult Freedom* that Badiou finds most objectionable:

> The traumatic experience of my slavery in Egypt constitutes my very humanity, a fact that immediately allies me to the workers, the wretched, and the persecuted people of the world … Among the millions of human beings who encountered misery and death, the Jews alone experienced a total dereliction. They experienced a condition inferior to that of things, an experience of total passivity, an experience of Passion.[68]

The traumatic experiences of Jews endow them with a unique capacity to identify with the suffering of all others. "For all its brute particularity, its life, its suffering, the Jewish people is the soul of humanity, and its essence is universalism," notes Michael L. Morgan.[69] In his dedication to *Otherwise than Being*, Levinas defines all of the victims of hatred ("victims of the same hatred of the other man") as victims of anti-Semitism. The trauma of the Jewish people attests to the universal human core of ethical subjectivity, to their exemplarity as a people: their trauma is a sign of both their uniqueness (their election) and humanity's vulnerability (we are all potentially Jews).[70] Yet, the promise of Israel, its prophetic vocation, does not always translate into reality.[71] In the case of the Palestinians, who are viewed as incapable of occupying the position of the

Semite (and thus incapable of being victims of hatred, defined narrowly as anti-Semitic hatred), it is quite off the mark.

Badiou's critique alerts us to the convoluted metaphysics, to the phantasmatic structure, underpinning this use and abuse of the signifier Jew: "[W]hat is at issue is to know whether or not, in the general field of public intellectual discussion, the word 'Jew' constitutes an exceptional signifier, such that it would be legitimate to make it play the role of a final, or even sacred, signifier."[72] The problem here for Badiou is not that the current representation of Jews as victims somehow distorts the actual history of Jews. On the contrary, Badiou repeatedly acknowledges the historical tragedy of the Jews and insists on the need to remain vigilant and to denounce explicit and latent anti-Semitism whenever it manifests itself. His point rather is that a certain ideology of the Jew, "a certain philo-Semitism,"[73] as he calls it, generally conditions mainstream Western discussion of Israeli politics.[74] The Jews' unprecedented historical suffering transforms them as a people from "victims" to "Victims" of Humanity, guaranteeing them the (timeless) status of (morally untouchable) other, giving them, in turn, a paradigmatic status in trauma studies and theory.[75] As Cécile Winter points out: "[T]he ideological frame mounted at Nuremberg laid the foundations for a durable edifice. The 'Crime' against 'Humanity,' the first, the incomparable and absolute, the inaccessible, definitive yardstick of all others, elevated its victims to exemplary status. The 'Victims,' once jews, became 'Jews.' 'Jew,' that is, turned into a metonymical signifier for Humanity … 'Jew' is the Victim par excellence."[76] This rhetoric of victimhood transforms the Jew into a self-sufficient and non-relational entity.

The Jew, thus, becomes a singular *V*ictim rather than a specific *v*ictim. For Peter Hallward, the singular and the specific designate "general logics of individuation,"[77] which he distinguishes from a third term, the specified: "The specified can only define the realm of the essence or essentialist, where the demarcation of an individual (subject, object or culture) follows from its accordance with recognised classifications."[78] The specified lacks agency; it is *specified by* others (not determined by me), and thus "extends only to the realm of the passive or the objectified."[79] In Levinasian parlance, the specified is the reduction of the self to the same, to the recognizable and the classifiable: "Indeed, it is evident that it is in the knowledge of the other (*autrui*) as a simple individual—individual of a genus, a class, or a race—that peace with the other (*autrui*) turns into hatred."[80] The logic of the specified breeds an allergic relation to alterity. In the context of postcolonial theory, the singular and the specific point to alternative economies of subjectivization. The specific, Hallward's

preferred logic of individuation, "yields elements whose individuality can only be discerned through the relations they maintain with themselves, with their environment, and with other individuals. […] The specific … implies a situation, a past, an intelligibility constrained by inherited conditions."[81] So the specific, like the specified, is relational, but its relationality is dynamic rather than reified. The singular is not relational in character. Rather it "is constituent of itself, expressive of itself, immediate to itself. That the singular creates the medium of its existence means that it is not specific to external criteria or frames of reference."[82] The singular "comes to be in the absence of others, deprived of an ethical or political *environment* as such."[83]

Seeing the Jew as "Victim" *singularizes* the other, ironically stripping him or her of facticity, or historical specificity. Or as Gilles Deleuze put it, the Zionists managed to transmute "the worst genocide in history" into an "*absolute evil*," taking "a religious and mystic approach" to the Shoah rather than "a historical one." This hermeneutic gesture did not simply mystify the event, but perpetuated its evil onto others, "other innocents." This transformation (from historical genocide to absolute evil, from real victims to mythic Victims) gives the right to the Israeli Jew, as to any Jew, to profess his or her universalism (the history of Jews is the history of Humanity) and at the same time to maintain a right to difference (a righteous defense of the Jewish state, a state to which the charge of state terrorism can never stick, for example).[84] But such a metamorphosis has political implications, especially for anyone who finds him- or herself opposed to Israel and its policies. Attempts to expose the uneasy relation of these two claims (of universality and difference), to scrutinize their dubious conflation, often earn the critic the pernicious label of anti-Semite. With this ubiquitous threat, Palestinians and advocates of the Palestinian cause are, as a result, constantly silenced, discredited, or excluded from the realm of rational public discourse, amounting to, as Badiou points out, nothing short of "political blackmail."[85]

Unlike some of his acolytes, Levinas to his credit never practiced this form of blackmail.[86] He even distanced himself from those Zionists he viewed as complacent, as too secure in their election, and too inclined to fetishize the Land (those "who confuse Zionism … with some sort of commonplace mystique of the earth as native soil"[87]). Morgan captures the thrust of Levinas's Zionism in terms of its priorities: "it is about helping Jews and not oppressing others."[88] Levinas still prioritized the relationship to the other over the relationship to the Promised Land, arguing that "a person is more holy than a land, even a holy land."[89] Levinas even warned Jews not to take their universality lightly, noting

that their election comes with an even greater sense of duty, an infinite responsibility to and for the other:

> We have the reputation of considering ourselves to be a chosen people, and this reputation greatly wrongs this universalism. The idea of a chosen people must not be taken as a sign of pride. It does not involve being aware of exceptional rights, but of exceptional duties. It is the prerogative of a moral consciousness itself. It knows itself at the centre of the world and for it the world is not homogeneous: for I am always alone in being able to answer the call, I am irreplaceable in my assumption of responsibility. Being chosen involves a surplus of obligations for which the 'I' of moral consciousness utters.[90]

But here again there is a gap between what Levinas preaches about the other (that *autrui* make asymmetrical demands upon me) and how he reads the Palestinian other (the other's other). Levinas can only maintain a separation between the other in the abstract, and the Palestinian other, by paradoxically asserting the historical basis of the Jews' claim to universalism:

> The origins of the conflict between Jews and Arabs go back to Zionism. This conflict has been acute since the creation of the State of Israel on a small piece of arid land which had belonged to the children of Israel more than thirty centuries before and which … has never been abandoned by the Jewish communities … But it also happens to be on a small piece of land which has been inhabited by people who are surrounded on all sides and by vast stretches of land containing the great Arab people of which they form a part. They call themselves Palestinians.[91]

Levinas questions the Palestinians' legitimacy as a people, those who merely "call themselves Palestinians," which pales before the rootedness or well-established lineage of the "children of Israel."[92] By assimilating them to the "great Arab people," Levinas denies the Palestinians any specificity, any acknowledgment of their own fragility and vulnerability as a people, contributing further to their dispossession and defacement. Given this lopsided judgment of the conflict, it is hard for Levinas to really imagine the Jews as otherwise than victims. He can entertain the idea of Jews as oppressors of Arabs, but only to quickly dismiss it:

> It is the position of an armed and dominant State, one of the great military powers of the Mediterranean basin facing the unarmed Palestinian people whose very existence Israel refuses to recognize! But is that the true state of affairs? Is not Israel, in its very real strength, also one of the most fragile and vulnerable things in the world, poised in the midst of unopposed nations, who

> are rich in natural allies, and surrounded by their lands? Land, land, land as far as the eye can see.[93]

Jews and the State of Israel are the "most fragile and vulnerable" *objects* of terror, never the *subjects* of it. Auschwitz inaugurated the rhetoric of the timeless victim, and we are still witnessing its effects.

Jacqueline Rose, for instance, discusses the pedagogical value and role of Auschwitz[94] in the fashioning of IDF soldiers, and its impact on their cultivation of identification and empathy:

> Israeli soldiers are regularly sent on visits to Auschwitz in order to strengthen their resolve. Responding in July 2003 to questions about the killing of Palestinian children by the Israeli army (in the conflict at that time, one in five dead Palestinians was a child), the commander in Gaza starts by taking responsibility: "Every name of a child here, it makes me feel bad because it's the fault of my soldiers," but by the end of the conversation he has—in the words of the interviewer— returned to being "combative," invoking the Holocaust as his rationale: "I remember the Holocaust. We have a choice, to fight the terrorists or to face being consumed again." There are suicide bombings on the part of the Palestinians in which Israeli children have died; they have rightly been described as unacceptable crimes. But the flames on the streets of Jerusalem and Tel Aviv are not the flames of the Holocaust.[95]

The evocation of Auschwitz (the event that disclosed the pure vulnerability of the Jews) works to produce a form of exclusionary hyper-masculinity. In Achille Mbembe's terms, this use of Auschwitz results in "the melding of strength, victimhood, a supremacist complex,"[96] paradoxically foreclosing any hope of relationality with the Palestinians, of recognizing them as victims, or, as Said puts it, as the "victims of the victims."[97] We are left asking, with Rose, how the lessons of Auschwitz might alternately provide the basis for thinking the "shared vulnerability of peoples," and what other political forms might better address or meet the ethical demands of this vulnerability.[98]

The Saying of the Palestinians

It is clear that the self as victim, though not an unproblematic ethical model, does open up or provide (for the one who can claim this position) some avenues for remedy. To claim victimhood, or better yet to have an ostensibly "neutral" third party (such as the Western media) claim it for you, can often succeed in

arousing, in the international public arena, feelings of pathos (guilt, empathy, pity, compassion, etc.) that are becoming a precondition for understanding a people's plight. Unless I can see you as a victim—as someone who has endured an injustice and reacts in defense, not offensively—I will likely not be amenable to empathizing with you nor moved to intervene and rectify the political situation.

In *Political Emotions*, Martha Nussbaum makes some pertinent observations about the precondition for compassion between self and others, drawing on the example of the poor, toward whom many fail to cultivate any sense of compassion. She writes that "many Americans feel no compassion for the poor, who they believe bring poverty upon themselves through laziness and lack of effort."[99] It is not difficult to expand Nussbaum's reading to the Palestinians. Those who feel no compassion for the Palestinians frequently consider them responsible for their own condition. The story goes as follows: the Palestinians had several chances at peace and co-existence with Israel, from 1948 to then US President Bill Clinton's last push at Camp David, in 2000; but each time, the Palestinians *chose* violence over peace. The Palestinians, therefore, cannot be seen as victims—objects of empathy and compassion—if they are construed as the primary agents of their misery. As formulated by former Israeli foreign minister Abba Eban, "The Palestinians never miss an opportunity to miss an opportunity."[100]

This ideological narrative along with Eban's mendacious adage help to explain for instance the failure of the mainstream American public to be outraged by the continued hardship of the Palestinians.[101] In the American imaginary, the Palestinian is not a traumatized subject; seeing him or her as a heteronomous subject, a fractured *cogito*—which would constitute an attempt at comprehension, an attempt at understanding the social, economic, and political conditions which could have helped to produce him as a so-called terrorist—is interpreted ungenerously as an endorsement, rationalization, or justification of Palestinian violence. Thus, the Palestinian is never the victim but almost always the Israeli's aggressor.

But, as Butler makes abundantly clear, "no political ethics can start with the assumption that Jews monopolize the position of victim."[102] If Jews can be the only ones to occupy that position in the conflict between the Arabs and the Israelis then it follows that the voice of the Palestinians as wronged subjects cannot be heard. Raising the Palestinian question must therefore begin with democratizing the position of victim (and terrorist[103]). More than a problem of political recognition, this process involves an affective dimension, and openness to what Levinas

calls the "Saying" of the other, the call of the other to which one feels impelled to respond. Levinas stresses the affective force of the Saying; he describes it as "the breakup of essence."[104] It short circuits the ego (the identity of the self) by unsettling its horizon of intelligibility, or, in other words, disrupting the self's interpretive frameworks and self-understanding. Levinas also describes the Saying as the dialogic impulse toward the other, the impulse to respond to the other who addresses me, whereas the Said—the constitution of meaning—designates and ossifies meaning, putting an end to the signifying process.

While Saying refers to a pre-discursive desire or responsiveness, it becomes in Levinas's later work compatible with a discursive mode that he had previously thought of as thwarting this impulse by reducing it to the Said. It is in part in response to Derrida—who critiqued the fantasy of *absolute* alterity as opposed to *relative* alterity in Levinas's formulation of ethics in *Totality and Infinity*—that Levinas later moves away from the pre-discursive face-to-face encounter as the paradigm for the ethical, and toward the modes of figuration through which the ethical encounter unfolds. In *Otherwise than Being*, while still insisting on the Saying, and on the respect for the other as exteriority and mystery, Levinas becomes far more attentive to the grammar of philosophy and to the possibility of ethical figuring. The language of ontology (the Said is "the birthplace of ontology,"[105] that is, the birthplace of the Greek) does not preclude nor exhaust the "ethical Saying." In other words, the ethical can signify *within* the realm of representation. It is no longer a question of simply choosing between the Saying and the Said.

After Derrida's "Violence and Metaphysics," Levinas is more cognizant of the paradox that as soon as one utters something, once meaning happens, one enters into the domain of the Said. Yet he does not stop there: "The *otherwise than being* is stated in a saying that must also be unsaid in order to thus extract the *otherwise than being* from the said in which it already comes to signify but a *being otherwise*."[106] Refusing now the false choice between Saying and the Said, opening and totality, respect and violence, Levinas advocates a kind of skepticism, an "endless critique," or "an incessant unsaying"—and the necessary resaying—of the Said.[107] The Saying, then, invariably passes through the compromised and compromising scene of language; its anarchic character—its "non-synchronizable diachrony"—is not fully digested, or reduced to a "modality of cognition," but preserved and rearticulated through the perpetual activity of interpretation.[108]

Interpreting the Saying of the other in the case of the Palestinian takes a particular form, for both their Saying and the Israeli horizons of receptivity are

shaped by trauma—the trauma of the Nakba, the trauma of Sabra and Shatila, and the ongoing trauma of occupation, on the one hand, and the trauma of the Shoah on the other. Trauma seems in Levinas's case to determine or restrict his reception of Palestinian Saying, which is marked by a refusal to engage in a dialogic exchange, an open-ended process of hesitation, unsaying, and resaying. To Malka's question: *For the Israeli isn't the other above all Palestinian?* Levinas responds rather with a *thematization* of the Palestinian: the Palestinian is not a neighbor, a non-other, an enemy. The Holocaust—the fear of another Holocaust as a justification for Israeli aggression, read as Israel defending itself—loomed large in the interview, pushing out, as it were, the Palestinians' claim to victimhood. Levinas's Said attests to the seemingly unshakable narrative of the Jew as timeless Victim.

That Levinas's response to the Sabra and Shatila massacre does not live up to the vision of receptivity that he lays out does not in itself, however, discount the interpretive value of a Levinasian sensibility. A call to break with the climate of Levinas's philosophy is, I think, premature.[109] An ethics of alterity framed around questions of Saying and Said is less prone to essentializing—to fixing or overdetermining the other in the dyadic relation—and thus might prove to be ethically, politically, and hermeneutically more viable. In the hope of advancing such a sensibility and its political potential, I want to turn to Ari Folman's highly acclaimed 2008 animated war documentary, *Waltz with Bashir*. The docu-film tells the story of Folman as the main character searching for his lost memories of his experience as an Israeli soldier in the 1982 Lebanon War, and as a witness to the massacre of the Palestinians at the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps.[110] The film clearly stages the Palestinian Saying in foregrounding the trauma of Sabra and Shatila and attempting to engage with questions of responsiveness and responsibility. Yet, it also points up the fallibility of such an attempt, and the ethical work involved in moving beyond one's own working through, in allowing other victims' Saying, their suffering, their trauma, to make demands on oneself.

Waltz with Bashir could be said to deliver on Rose's hope for a different form of Israeli masculinity, a military masculinity less aggressive, heroic, and certain of itself: an Israeli masculinity capable of seeing Israel's other, the Palestinian (*pace* Levinas), as a victim, and not as a bloodthirsty terrorist and ungrievable enemy. Folman embodies this new vulnerable subject, who seeks therapy and the assistance of others. In Folman's hallucinatory journey, he slowly circles back to the traumatic event of the massacre. From his dream of rising naked, with a couple of other Israeli soldiers, from the Mediterranean sea, watching flares

light up Beirut, Folman eventually arrives at the realization that he was an actual witness to the tragic event, and, moreover, that he, alongside other Israeli forces, assisted the Phalangists, either by launching flares or by helping to contain the Palestinian refugees while the Phalangists were running their operation.

To be sure, telling the other's story, speaking for them, is a thorny interpretive adventure. Folman chooses to engage with what he knows—which is first and foremost his own experiences as an Israeli solider:

> For me, it was essential to keep it on the level of the common soldier and not try to figure out how the others [ex-Lebanese soldiers, ex-Palestinian refugees] felt; I mean, one day, hopefully, the Palestinians and the Lebanese, they will have the option to tell their own story, their own version, and I'd love to see it. But you can't be both sides, you can't tell, you can't be the invader and be in this army, and then go to the other side and tell that story too. I mean you have to keep focus. And I kept focus on a very personal level, on my personal story and my friends' story, and it's big enough to try to cover it. It's pretentious enough to try to cover this story as it is.[111]

Similarly, in an interview, Folman describes entertaining the possibility of "making a *Rashomon* of 1982, showing the conflict from the differing viewpoints of all those involved. But it was not for him. 'Who am I to tell their stories?' he says of the Palestinians. 'They have to tell their own stories.'"[112] But one wonders if this expression of humility serves rather a self-protective function, effectively foreclosing contact with the other rather than making room for their voice. It is after all never a simple choice between speaking *for* others or only speaking for oneself/one's people. Folman's position here is reductive: what about the possibility of speaking *with* the Palestinians? In limiting the narrative focus to Israeli lenses, Folman's film can be said to essentialize the Israeli self and its Palestinian other. It rules out relationality as a modality of being, rendering, in turn, possible the transformation of Folman's character into a singular Victim, while silencing the Palestinians by making them unavailable, by excluding them from input and dialogue.[113]

In a key moment of the film, when only the memory of the massacre at Sabra and Shatila still remains repressed, Folman's psychologist friend, Uri Sivan, advises him to talk to others who were there, who may provide him with the missing information about his presence or absence at the camps. Folman reads the advice narrowly, and seeks out only fellow Israelis, soldiers and war journalist Ron Ben-Yishai—but not the Palestinian survivors, the "real witnesses," as Udi Aloni puts it.[114] The advice works, and Folman is able to retrieve his traumatic memory: he was indeed posted at the camps, and not

emerging from the sea as he fantasized in his dream. Sivan "helps" him further by interpreting Folman's trauma in relation to his parents' trauma of Auschwitz ("You were engaged with the massacre a long time before it happened, through your parents' Auschwitz memory"), perversely suggesting that the trauma of Sabra and Shatila is not really about the Palestinians themselves, that the "true" causes of his disturbance lie spatially and temporally elsewhere. Here the ostensive victims, the Palestinians, are displaced by Folman's split identifications with both victims (the Jews of Auschwitz) and victimizers (Sivan describes his behavior at the Sabra and Shatila camps as Nazi-like).

Folman's trauma—that he could become that type of person—is not, however, a sufficient condition for victimhood. Aggressors are not immune to trauma—be it experienced first hand or transmitted transgenerationally—but this fact alone does not make them victims on equal ethical and political footing with the victimized.[115] The film appears to be guilty of this dubious conflation. "*Waltz with Bashir* equates the victimizer and the victim by linking the massacre at Sabra and Shatila to the Jewish trauma of the Holocaust," writes Raz Yosef.[116] But this is perhaps to overstate the matter. The psychologist is only a character in the film and does not necessarily represent the film as a whole. To better engage with the film's potential and limitations, it is more instructive to turn to the final scene, in which the animation is interrupted and replaced with actual video footage of the aftermath of the massacre showing dead bodies and the lamentations of a Palestinian mother. For Yosef, the display of the actual footage does nothing to counter the film's depoliticized and depoliticizing narcissistic bent:

> The horrifying archival images of slaughtered Palestinian men, women and children at the end of the film are … detached from their historical and political context and provide a kind of catharsis for the protagonist: now he remembers and is released from the trauma that had been haunting him; now he is cured and redeemed from the wounds of the past and can apparently carry on with his life.[117]

Yosef's reading, though attractive in its insistence on the problematic aspects of the film, downplays the interpretive potential of the ending. I read the scene instead, at least in part, as a rebuff of Uri Sivan's allegorical interpretation of Folman's trauma, where the master narrative of the Holocaust enables the psychologist to decipher the true causes of Folman's amnesia and post-traumatic condition. The Saying of the Palestinian woman reminds the audience that the scene of violence is (also) about the Palestinians, about the trauma of the other. Her Saying jolts the spectator out of his or her comfortable consumption of a

Lebanese War aestheticized through the subjective gaze of its protagonist.[118] It throws the viewer back to the morally bewildering place of Sabra and Shatila, "the place where everything is interrupted, where everything is disrupted, where everyone's moral responsibility comes into play."[119] But is this return of the *real*, or raw account, of the massacre too late and thus incomplete?[120] The spectator is confronted with the Saying of the woman, but her Saying is left without a response. Folman declines to engage with her (collective) story. He does not directly express any sense of personal responsibility for Palestinian suffering—he does not ask for their (impossible) forgiveness[121] (you can only forgive the unforgivable, as Derrida has taught us[122])—or collective responsibility for the Lebanese invasion, not to mention the Nakba, which brought the refugee camps into existence in the first place.[123] As these difficult questions go unexplored, Folman leaves his spectators with a generalized sense of responsibility ("everyone's moral responsibility comes into play," as Levinas put it) but this universalization of responsibility risks reifying the Palestinians' Saying by presenting it as undigested (it is left untranslated for Folman's Israeli and Western audiences), and by depoliticizing Israel's involvement: *if everyone is responsible, no particular one is responsible*. Again, it may have been the fear of cannibalizing the Palestinian story, the fear of reducing Palestinian Saying to his Said—*traduire, c'est trahir*, "to translate is to betray"[124]—that motivated Folman's move. When it came to the Palestinians, Folman refused to figure (out) the trauma of other, opting for hermeneutic fasting or withdrawal, perhaps out of a desire to respect the opacity of the other, but at the expense of further engaging in dialogue with the survivors and the memory of the victims.

As with *The Gatekeepers*, the film represents multifaceted complexity on the side of the Israelis, and a flattened two-dimensionality on the side of the Arabs. *Waltz with Bashir* displays tormented Israeli soldiers, innocent but not indifferent to the suffering of others; they are haunted by the horrors of war. But this focus on the personal and the subjective neglects critical attention to Israeli military policies. According to Žižek, "this is ideology at its purest: the focus on the perpetrator's traumatic experience enables us to obliterate the entire ethico-political background of the conflict, involving questions such as what was the Israeli army doing deep in Lebanon?"[125] The film's representation of its soldiers as victims of Israel's willful wars (and not occupiers or aggressors) and its use of victimhood as a continuous bridge with its Holocaust past, have further ideological consequences.[126]

On one hand, the soldier as victim presents the Israeli military with a human face, displaces responsibility up the chain of command and, cinematically,

almost exclusively off screen; it humanizes its forces, conjuring an image of the IDF that effectively overrides their representation as "bloodthirsty soldiers at the checkpoints, the pilots who bomb residential neighbourhoods, the artillerymen who shell women and children, and the combat engineers who rip up streets."[127] The film portrays Israel—whose values Ari Folman embodies and promotes[128]—as "enlightened … anguished and self-righteous, dancing a waltz, with and without Bashir."[129] On the other hand, Israel's Arab others in *Waltz with Bashir* are portrayed either as cruel (the Phalangists—who lack the guilt and self-introspection of their Israeli allies) or abject (the Palestinians—the victimized bodies of old men, women, and children). The film's representation of Palestinian abjection, though powerful in its provocation of pathos, runs the risk of objectifying and normalizing its victims, and thus denying them any sense of agency: the Palestinians are subaltern subjects; they could not be *other than* victims.[130] Jacques Rancière raises this concern at the level of form, tying the representation of Palestinian victims to the documentary genre:

> The main enemy of artistic creativity as well as of political creativity is consensus—that is, inscription within given roles, possibilities, and competences. Godard said ironically that the epic was for Israelis and the documentary for Palestinians. Which is to say that the distribution of genres—for example, the division between the freedom of fiction and the reality of the news—is always already a distribution of possibilities and capacities: To say that, in the dominant regime of representation, documentary is for the Palestinians is to say that they can only offer the bodies of their victims to the gaze of news cameras or to the compassionate gaze at their suffering. That is, the world is divided between those who can and those who cannot afford the luxury of playing with words and images.[131]

Waltz with Bashir makes Rancière's point. The *animated* documentary plays with words and images, mixing codes, mesmerizing its audience through its characters' fantasies and hallucinations, whereas the live footage of the camps captures the victimized and traumatized bodies of Palestinians—the Palestinians in their bare life. There is, then, a certain poverty in the representational range of the Palestinians. They are represented to the Western gaze either as bloodthirsty (male) terrorists or abject (female) victims. The genre of the documentary contributes primarily but not exclusively to the formation of the latter Palestinian identity.

Even if one is not fully convinced by Rancière's account, the documentary genre, at least as illustrated in *Waltz with Bashir*, does seem to limit the receptivity of a Palestinian Saying, foreclosing the possibility of seeing it emerging

from another *equal* self.[132] The Palestinian other remains confined to a frozen horizon, stuck in his or her naturalized passivity. If the Jew, as we saw, occupies the position of *the* singular Victim, we might say, following Rancière's account, that the documentary genre tends to frame the Palestinian as *a specified* victim—a victim determined by the gaze of others. *But genre is not destiny*. The documentary frame does not determine the Palestinian Saying and its powers to affect us: whence the need of unsaying and resaying the image of Palestinian victimization (synonymous here with the labor of ideological critique), to subject the image to a process of *de-specification* (adopting a critical distance in relation to its positive properties, to what the image *is*).[133] We can do no better than to return to the woman's words from the Sabra and Shatila live footage: "Where are the Arabs? Where are the Arabs?" "Take photos! Take photos!" Even though, or because, left untranslated by Folman (for a variety of possible reasons—indifference, respect, fidelity to his experience of surprise, etc.), the haunting words are *more* than a transfer of information; they impose themselves as imperatives. Don't betray me (again) like my kin, like the Arab states who failed to protect us, and don't forget about my/our trauma—imperatives that resist easy satisfaction and that are at the heart of the Palestinian question.

2

The Gaza Wars: Palestinians as *Homines Sacri*

The camp is the space that opens up when the state of exception starts to become the rule.

Giorgio Agamben[1]

Palestinians often use the problematic cliché of the Gaza strip as "the greatest concentration camp in the world"—however, in the last year [2008], this designation has come dangerously close to truth.

Slavoj Žižek[2]

Philosophers and social critics have productively turned to the concept of *homo sacer* in attempting to explain and redress the abject condition of the Palestinians. In ancient Roman jurisprudence, *homo sacer* designated the excluded or exiled other par excellence, someone who is abandoned and cast out of the community, who could be killed with impunity by anyone but whose life lacked any sacrificial value (since it no longer possessed any worth). Revived in ethical and political circles by Giorgio Agamben, the concept of *homo sacer* reorients the interpretive gaze, moving from an understanding of otherness as ontological to a historical account of processes of othering, from the dyadic ethics of the face-to-face encounter to the political mechanisms of *de-facement*. Shifting away from the Levinasian face (and its negotiations with the third), this reorientation emphasizes biopower and biopolitics (the management of life), or more specifically "thanatopower" and "thanatopolitics"—"the management of death and destruction"—which Honaida Ghanim has identified as characterizing the neo-colonial subjugation of the oppressed and stateless.[3]

Agamben's example of radical alterity is the *Muselmann*, the living dead of Auschwitz, the most extreme embodiment of *homo sacer*. The origins of the term are disputed, but at its most basic, literal level, the word *Muselmann*—Auschwitz camp slang for prisoners who had fallen into a vacuous, corpselike state—simply means "Muslim," the one who submits unconditionally to the

will of God. The *homo sacer* is excluded by definition from discourse—from power itself—stripped of his or her rights, and deprived of the means of articulating his or her very exclusion or demanding redress. Agamben meditates on the conditions that made the Nazi concentration camps possible, which, in turn, produced the *Muselmann* and other *homines sacri*. For Agamben, the *Muselmann* is a limit-figure, residing between life and death, neither fully human nor wholly inhuman: he is the "non-human who obstinately appears as human," and "the human that cannot be told apart from the inhuman."[4]

Dwelling in the Occupied Territories, where psychological humiliation is constitutive of Palestinian life, Palestinians arguably inhabit the undesirable position of the *homines sacri*. They have *become* non-citizens living in zones of exclusion, perpetually robbed of their dignity, reduced to bare life, subjected to merciless Israeli sovereignty, and made to appear to an international public as less than human—that is, barbaric, irrational, and evil.[5] This designation of the Palestinian as *homo sacer* in the context of Israeli brutalization brings back into focus the analogy between Jews and Palestinians—the Palestinians as the "victims of victims." This analogy is of course fraught with ethico-interpretive difficulties. Any parallel between Nazi Germany and the State of Israel must be drawn with great care and interpretive restraint so as to avoid overgeneralization in comparing historical conditions that are fundamentally incommensurable. Upholding such hermeneutic vigilance, however, does not preclude critically engaging with the ethics and politics of the Shoah and the current Israeli mistreatment of the Palestinian people.

Given these difficulties, we must first ask: How does the notion of *homo sacer* illuminate the daily life of Palestinians under occupation? More specifically, in what sense is Agamben's figure of the *Muselmann* a useful model for understanding the Palestinian condition in the Occupied Territories? Does such a focus on this particular manifestation of political exclusion once again privilege a Eurocentric framework, taking the Holocaust as the exclusive paradigm for human suffering and ignoring other potentially productive models (those of colonialism and slavery, for instance)?[6] The familiar and forceful example of the Nazi concentration camp does provide philosophers with a productive starting point for historical comparison and political persuasion. Yet, by not provincializing the Holocaust, by not treating it as one catastrophe among others, we might risk ontologizing or Hellenizing the victim as Jew, subsequently displacing the suffering of the Palestinian.

Other questions concerning the example of the *Muselmann* and its capacity to illuminate or obscure the workings of thanatopolitics in modern life relate

to the concepts of agency and sovereignty on which theorizations of the *homo sacer* rely. To what extent does the notion of *homo sacer* unwittingly dispossess the Palestinians by making their victimization so absolute as to evacuate all possibilities of agency? Can the Palestinian—the Gazan—speak? Ronit Lentin expresses such a concern when she asserts that reading the Palestinian as *homo sacer* "runs the risk of erasing the active agency of the Palestinian subject, represented as either passive victim of Israeli dispossession or aggressive insurgent, but with interpretative control wrested away."[7]

Secondly, we might also ask to what extent the notion of Palestinian bare life adequately captures the workings of Israeli sovereign power, its capacity to determine the "state of exception"—the removal of Palestinians from the protection of the law. While some Zionists unmistakably fantasize about an *Israel without Palestinians*, it is not Israel's stated position to exterminate the Palestinians. While critical of Israel's brutality in the 1982 Lebanese invasion (calling for the resignation of then Defense Minister Ariel Sharon and Prime Minister Menachem Begin after the events of Sabra and Shatila), Holocaust survivor and writer Primo Levi has drawn attention to this difference, resisting the conflation of the Jews of Auschwitz with the Palestinians under Israeli domination. As Levi pointed out, "There is *no* policy to exterminate the Palestinians," no state-sanctioned project equivalent to Hitler's final solution.[8] At the same time, Israeli politicians' nonchalant use of the genocidal metaphor of "mowing the lawn"[9] to refer to the IDF's habitual purging of Hamas every two or three years (in the Gaza wars of 2008–9, 2012, and 2014)—along with the destruction of Gaza's infrastructure, aimed at making the lives of those civilians not killed as collateral damage as unbearable as possible—complicates a straightforward answer to Israel's war of extermination.[10]

Gaza and the paradigm of the camp

Agamben has controversially claimed that in contemporary times the camp represents "the fundamental biopolitical paradigm of the West."[11] The camp captures the fragility of the separation of life and death decisions, the way in which biopolitics quickly gives way to thanatopolitics in modern states. The line "marking the point at which the decision on life becomes a decision on death … no longer appears today as a stable border dividing two clearly distinct zones."[12] Thanatopolitics and thanatopower are most visibly in operation under

colonization,[13] a peculiar form of domination requiring us to rework the ways we think about power and sovereignty:

> It is inadequate to use Foucault's analytical notions of biopower and biopolitics alone, concepts developed in the analysis of population management in the modern European nation-state … [T]hanatopower … is the appropriate conceptual frame for understanding the management of colonized occupied spaces and subjugated populations.[14]

If some have questioned the applicability of the camp as a paradigm for all of Western modernity, the example of the Gaza Strip makes Agamben's claim seem less outrageous. It is now commonplace to refer to Gaza as "the world's largest open-air prison." While Israeli politicians claim to have washed the state's hands of Gaza, unilaterally disengaging from the territory on September 11, 2005—Israel's High Court of Justice upheld the government's decision, ruling that after the disengagement, Israel "had no effective control over what occurred"[15] within the Gaza Strip—Israelis are in reality *besieging* Gaza. As Palestinian legislator Hanan Ashrawi asserts, "they control the territorial waters, the airspace, the land crossing points and they gave themselves overriding security consideration or powers."[16] The World Health Organization predicts that Israel's blockade will make Gaza "unlivable" by 2020.[17] After the first Gaza war, *Operation Cast Lead*, Žižek conceded that seeing Gaza as "the greatest concentration camp in the world"[18] was no longer rhetorical flourish, a dubious appropriation of the suffering of the Jews. In commenting on Israel's blockade of Gaza, former British Prime Minister David Cameron felt compelled to state: "Gaza cannot and must not be allowed to remain a prison camp."[19] Of course, there is ostensibly some distance between Žižek's comment and Cameron's: a prison camp is *not* a concentration camp. But the latter, understood as a paradigm for managing ungrievable lives, makes Gaza an apt example of Israeli thanatopolitics.

At stake in debates over the conceptual terms and figures philosophy uses to thematize the management of life and death in Gaza are, first, the mechanisms through which state power is exercised today—the structure of sovereignty underpinning the juridico-political realities of the Israel–Palestine conflict—and the forms of agency and affect these structures work to produce. To the first point, Agamben's work has highlighted the crucial role that states of exception come to play in the exercise of thanatopower. Israel's management of death and destruction cannot be divorced from the nation's state of perpetual emergency. As Yehouda Shenhav puts it, "In Israel there is a constant state of emergency. The state inherited the British Mandate's 'Emergency Regulations' under which

it continued the anomalous suspension of the law, within the law … . We must remember what this system enables: one rule (life) for the majority of the state's citizens, and another (death, threat of death, threat of expulsion) for the state's subjects, whose lives have been rendered 'bare.'"[20] In this sense, Israel exemplifies Agamben's account of the West's drama of sovereignty. Following Carl Schmitt, Agamben defines the sovereign as "he who decides on the exception."[21] The sovereign declares whether a state of emergency exists and if it does he has the power to transcend the legal order by suspending the rule of law; this state of exception in contemporary times, he argues, has dangerously become the norm.[22] Citing the well-being of democracy as justification, the sovereign monopolizes the power to decide which lives are deemed worthy of living (those who belong to political life, who have the capacity to participate in the decisions of the polis) and those that are not. Disqualified from legal protection, the *homo sacer* represents a paradox: expendable and expelled from political discourse, the *homo sacer* is paradoxically included in the law by virtue of being subjected to it. The "inclusive exclusion" of bare life defines the structure of state power, and is inherent to sovereignty itself.[23] The expulsion of the *homo sacer*, or his "abandonment," as Agamben puts it,[24] involves a crucial blurring of the Greek distinction between biological existence (*zoē*) and political existence (*bios*). Sovereign power resides in the capacity to wipe out political existence (to strip the individual of his or her legal rights, for instance), making life bare and expendable. Life as such is transmuted, becoming neither *zoē* nor *bios* but the faint remainder of the latter: "bare" or "naked" life (*nuda vita*), the life of *homo sacer*, "is not simply natural reproductive life, the *zoē* of the Greeks, nor *bios*" but "a zone of indistinction and continuous transition between man and beast."[25]

In ostensibly democratic states, the smooth operation of sovereign power—which is non-democratic, predicated as it is on the sovereign's ability to stand above the law—requires that these structures be taken for granted, that the state's power to remove subjects from political life be naturalized, forgotten, unquestioned, or otherwise rationalized. In the modern Israeli state, the tensions between the democratic organization of the polis and exercise of state sovereignty to exclude Gazans from that polis are frequently smoothed over by positing exclusion as a choice freely made by the Palestinians of Gaza themselves. This framing of the issue shifts concern away from the livability of bare life, the value of such a life and the responsibilities owed to those found in this liminal non-existence, and supposes instead that Gazans are full subjects and political actors, endowed with the same rights as any subject: "The Gazans

must decide what they want to be: Singapore or Darfur," says, for example, Former Israeli Transportation Minister Yisrael Katz.[26] Time and again, the Israeli government laments the Gazans' choice of Darfur (their election of Hamas), justifying, in turn, the Palestinians' reduction to bare life. Yet it is hard to convince anyone that the Palestinian Authority's choice of cooperation has yielded any qualitative difference in the daily lives of Palestinians in the West Bank. Max Blumenthal underscores the disingenuousness of the Israeli position (*recognize us, work with us, and your people will prosper*):

> Palestinians in Gaza need only look 80 kilometers east to the gilded Bantustans of the Palestinian Authority (PA) to see what they would get if they agreed to disarm. After years of fruitless negotiations, Israel has rewarded Palestinians living under the rule of PA President Mahmoud Abbas with the record growth of Jewish settlements, major new land annexations, nightly house raids, and the constant humiliation and dangers of daily interactions with Israeli soldiers and fanatical Jewish settlers.[27]

Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are "collectively pushed into a social symbolic corner where they acquir[e] the status of 'living corpses,' or masses of individuals who are *neither completely 'alive' nor yet, already 'dead.'*"[28] As *homines sacri*, they are refused access to the law but are still forcibly subject to it.[29]

Under such conditions, Palestinians are already born dehumanized, commodified as disposable beings, excluded from Israel's positive biopolitics,[30] which is restricted to the liveable lives—lives that the Other/other deems worthy of care—of Israeli Jews. Palestinians *are* ontologically marked as *homines sacri*—the only option for an Israeli sovereignty fuelled by political Zionism and settler colonialism. Ontology here does not refer to a timeless being of the Palestinians. Rather, it functions in an analogous way to Simone de Beauvoir's description of the condition of women:

> When an individual or a group of individuals is kept in a situation of inferiority, the fact is that he or they *are* inferior. But the scope of the verb *to be* must be understood; bad faith means giving it a substantive value, when in fact it has the sense of the Hegelian dynamic: *to be* is to have become, to have been made as one manifests oneself. Yes, women in general *are* today inferior to men; that is, their situation provides them with fewer possibilities: the question is whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated.[31]

The Palestinian is a *homo sacer*; this is not a subjective judgment, yet *the Palestinian question is whether this state of domination must be perpetuated.*

This overdetermination of the Palestinians as *homines sacri* has led Ilan Pappé to question "the inclusion of Israel in the state of exception debate," since it would align Israel with the other Western democracies and their struggles with the vexed logic of sovereignty. For Pappé, this is a grave mistake. Israel is precisely *not* "another case of a western liberal democracy,"[32] plagued, like all democratic states, by the corrosiveness of sovereignty. What distinguishes Israel from other states, argues Pappé, is that it is not in a "state of exception," since it does not suspend the rule of law to protect its democracy, but rather "uses oppression to defend it against democracy."[33] Yet the gulf separating the "state of exception" and a "state of oppression" is not as unbridgeable as it seems. Thanatopolitics is, after all, constitutive of all modern democracies. Israel is undoubtedly *passing* as a democratic state, but it normalizes its state violence in particular ways, in its deployment of a rhetoric of rational agency, and also in its use of its justice system to condemn particular forms of violence while implicitly or explicitly upholding others. When, for instance, the Israeli High Courts of Justice occasionally do side with Palestinian plaintiffs against particular individual, non-state actors, what gets taken for granted and forgotten is the baseline, structural violence of Israeli occupation. Butler cautions against being duped by an appearance of objectivity and fairness in Israel's legal framework:

> Israel is at once the colonial occupier, the maker and arbiter of the rule of law, which means that the rule of law is implicated in the colonial project itself. So though there are on occasion "good decisions" that emerge from Israeli courts, the scene is still one of extraordinary inequality. It is also why efforts at co-existence that do not fundamentally challenge the colonial structure end up ratifying and extending that structure, even offering an alibi for colonialism's 'humane' versions.[34]

Žižek makes a similar point: "The condemnation of extra-statist anti-Palestinian violence obfuscates the true problem of *state* violence; the condemnation of 'illegal' settlements obfuscates the illegality of the 'legal' ones."[35] By bracketing the colonial context of the conflict, we are likely to get at best a *Zionism with a human face*.

In attempting to develop a more effective critique of violence, one that brings to light these effacements, Žižek makes an analytic distinction between two categories of violence. What is typically perceived as violence today is what Žižek calls "subjective violence": it is the violence that is "performed by a clearly identifiable agent … [and] … is seen as a perturbation of the 'normal,' peaceful state of things."[36] As a necessary philosophical supplement to this prevalent

understanding of violence, Žižek adds "objective violence," which includes, first, "symbolic violence" (the violence of racist rhetoric, for example, or, more generally, the hegemonic imposition of a given universe of meaning through language) and second, "systemic violence" (such as the violence of capitalism—capitalism as a naturalized, oppressive, impersonal, smooth-functioning socio-political reality). "Objective violence is invisible," Žižek maintains, "since it sustains the very zero-level standard against which we perceive something as subjectively violent."[37] A serious account of objective violence would thus not simply complement a critique of subjective violence but demonstrate how a concern for subjective violence (though necessary), in effect, helps *to sustain* the existence of this more insidious form of violence whenever it displaces or masks it. We can see this distinction operating in the evaluative judgment of liberal Israelis who are quick to condemn the excesses of their right-wing government, while remaining oblivious to the state's economy of violence, to the objective violence of its daily management of Palestinian lives:

> When Israeli peace-loving liberals present their conflict with Palestinians in neutral "symmetrical" terms, admitting that there are extremists on both sides who reject peace, etc., one should ask a simple question: What goes on in the Middle East when *nothing goes on there* at the direct politico-military level (i.e., when there are no tensions, attacks, negotiations)? What goes on is the incessant slow work of taking the land from the Palestinians on the West Bank, supported by a Kafkaesque network of legal regulations.[38]

Whereas humanists and liberals typically advocate the cultivation of empathetic imaginings—of ways of identifying with the victimized other—Žižek enjoins us to resist the ideological pull of subjective violence, its totalizing framing of the problem of violence: "My underlying premise is that there is something inherently mystifying in a direct confrontation with [violence]: the overpowering horror of violent acts and empathy with the victims inexorably function as a lure which prevents us from thinking."[39] To think critically about violence is to think about it *obliquely*, to look at violence awry, that is, to look at violence from a multiplicity of incommensurable perspectives.[40]

Looking awry at the subjective violence of the Gaza wars—violence typically framed as a battle between equal actors endowed with equal powers of choice—brings into view a very different objective struggle and understanding of Israeli and Gazan agency. On one level, the asymmetry on display in these wars between strikingly unequal military powers reveals the extent of Gaza's subjugation and Israel's latitude for movement. During outright war, Gaza's status as

an area over which Israel holds life or death power, "the area in which Israel can create famine, even starve people to death, but refrains from doing so"[41]—where humanitarian aid functions as a political tool in the management of Palestinian bare life[42]—becomes more visible. War, viewed from this angle, is not qualitatively different from the everyday slow death of the blockade, but rather an extreme example of it: the nudity of life under siege is fully extinguished in missile strikes. Again, it should be noted that Israel does not have an extermination policy per se. Its target, rather, is Palestinian *quality* of life: comply fully or "live" miserably is the message of the siege. We must situate Hamas's firing of rockets in this context. Hamas's refusal to comply with Israel's thanatopolitics, its unbearable "governance through catastrophisation,"[43] has something of a phatic quality. Fighting against the normalization of the Palestinian problem, against bare life as usual in the Occupied Territories, rocket fire says to Israel, *Hey Tel Aviv, we refuse your terms!* That is, Hamas's rocket fire, which anticipates a disproportionate Israeli response, is surely not a tactic aimed at military victory.[44] There is no prospect of overcoming Israel's immense superiority militarily. Rather, the violent puncturing of normalcy registers a deeply felt frustration about the everydayness of objective violence in the camp. If Palestinians are disposable bodies in Israeli eyes, such tactics represent a refusal to be passive recipients of state violence.

Palestinian resistance shows that, *pace* Agamben, the life of Gazans is not a life "reduced to mere being," to "pre-political or extra-political" existence[45]—but "saturated" or "mired" in power.[46] Indeed, as Butler argues, *homines sacri* are not outside of power—and thus "they are not passive and powerless" but "more often than not, angered, indignant, rising up and resisting."[47] Agamben's reduction of the dispossessed to bare life would construe Palestinians as defined primarily by others, as a *mere* effect of sovereign power, producing them as docile victims or reactive insurgents (that is, as *specified* victims/insurgents), rather than as capable of (some) self-definition, inscribed within a dynamic field of power, struggling against Israel's neo-colonial military "apparatus of power," which does afford them at least a minimum degree of freedom.[48] From the perspective of the Palestinians, Sari Hanafi makes this point explicit: "We are not victims, we are actors."[49]

Palestinian agency and political options are not, of course, unlimited, and Palestinian violence also plays into the hands of Israeli politicians, who have an interest in framing the conflict solely in terms of subjective violence, representing Hamas fighters as the aggressors and Israeli civilians as innocent victims. Moreover, this framing is not incompatible with an account of the victimization

of Palestinian civilians and the destruction of Gaza as falling outside of Israeli responsibility.[50] Coverage of Palestinian civilian suffering in wartime abounds, though the spectacle of war, treated as something exceptional—"breaking news"—garners intensive but generally short-term and superficial coverage. This suffering is, however, coopted by ideological narratives that serve to regulate affective responses of outrage over Palestinian suffering, the pathos provoked by the circulation of images of dying children, and redirect blame to Palestinians. Hamas fighters are made to appear in government speeches and propaganda as the true aggressors and the Palestinian civilians are the abject victims. The blame for collateral damage is put squarely on Hamas. Then U.S. Presidential candidate Barack Obama's 2007 comment that "nobody is suffering more than the Palestinian people" is a case in point. This potentially significant recognition of the Palestinian's plight generated a flurry of objections, which subsequently led him to qualify and diminish the full force of the statement, blaming the cause of the suffering solely on Palestinian leadership: "nobody has suffered more than the Palestinian people from the failure of the Palestinian leadership to recognize Israel, to renounce violence, and to get serious about negotiating peace and security for the region."[51] Under the pressure of pro-Israel narratives, Obama generated a myopic judgment, lacking both nuance (all the causes mentioned concerning Palestinian suffering are internal ones) and political courage (a missed opportunity to challenge the political status quo, to reframe the Palestinian question), which is also tantamount to blaming the victim. Unfortunately, the subsequent two terms of his presidency saw little change in the administration's public rhetoric on the Palestinians. "We use missiles to defend civilians, Hamas uses civilians to defend missiles," the slogan of Netanyahu and his sympathizers used during *Operation Protective Edge*, the last Gaza war, is taken by the U.S. leadership more or less as an undisputed truth.

Focusing on subjective violence at best compels viewers to see the Palestinians as suffering bodies (though this does not necessarily guarantee the condemnation of the IDF), and at worst, it simplifies and distorts the reality of the conflict. Raising the question of objective violence is tantamount to insisting on Israel's governmentality of Palestinian bodies, to exposing Israel's "implicit frames of recognizability,"[52] since, as Butler puts it, "one way of 'managing' a population is to constitute them as the less than human without entitlement to rights, as the humanly unrecognizable."[53] The Gaza wars dramatize the virtuality of Israel's thanatopolitics and its exclusionary norms. Contrary to Agamben's assertion that "if today there is no longer any one clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri*,"[54] it

is *not* just anyone who can become a *homo sacer* in/for the State of Israel, but first and foremost the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip, those who are defying the sovereign will of the State of Israel. The paradigm of the camp, which highlights the spatial confinement of Gazans and their subjection to overwhelming Israeli military force, both helps us understand the daily experience of the Gazans and the constraints limiting their supposedly free choices while also masking the normalization of the state of exception thought to be at work in the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The problem of the Palestinians—the problem of *why Western nations ascribe value differentially to Palestinians*—is more than a public relations matter, more than a failure on the part of Palestinians to convey their message to the rest of the world, that is, to make their case for the brutality of subjective violence. It is a structural problem, having more to do with the socially dominant structures of meaning, a deeply ingrained *image* of the Palestinians, caught within the prism of Orientalism (and the "War on Terror," Orientalism's most recent expression), which for the most part successfully immunizes Israel from critique, deflecting attention from its thanatopolitics and preventing it from being denounced as another apartheid regime.

De-Orientalizing the Palestinian

The tenacity of Orientalism, the term Edward Said used to name the habitual modes of reasoning constraining European thought about the "Orient," stems from the discourse's self-reinforcing characteristics: its pretensions to total knowledge and tendency to fit new evidence to pre-existing frameworks; its reliance on binary oppositions and analogy, which fail to admit departures from expectations; its privileging of textual authority, to the exclusion of other sources; its institutionalization in numerous governmental, economic, and cultural bodies and organizations. As a style of thinking, Orientalism is about the West's *construction* of the Orient as an object of knowledge and mastery, and in this respect, as Said brilliantly demonstrated, always tells us more about the knower than the known. Orientalism, then, is not about knowledge of the Orient, of its culture and history, but rather it is "a kind of Western projection";[55] the West *invents* the East so as to better define itself, its identity, in opposition to its antagonistic Oriental other, to what *it is not*.

If the specific content of Orientalist projections is multiple—encompassing figures of the nomad, the despot, and the passive, sensual female,

for example—and shifts over time, the entrenched modes of reasoning that underpin these images persist, generating new but familiar projections. These share a tendency toward essentialism—positing the other's identity as fixed and timeless—and hierarchization—positing difference not merely as different, but as inferior to the self, the assumed point of reference. Today, the dominant image of the Palestinian in Western media is that of the terrorist—the single-minded, violent, and amoral aggressor—which is far removed from the real and complex identity of Palestinians. The Palestinian's reduction or overdetermination as terrorist takes on an additional meaning in the era of the "War on Terror." For Žižek, being designated a terrorist post 9/11 transforms you almost instantly into a *homo sacer*:

> The logic of *homo sacer* is clearly discernible in the way the Western media report from the occupied West Bank: when the Israeli Army, in what Israel itself describes as a 'war' operation, attacks the Palestinian police and sets about systematically destroying the Palestinian infrastructure, Palestinian resistance is cited as proof that we are dealing with terrorists. This paradox is inscribed into the very notion of a 'war on terror'—a strange war in which the enemy is criminalised if he defends himself and returns fire with fire.[56]

Labeling Palestinians terrorists functions to dehumanize them (they are only terrorists, whose moral bankruptcy is manifested in the use of their own children as human shields/hostages[57]) and to forestall their inclusion (as mature rational agents) in any serious and balanced peace negotiations: Israel needs a true partner in peace, goes the argument, which requires that Palestinians renounce their "identity" as terrorists.

According to this perverse reasoning, the Israeli military is helping the Palestinian people overcome themselves through its targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders. We could even say that Israelis are engaged in their own "civilizing mission," using force only in order to achieve a noble end. Lacking the "concept of compromise," Arabs, according to former Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, are doomed to barbarism (a comment reminiscent of Begin's "The Palestinians are beasts walking on two legs"[58]), while Israel, in an obscenely self-serving assessment, represents a "vanguard of culture against barbarism … a villa in the middle of a jungle," a "protective wall" to the West.[59]

Israel's Gaza invasions crystallize the Palestinians' status as *homines sacri*, and illustrate well the tenacity of Orientalist interpretive frameworks, through which potential counter-evidence is perceived to fit and support existing narratives. While during *Operation Cast Lead*, the first Gaza war, Israel heavily

censored the news by restricting access to the war zone, successfully limiting the visual transmission of the Palestinian devastation on cable news outlets, *Operation Pillar of Defense* and *Operation Protective Edge* lacked these earlier restrictions. Yet the result was not noticeably different. Outrage at Palestinian suffering was relatively contained, because such suffering, for many in the West, was easily attributable to Hamas (rather than to Israeli policies or military actions). Outrage at the number of civilian casualties did little to challenge the overarching ideological narrative—the Israelis as victims, and the Palestinians as aggressors—that pre-existed the first Gaza war and continues to inform if not determine the American public's perception of the Palestinian conflict as a war between the defensive forces of a fundamentally peaceful democracy and the aggressive violence of intractable, religiously-motivated (or simply senseless) terrorists.

Former New York Mayor Michael Bloomberg is a case in point. Justifying Israel's right to defend itself, Bloomberg said: "I can only think what would happen in this country if somebody was lobbing missiles onto our shores or across the border." On Israel's brutal disproportional response to Hamas's firing of rockets into Israel, Bloomberg was equally unyielding, providing us again with a hypothetical example: "If you're in your apartment and some emotionally disturbed person is banging on your door, screaming, 'I'm going to come through this door and kill you!' do you want us to respond with one police officer, which is proportional, or with all the resources at our command?" Fortunately, yet also sadly, this all-too-common frame or narrative found a critical response not from the mainstream media but from late-night comedian Jon Stewart, who, on Comedy Central's cable program *The Daily Show*, humorously deconstructed the framing of the problem, the narrative of rational, aggrieved victim and irrational, bloodthirsty perpetrator with this follow-up to Bloomberg's comment: "I guess it depends if I forced that guy to live in my hallway … and make him go through checkpoints every time he has to take a sh*t!"[60] We can of course extend Stewart's response by saying "it depends if I kicked that guy out of his own home, and now live in it … and took out a restraining order on him."

Debates concerning Israel's disproportionate force make explicit what it stakes in this military policy. Advocates for its use in the Gaza offensives implicitly or explicitly posit the Palestinians as *homines sacri*, as ungrievable, worthless bodies whose killing leaves one indifferent—"if a life is not grievable, it is not quite a life; it does not qualify as a life and is not worth a note. It is already the unburied, if not the unburiable."[61] The logic of *homo sacer* facilitates

and regularizes justifications for civilian carnage. From the standpoint of advocates for extreme force, Palestinian loss is not a meaningful or relevant loss. If Palestinian lives are not seen as liveable (and thus grievable) lives in the first place, then their destruction for the supreme good that is Israeli security is perceived as a more than acceptable outcome. In his 2008 "Disproportionate Force," Colonel Gabi Siboni, from the Institute for National Security Studies (INSS), a think tank with strong connections to the Israeli military, advocated a new ethos and military policy, favoring cold, calculated use of disproportionate force when dealing with the likes of Hamas and Hezbollah: "With an outbreak of hostilities, the IDF will need to act immediately, decisively, and with force that is disproportionate to the enemy's actions and the threat it poses. Such a response aims at inflicting damage and meting out punishment to an extent that will demand long and expensive reconstruction processes."[62] This military policy is another result of the logic of Israeli exceptionalism at work, an exceptionalism that justifies acting militarily in complete disregard of international law. The UN report on *Operation Protective Edge*, which is also critical of Hamas, admonished such actions, singling out Israel's disproportionate use of force as a potential war crime:

> With regard to proportionality, given the circumstances, a reasonable [Israeli] commander would have been aware that these attacks would be likely to result in a large number of civilian casualties and the complete or partial destruction of the building. Such circumstances differ from case to case, and include the residential nature of the targeted buildings; their location in densely populated areas; the timing of the attacks; and the frequent use of large bombs that were apparently meant to cause extensive damage. Given the absence of information suggesting that the anticipated military advantage at the time of the attack was such that the expected civilian casualties and damage to the targeted and surrounding buildings were not excessive, there are strong indications that these attacks could be disproportionate, and therefore amount to a war crime.[63]

Israeli exceptionalism produces its constitutive outside: the un-exceptional, the un-viable, the un-grievable, and the un-deserving (of recognition) Palestinian. In short, *Israeli lives matter, whereas Palestinian lives don't*.

As this UN report noted, *Operation Protective Edge* resulted in the deaths of at least 2,104 Palestinians, of whom 1,462 were civilians (253 women and 495 children), and 66 Israeli soldiers and seven civilians in Israel. The assumption of Palestinians' disproportionate value or worthlessness, which drives policies governing the use of force, is also discernible in various other negotiating tactics on both sides of the conflict. Such is the case of the exchange release of

IDF tank gunner Gilad Shalit, negotiated between Hamas and Israel through back channels (namely, Egypt). On October 18, 2011, Shalit, who was captured by Hamas in 2006, was released in exchange for 1027 Palestinian prisoners held in Israel.[64] This deal, despite its acceptance by Hamas, helps to humanize one group and dehumanize another. It reflects and reproduces the differential allocation of "liveability" and "precarity"—the unequal distribution of corporeal vulnerability (an ontological given that Butler terms "precariousness")—in a particular historical conjuncture.[65] Shalit and the disproportionate exchange make visible an obscene "hierarchy of grief,"[66] a naturalized hierarchization of lives: the precarity of the Palestinians under a Zionist regime of power today. Israelis can be murdered, Palestinians only killed; the latter deaths pass unmarked for the Israeli government and their staunchest supporters. We might say that the Palestinian prisoners occupy a position analogous to Guantánamo Bay detainees. Both have an ambiguous legal status: Guantánamo Bay detainees are "enemy combatants" and the Palestinians are all potentially "security prisoners."[67] The former are caught "between two deaths," because, according to the government and its media apologists, "'they are those who were missed by the bombs.'"[68] As such, both detainees and prisoners are *homines sacri*, living in zones of exclusion, tortured with impunity, reduced to "bare life,"[69] exchangeable in greater number for someone more valuable: a ratio of 1 to 1027.

While such numbers strike many observers as unjust, as Butler avers, "the numbers do not speak for themselves; they require interpretation."[70] Setting the stage for an interpretation, or rather a reinterpretation, of the "facts" requires a process of unlearning. That is, we must defamiliarize the "natural attitude" that takes *Operation Protective Edge*'s aims and tactics as a given, deconstructing its conceptual and affective framings. Israel's rhetoric of vulnerability remains powerful. That Israel is surrounded by hostile neighbors, always already exposed to an existential threat, has become a commonplace, setting the interpretive tone for any discussion of Israeli military activity. Time and again Israel presents itself as a modern-day David, the timeless underdog, at war with the Arab Goliath.[71] In *Operation Protective Edge* this Goliath is figured as a Palestinian or Hamasian Goliath, bent on the destruction of Israeli lives. In a collage for *The Nation*, captioned "Perspective in Gaza (The David and Goliath Illusion)," Art Spiegelman, author of the graphic Holocaust narrative *Maus*, exposed the ideological function of the Israeli narrative by shifting the perception of the strong and the weak (see figure 1).

In the second frame, David emerges as the new Goliath dominating the other—Hamas, the new David—whose size, and terroristic threat, diminishes as

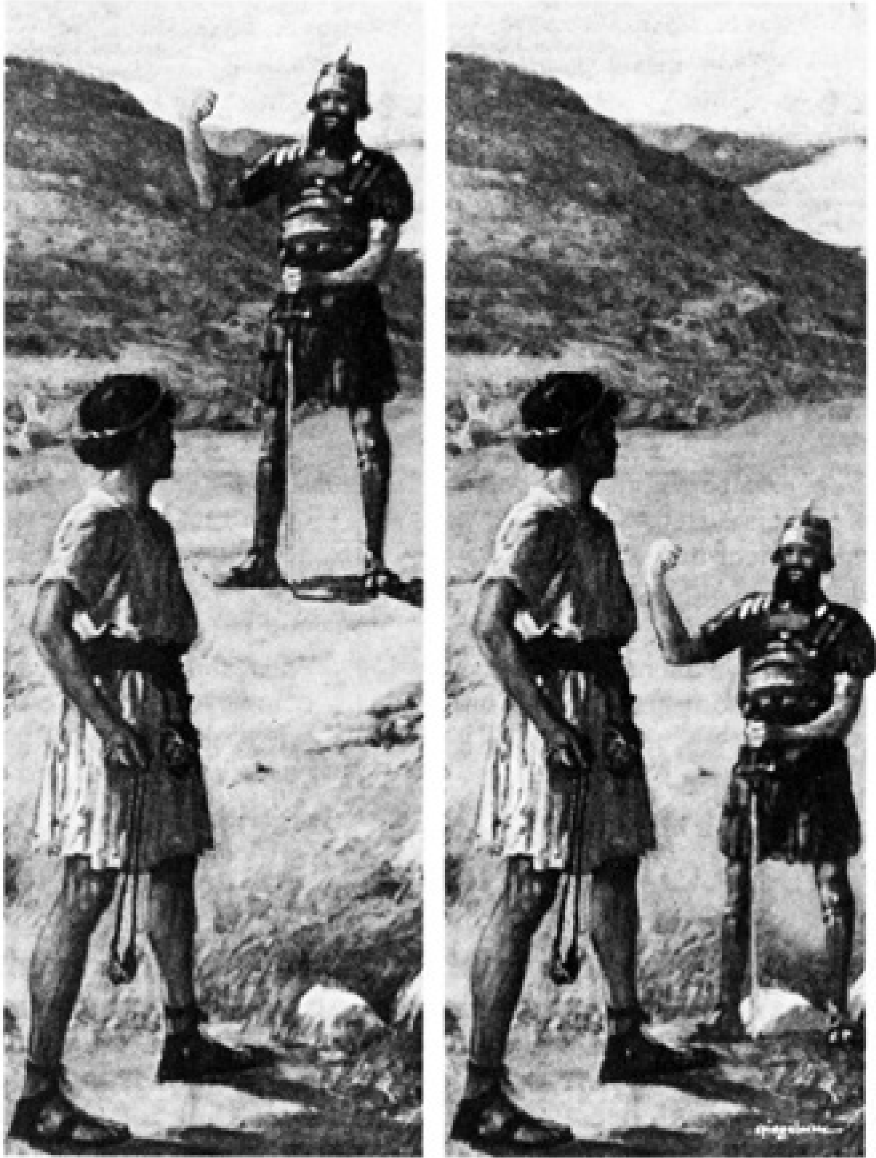

Figure 1 "Perspective in Gaza (the David and Goliath Illusion)" by Art Spiegelman. Copyright © 2014 by Art Spiegelman, used by permission of The Wylie Agency LLC.

the figures draw closer to one another. The historically dominated has become today's oppressor.

In the context of the U.S. global "War on Terror," the attribution of terrorism to many disparate acts of violence functions to flatten historical and political differences. The War on Terror, with its clear and distinct logic of good and evil, facilitated a closer identification of the U.S. with Israel, and swept Palestinians into the broad category of international terrorists. While the Israelis were depicted as a mirror image of the Americans, unjustly shocked and traumatized by the violence of the Islamic other, Palestinians—like the "Islamo-fascists" who attacked America on 9/11—were depicted as profoundly evil, hating the freedom of Israelis and their democratic way of life.[72] Their violence was considered "a product of cultural pathology," framed as a disorder or disease to be eradicated.[73] This interpretation of the Gaza offensive puts the blame for civilian casualties squarely on Hamas and thus helps to preserve the self-proclaimed moral superiority of the Israeli government—exemplified in the claim of possessing the "world's most moral army."

Self-presentation and representation of the other are thus deeply intertwined: Orientalist discourse relies not only on a flattening of the other, but also on concurrent representation of the self, in contradistinction, as round, deep, and three-dimensional. What Jasbir Puar has called "homonationalism," that is, American and Israeli deployments of liberal attitudes toward homosexuals as evidence for moral superiority (civilization is on the side of Western nations), effectively complements the portrayal of the terrorist other and contributes to its persistence and affective force. The Israeli government and its supporters actively promote the State's sexual exceptionalism (on December 23, 2014, a full-page ad in the *New York Times* read: "Hamas, ISIS, and Iran kill gays like me—in Israel, I am free"), and the progressive fact that Israel's is the only military in Middle East where gay officers can serve. Homonationalism portrays the Arab and Muslim world as backward and intolerant, that is, as morally, culturally and politically inferior, and thus legitimate targets of military domination by the West.[74] Netanyahu is fond of evoking Israel's progressive sexual policies[75] when trying both to mobilize international condemnation of Hamas, Iran, and other rogue groups or states, and to deflect criticism from his government's treatment of Palestinians (a phenomenon known as "pinkwashing"). After the flotilla fiasco in 2010, for instance, when Israeli commandos killed nine activists on the Gaza aid ferry, Netanyahu made a plea to humanitarians and peace activists: "Go to the places where they oppress women. Go to the places where they hang homosexuals in squares and deny the rights of minorities. Go to the places

where there is no freedom of expression, no freedom of press, no independent courts and no human rights organizations. There are no human rights. Go to Teheran. Go to Gaza."[76] Israeli oversight and aggressive intervention in the flotilla incident were required to keep the "dark forces" of Gaza contained.

Netanyahu similarly repeatedly ties Hamas to the major threats of the day, evacuating the historical and political specificity of the Gaza wars in favor of a broader "clash of civilizations" narrative, a narrative of irreconcilable cultural-religious conflict. In seeking to mobilize international support for *Operation Protective Edge*, his global "War on Terror," Netanyahu collapses all differences between Hamas and other terrorist groups:

> In Gaza, Hamas condemned the US and called Bin-Laden a "holy warrior," a holy warrior of Islam. That's the moral divide. We celebrate; they mourn the death of an arch-terrorist. Now that moral divide has never been clearer than it is today because Hamas, like al-Qaeda and its affiliates al-Nusra or its new growth ISIS or Boko Haram, al-Shabab, Hezbollah supported by Iran—all are branches of the same poisonous tree. All present a clear and present danger to the peace and security of the world and to our common civilization.[77]

Netanyahu's hyper-Islamization of Hamas—the process of seeing them first and exclusively as *Islamic* terrorists with aspirations to create a caliphate (the position of Al-Qaeda and IS, not Hamas) rather than anti-imperialist militants who express their resistance in religious discourse—perpetuates the Orientalist logic exacerbating the Israel–Palestine conflict. Indeed, the notion of "Islamic terrorism" makes terrorism "constitutive of the very identity of Islam."[78] Lacking an eye for nuance, Netanyahu simplifies and flattens Palestinians' identity as the mindless expression of religious zealotry: Hamas, in its demonized form, stands for the whole of Palestinian identity.[79] After 9/11 all Palestinians almost effortlessly became religious extremists, supposedly promoting a perverse culture of martyrdom and engaging in "terror for the sake of terror."[80]

Edward Said warned against overestimating the religious character of Hamas, preferring to see the militant organization "as creatures of the moment, for whom Islam is an opportunity to protest against the current stalemate, the mediocrity and bankruptcy of the ruling party."[81] Moreover, the totalizing view of Orientalism excludes from purview non-violent modes of resistance taking place in the Occupied Territories—such as the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions (BDS) movement, the planting of citrus trees by Palestinian youths to replace those razed by Israel in their continuing siege of Gaza, and peaceful protests against the wall. It ignores not only the history of Palestinian resistance

(the PLO was a leftist secularist organization), but also the fact that Hamas and the Islamic State (IS) are ideological foes.[82] Said also pushed back against Israel's hegemonic representational regime and its interpretation of Palestinian violence. He emphatically objected to terrorism, to Hamas's tactics, but at the same time wanted to redirect our critical gaze to the conditions that brought about such violence in the first place:

> [Terrorism] is reprehensible but it is a direct and, in my opinion, a consciously programmed result of years of abuse, powerlessness and despair. It has as little to do with the Arab or Muslim supposed propensity for violence as the man in the moon. […] Yet the location of Palestinian terror—of course it is terror—is never allowed a moment's chance to appear, so remorseless has been the focus on it as a phenomenon apart, a pure, gratuitous evil which Israel, supposedly acting on behalf of pure good, has been virtuously battling.[83]

Homi Bhabha has objected to Said's portrayal of the conflict, which he finds overly simplified, arguing that "the complex, overdetermined conditions of 'Palestinian terror'—desperation, despair, indignity, the asymmetries of power and influence—are now a vital part of most international discourses on the intractable impasse in the Middle East, while few members of the international community see the current Israeli government as the good knight engaged in a Manichaean battle against evil."[84] While it is doubtful that the Manichaean narrative has completely lost its purchase on the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, particularly in the United States—one of the few but powerful members of the international community where this narrative obtains—it is not as prevalent as it used to be. However, we must also acknowledge that, for Said, binary thinking of the good versus evil type is just one component of Orientalism, a discourse which accommodates internal contradictions and, as noted above, multiple, ostensibly incompatible images of the other.

Moreover, as the Israeli documentary *The Gatekeepers* shows, one can critique the Manichaean narrative of good versus evil—admitting that war blurs moral clarity, throwing the leaders of Shin Bet into an ethical "gray zone"—while still further silencing the Palestinians and reinforcing an Orientalist discourse of power. In this film, which I highlight here for the way it succinctly captures a number of elements of Orientalist and thanatopolitical logics of opposition, sovereignty, and exception, it is the Israelis who solely determine the conceptual apparatus of the conflict, locating complexity and a higher moral calling—we might say a sense of *noblesse oblige*—on the side of the Israelis, and portraying the homogenized and silent Palestinians as recipients of Israeli interpretive

good will. In allowing only Shin Bet members to speak, the film suggests that the intelligence-gatherer can theorize better than voiceless Palestinians—the *object* of Israeli intelligence—their own objections to the violent strategies of intelligence gathering.

There are moments in the documentary that are undoubtedly promising, such as the one in which Yuval Diskin, one of the former Shin Bet leaders, questions the use of the word terrorist and its correspondence to an objective reality: "To them, I was the terrorist … One man's terrorist is another man freedom fighter." Seeing things from the perspective of the Palestinians is potentially revolutionary for reframing the narrative of the conflict. We witness rare moments of such identification with the Palestinians from Israeli Prime Ministers as well. The most striking is perhaps from David Ben-Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, who acknowledged:

> If I was an Arab leader I would never make terms with Israel. That is natural: we have taken their country. Sure God promised it to us, but what does that matter to them? Our God is not theirs. We come from Israel, but two thousand years ago, and what is that to them? There has been antisemitism, the Nazis, Hitler, Auschwitz, but was that their fault? They only see one thing: we have come here and stolen their country. Why should they accept that?[85]

Similarly, when asked in 1999 by a *Haaretz* journalist what he would have done if he had been born a Palestinian, then Prime Minister Ehud Barak said, "Had I been a Palestinian I would have joined a terrorist organization."[86] I consider these moments of "honesty"[87] deconstructive moments that disclose the ideological lie of the Orientalist narrative, short circuiting its epistemological frames: Palestinians cannot be pure evil if even an Israeli leader would engage in the same activities of violent resistance.

Disruptions to the Orientalist framework, in the form of cognitive and affective dissonance, are also felt by individual soldiers carrying out policy. Veterans have testified to the moral predicament the Gaza wars put them in, and to their personal struggle to make sense of the prescribed rules of engagement. One soldier, on condition of anonymity, describes being deeply unsettled by what he perceived as military-sanctioned murder:

> We were supposed to go up floor by floor, and any person we identified, we were supposed to shoot. I initially asked myself, *where is the logic in this?* From above they said it was permissible, because anyone who remained in the sector and inside Gaza City was in effect condemned, a terrorist, because they hadn't fled. I didn't really understand. On one hand they don't really have anywhere

> to flee to, but on the other hand they're telling us they hadn't fled so it's their fault.[88]

The logic is unfortunately all too clear; the logic that justifies the murder of innocent civilians—transforming murder into mere killing—is precisely the same Orientalist logic that fixes the identity of terrorists and victims according to a phantasmatic field, and places the burden of proving one's innocence on those deemed guilty by reason of ethnic and religious affiliations. Seeing the possibility of war crimes in the actions of the "world's most moral army" in effect demystifies Israel's exclusive claim to victimhood, "humanizes" the enemy, opening up the possibility of not treating the Palestinian as *homo sacer*, but rather as someone who can be *both* killed *and* murdered. It also introduces a critical distance between the history of Jews and the current politics of Israel. Recognition of the former does not entail a blind endorsement of the latter.

A grievable *homo sacer*, the Palestinian as neighbor

Breaking free from Israel's thanatopolitcs, reconfiguring an economy of relationality that is otherwise than death driven, requires an ethical framework that would make Palestinian life be seen as grievable for both a hardened Israeli public and an increasingly indifferent Western audience.[89] This process might begin with talking to your enemy. This was one of the more insightful messages from *The Gatekeepers*. As Avraham Shalom says:

> Talk to everyone, even if they answer rudely. So that includes even Ahmadinejad, [Islamic Jihad, Hamas], whoever. I'm always for it. In the State of Israel, it's too great a luxury not to speak with our enemies … Even if [the] response is insolent, I'm in favor of continuing. There is no alternative. It's in the nature of the professional intelligence man to talk to everyone. That's how you get to the bottom of things. I find out that he doesn't eat glass and he sees that I don't drink oil.[90]

To see Hamas as a political party is to contest the existing cultural frames, to reinscribe it in the discourse of politics, and to give considerations to the demands of a democratically elected party, rather than dismissing them from the start.[91]

Butler made a complementary point at a 2006 teach-in at UC Berkeley. Responding to the question, "Since the Left hesitates to support Hamas and Hezbollah 'just' because of their use of violence, does this hurt Palestinian solidarity?", Butler courageously stated:

> I think: Yes, understanding Hamas, Hezbollah as social movements that are progressive, that are on the Left, that are part of a global Left, is extremely important. That does not stop us from being critical of certain dimensions of both movements. It doesn't stop those of us who are interested in non-violent politics from raising the question of whether there are other options besides violence. So again, a critical, important engagement. I mean, I certainly think it should be entered into the conversation on the Left. I similarly think boycotts and divestment procedures are, again, an essential component of any resistance movement.[92]

Butler's measured comment acknowledges Hamas and Hezbollah as anti-imperialist movements, thus, in line with a general understanding of the global Left,[93] while also clearly objecting to and distancing herself from their hateful rhetoric and violent tactics.[94] For many, however, Butler's intervention hit an ethical/hermeneutic nerve. The outrage generated by the suggestion that Hamas's actions might be interpreted as a struggle for a better life—that is, as a life free from siege and imperialist domination—attests to the entrenchment of Islamophobia and colonialist affects of disgust, fear, and longing for dominance. More generally, it also attests to the deep-seated resistance to any view of Palestinians as liveable and viable subjects; the concept of the Palestinian as grieveable *homines sacri* appears from such a vantage point utterly oxymoronic.

Raising the Palestinian question necessarily disrupts this ethical and political hierarchization of lives, calling into question the normalization of Palestinians as inferior and expendable beings. To raise these questions is to make a case for why Palestinian lives matter, since in the eyes of the Western world this is less than self-evident. "So," Butler argues, "one asks the question, what is the value of Palestinian lives?, to show that there is no consensus on the matter, and to expose this as a moral and political scandal."[95]

What follows from this problematization of the Palestinian as an ungrievable other is a call for solidarity with the precluded, "*solidarity with the as-of-yet-unintelligible*."[96] Such solidarity need not be predicated on symmetry, some easy universalism, or an abstract equality that would unwittingly erase the differential framing of experience. To affirm the Palestinian as a "grievable *homo sacer*" is to insist on the contextualization and politicization of his or her claims of grievability. Likewise, the goal of making the other intelligible—at the affective and cognitive registers—need not evacuate the Palestinian's specificity and alterity. This emphasis on the management or conditioning of grievability can be seen as further qualifying the Levinasian face-to-face encounter (understood as a privileged pre-discursive or unmediated space outside of power). "It

is not enough to say, in a Levinasian way," Butler argues, "that the claim is made upon me prior to my knowing and as an inaugurating instance of my coming into being. That may be formally true, but its truth is of no use to me if I lack the conditions for responsiveness that allow me to apprehend it in the midst of this social and political life."[97]

To (re)make the *homo sacer* grievable is to render the designation inoperative; a grievable *homo sacer* is no *homo sacer* at all. Such a remaking entails seeing the Palestinian not only as an equal or a fellow citizen, but also as a *neighbor*, a "dangerous supplement" to the Jew/Greek dyad. Žižek has frequently returned in his writings to the figure of the neighbor, to what he describes as the "most precious and revolutionary aspect of the Jewish legacy," the fact that the neighbor "remains an inert, impenetrable, enigmatic presence that hystericizes."[98]

Lacan noted how this emphasis on the neighbor is utterly foreign to Greek philosophy: "Nothing is farther from the message of Socrates than *you shall love your neighbor as yourself*, a formula that is remarkably absent from all that he says."[99] This preoccupation with the opacity of the neighbor, with his or her unknowability, is not simply an epistemological impasse (an instance of the classic "problem of other minds"), but an existential, anxiety-ridden one. Like Levinas, Žižek describes my encounter with the neighbor *as* neighbor as a traumatic experience. In Lacanian terms, this real neighbor contrasts with the imaginary neighbor, the neighbor as a mirror image of myself, the result of a narcissistic reduction of the other to the same.[100] Jewish law recognizes the Real of the neighbor, the neighbor as the "bearer of a monstrous Otherness, this properly *inhumane* neighbor."[101] This neighbor as Real can only appear as a frightening otherness, as a radical disruption of my hermeneutic comfort. Or as Derrida puts it: "Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: 'Here are our monsters,' without immediately turning them into pets."[102] For Žižek, this is the monstrous neighbor of the Tanakh:[103] the injunction "to love and respect your neighbor … does not refer to your imaginary *semblable*/double, but to the neighbor qua traumatic Thing."[104] *To love thy neighbor is to care for the unfamiliar.*

The impossible ethics of the other as real neighbor stands apart from, and always threatens to break up, the tepid everyday social morality of the big Other. The symbolic order attempts, if you will, to "normalize" the traumatic Thing, to contain its excess and regulate its (non)meaning:

> In order to render our coexistence with the Thing minimally bearable, the symbolic order qua Third, the pacifying mediator, has to intervene: the

> "gentrification" of the Other-Thing into a "normal human fellow" cannot occur through our direct interaction, but presupposes the third agency to which we both submit ourselves—there is no intersubjectivity (no symmetrical, shared, relation between humans) without the impersonal symbolic Order.[105]

Levinas, for his part, argued that the concept of the "face," as "a being beyond all attributes,"[106] enabled his philosophy to transcend the realm of sociality and the socialization of the other. But Žižek, not unlike Derrida, questions Levinas's singularization of the face, underscoring how Levinas's radical alterity is still subject to mediation, to the workings of the symbolic order. The face of the other could not be experienced as such, as a face, if it were not always already a discursive product; reading the neighbor as a face thus domesticates the neighbor, making the other's alterity as a resource of infinite responsibility more retrievable. Žižek exposes Levinas's gentrification of the face (the symbolic neighbor) by juxtaposing it with Levi's account of the *Muselmann*, that living-dead, faceless figure of Auschwitz (the real neighbor). For Žižek, the faceless face of the *Muselmann* discloses the limits of Levinasian ethics:

> When confronted with a Muselmann, one cannot discern in his face the trace of the abyss of the Other in his/her vulnerability, addressing us with the infinite call of our responsibility. What one gets instead is a kind of blind wall, lack of depth.[107]

The *Muselmann*, a figure of precarity and bare life, constitutes a disquieting example of the neighbor for whom no relation *as such* is affectively afforded; this "'faceless' face," as Žižek puts it, is a "neighbor with whom no empathetic relationship is possible."[108] Stripped of its symbolic veneer, unamenable to one's imaginary projection, denied access to the human realm of intersubjectivity, the *Muselmann* foregrounds the neighbor as Real, in which "we encounter the Other's call at its purest and most radical," and "one's responsibility toward the Other at its most traumatic."[109] It is in this context that the ethical injunction to "love thy neighbor" takes on its full political force. What is my responsibility to another who is precisely made to appear *not like me*, and, more importantly, illegitimate in the eyes of my organic community? Again, what is the status of the Palestinian other for the Israeli Jew?

Israel's *refuseniks*, those soldiers who refuse to complete their compulsory military service in the Occupied Territories, respond to this neighbor, the Palestinians, with a form of affective solidarity. They reject the Kantian dictum: "Argue, as much as you want and about what you want, but *obey*!"[110] Kant himself had used the example of a military officer. The officer can express his dissent by

addressing his views to the reading public at large (engaging in what Kant calls the "public use of reason") but he must obey his superior's orders (exercising the "private use of reason"). Such is not the case with the *refuseniks*.[111] Declining to perpetuate their government's thanatopolitics,[112] refusing the Zionist/colonizer settler narrative that frames or structures their knowledge and experience of the Palestinians, the *refuseniks* seriously take up, if not fulfill, the impossible injunction to "love thy neighbor." Their actions call for a reinvention of the symbolic order, and constitute something of a "miracle" in today's climate:

> What the *refuseniks* have achieved is the passage from *Homo sacer* to "neighbour": they treat Palestinians not as "equal full citizens," but as *neighbours* in the strict Judeo-Christian sense. And, in fact, that is the difficult ethical test for Israelis today: "Love thy neighbour!" means "Love the Palestinian!" (who is their neighbour *par excellence*), or it means nothing at all.[113]

Seeing the Palestinians as neighbors is, of course, not simply an acknowledgment of their ontological opacity (that is, an acknowledgement of the truth that "we are all opaque subjects"—it is that and more), but of a historically particular opacity subjected to their state of "precarity"—the symbolic order's contingent distribution of vulnerability and unfamiliarity (an unfamiliarity made to appear inhumane).

In Žižek's account, the *refuseniks* decline the liberal or humanist remedy. They refuse to conceive of the neighbor merely as "equal full citizens," terms that still rely on a logic of sovereignty, a structure through which a sovereign power dictates who is included in Israel's modern state (applying the Law of Return), and who is excluded from it (denying the right of return). The enlightened sovereign self would make the Palestinian other grievable on the basis of an implicit identification with the formerly excluded, now brought into the realm of intersubjectivity and sameness. By contrast, the injunction *to love thy Palestinian neighbor* compels a different kind of affective relationality; the injunction is subject to a logic of incompleteness or "non-all."[114] It is characterized by an affective excess, a visceral ethical feeling, that is, a non-coincidence between what cultural norms tell soldiers they should feel for the enemy and how they actually respond to the real Palestinians—to these faceless neighbors. The realm of signification, society's implicit frames of interpretation, remain untotalizable and incomplete: there is nothing which is not discourse *and* discourse is non-all. As Žižek asserts, "The Real is not external to the Symbolic: the Real is the Symbolic itself in the modality of non-All, lacking an external limit/Exception."[115]

The Palestinians as real neighbors are not outside symbolization, but are an effect of the symbolic order—without being reducible to it. The *refuseniks* demonstrate that affects and perceptions are *not* fully disciplined or determined in advance, that their discursive construction of reality is non-all—whence the possibility of political transformation.[116] Neighborly love, in this radical manifestation, contests the "foreclosure"[117] of the Palestinians from the symbolic order, that is, the immunitarian project of Zionism and its exclusionary communitarian ethos (*Jews for Jews*), embracing rather than disavowing vulnerability and incompleteness. Such an ethico-politics of love, which translates unruly affect into imaginative action, troubles identitarian rootedness, traverses the fantasy of Zionist self-sameness, and loosens the grip of dominant frames of recognizability: "Only a lacking, vulnerable being is capable of love: the ultimate mystery of love is therefore that incompleteness is in a way higher than completion."[118] This vulnerability or precariousness that neighborly love, in its openness to the other, both presupposes and discloses is precisely what the Israeli state, in its current manifestation, seeks to regulate and police: *no debt, no obligation, to the Palestinian neighbor*.

3

"A People Like Any Other People": Palestinians as Example

To say "I am Jewish," which means: I am testifying to the humanity of human beings, to universality, to responsibility for universality. "We are the chosen people" means: We are par excellence, and in an exemplary way, witnesses to what a people can be, we are not only God's allies, God's chosen, but God's witnesses, and so on.

Jacques Derrida[1]

The opening pages of the first issue of … [La Revue d'études palestiniennes] contain a manifesto: we are "a people like any other people." The sense of this declaration is multiple. In the first place, it is a reminder, or a cry. The Palestinians are constantly reproached with refusing to recognize Israel. Look, say the Israelis, they want to destroy us. But for more than 50 years now, the Palestinians have been struggling for recognition as a people. In the second place, the declaration marks an opposition with the manifesto of Israel, which says "we are not a people like any other people" because of our transcendence and the enormity of our persecutions.

Gilles Deleuze and Elias Sanbar[2]

Exemplarity is a double-edge sword. It universalizes its object, but also risks abstracting it from the dynamics of power and the dialectics of history. The affirmation of the Palestinian people as an example of humanity ("like any other people"), as Gilles Deleuze points out, serves a double purpose: a call for recognition of their *sameness* and a call for the recognition of their *difference* from the Israeli "manifesto," its singular call for recognition, "which is 'we are not a people like any other people,' because of our transcendence and the enormity of our persecutions."[3] We have here an ontological sameness alongside an ontic difference: the fact that the Palestinians' ethico-political "cry"[4] for recognition is different from that of the Jewish people is accidental, whereas the affirmation

and "reminder"[5] of their humanity is not. Palestinian exemplarity differs from Jewish exemplarity in one important way: unlike the Israeli people, the Palestinians do not define their call as inherently particular; their status reflects, strictly speaking, their *commonality* with others. This chapter examines these various modes of exemplification, and the revitalization of a "Greek" language of universalism, among a growing number of Continental philosophers from the Left. What motivates this return to universalist discourse (a surprising turn, given the strong and influential critique postcolonial theorists have leveled against it)? What political avenues for thinking the Palestinian example do these philosophies seek to open up?

After Auschwitz, Jewish exemplarity, under the sway of political Zionism,[6] came to be associated with the paradigm of the singular Victim, inaugurating, in the words of Levinas, a new "humanism of the suffering servant."[7] Jews, as the chosen people, function as an "example," or a *paradeigma* in Greek. In Platonic terms, they capture the transcendental form or archetype of humanity. Their universality reflects their privileged particularity, setting the standard for all others. They are God's singular "witnesses," as Derrida puts it, becoming the measure of all things moral. Jewish exemplarity effectively intertwines the "singular with the normative,"[8] making in turn any reproaches to the State of Israel or Zionism—as a synecdoche for the whole Jewish people[9]—a moral transgression, something illegitimate, and thus subject to the dismissive charge of anti-Semitism. So if a logic of exclusion informs Jewish exemplarity (no one else can stand for humanity the way Jews can), a logic of inclusion governs the declaration of Palestinian exemplarity that Deleuze affirms: Palestinians are *samples* of humanity, samples among many others that could have been chosen, lacking any sense of normativity, or at least, the kind of normativity attached to the example of the Jews. "A People like any other people" is a rhetorical claim that deploys a more Aristotelian understanding of exemplarity, "reasoning neither from part to whole nor from whole to part but from part to part, like to like, when two things fall under the same genus but one is better known than the other."[10] The Palestinians are the lesser known people, advocating their similarities with the better known—or we might say grievable—peoples of the world.

Deleuze's interview with Elias Sanbar, founder of the journal *La Revue d'études palestiniennes*, is appropriately entitled "The Indians of Palestine." Like the American Indians, the Palestinians have been dispossessed of their land and rendered invisible to the world. For the Jewish settlers in Palestine, Sanbar states, "all we were to do was disappear from view."[11] Yet, we should proceed with caution and resist the temptation to translate and convert American indigeneity

into an *eidos* of oppression—the true form of the oppressed (the Victim), which is then set as a *stable precedent* for thinking the Palestinian question.[12] The saying "A People like any other people" contradicts a logic of precedence.

If the exemplification of the Jewish people follows a "vertical" movement, setting the Chosen People above the rest of humanity, as the transhistorical and normative model against which other peoples are measured, then we might say that Palestinian exemplarity—the claim to be like all other peoples—follows a "lateral" movement, moving from the recognition of a shared condition with others to an extrapolation of that insight, a demand to be recognized as akin to, and included in, the measure formed by these others.[13] We might think of the difference between Palestinian exemplarity and Jewish exemplarity in terms of Said's distinction between origins and beginnings: "Beginning and beginning-again are historical whereas origins are divine."[14] Unlike the Jewish narrative of *origins*, which tends to fix the identity or being of Jews through a rhetoric of the unprecedented, the Palestinian foregrounds its historically contingent *beginnings*, its becoming and openness to the future: "As opposed to history as apocalypse," which characterizes Jewish exemplarity, there is, with Palestinian exemplarity, "a sense of history as possibility, the multiplicity of what is possible, the profusion of multiple possibilities at every moment."[15]

By defining their plight in terms of normalcy (they are "a people with 'unexceptional' status"[16]) and equality (they are not intrinsically better or worse than other people), the editors of *La Revue d'études palestiniennes* base demands for justice on a human condition posited to be universal, a human need for self-determination and dignity. Étienne Balibar stresses a similar point, arguing that the universality of the Palestinian cause lies in its thematization of the stakes of global democracy itself: "[The Palestinian cause] is a *test* for the recognition of right, and the implementation of international law."[17] The Palestinian question makes Israelis' ethico-political choice unavoidable; they must "either turn their state into an even more secular and more egalitarian democracy, continuing to call it 'Israel,' while admitting that a state where this is a rule of law can only be non-Jewish if it is to be truly democratic; or affirm the Jewish character of their state, thereby accepting it will cease to be Israeli and democratic becoming instead religious and racist."[18] To insist on the universal dimension of Palestinian suffering is, first, to resist the containment of the Palestinian question to a regional dispute between Israel and its antagonistic Arab neighbors, and, second, to short-circuit the Zionist narrative of exceptionalism that places Israel "above the law of nations," that allows it "to instrumentalize the genocide of European Jews" in order to silence objections to its policies and practices. The Palestinian

cause interpellates the West, demanding of its nations' leaders to intervene in the conflict, to imagine and invent the conditions for global justice and equality in a postcolonial era. As Gargi Bhattacharyya puts it, the Palestinian question is "the emblematic solidarity movement of our time. Palestine has become our Spanish civil war, our Cuba, our Nicaragua."[19]

For his part, Alain Badiou approaches the question of Palestinian universality more obliquely, through a de-sacralization of the signifier "Jew," reflecting the philosopher's allergy to identitarian reasoning and politics. Favoring an *indifference to differences*, a rhetoric of the concrete universal, whose truth "traverses and transcends"[20] all differences or particularities, Badiou calls for a reinterpretation of Jewish identity beyond the hegemony of "the tripod of the *Shoah*, the State of Israel and the Talmudic Tradition," which "stigmatizes and exposes to public contempt anyone who contends that it is, in all rigour, possible to subscribe to a universalist and egalitarian sense of this word."[21] He contests its special status, its "paradigmatic position with respect to the field of values, cultural hierarchies, and in evaluating the politics of states."[22] For Badiou, the word "Jew" must be liberated from the prism and prison[23] of ethnic particularism, which forecloses any discourse other than that of identity politics. Against the fetishization of difference (*philosemitism*), Badiou champions a "philosophy of subtraction," a philosophy, firmly anchored in the Greek tradition, that de-sanctifies all names, and eliminates the inessential in order to arrive at what constitutes "generic humanity."[24] Indeed, only by loosening the bonds of one's organic community, weakening the ideological appeal of rootedness on both sides, Jewish and Palestinian, can a universalist or cosmopolitan attitude break the stalemate of competing, and mutually exclusive, religious, and nationalist claims to the Holy Land/historical Palestine.

The return to the Greek as/and the "new anti-Semitism"

In recent years, Badiou and Žižek have led the charge for a return to a universal mode of philosophizing. They frame their critique in opposition to an ethics of difference, a cult of the other. Under this umbrella fall postcolonial theory, postmodernism, feminism, queer theory, and multiculturalism. This obsession with difference comes at an interpretive cost. In *Violence*, Žižek singles out postcolonial theory for its emancipatory shortcomings, questioning what he ironically calls "the 'radical' postcolonial critique of liberalism."[25] The problem with the postcolonial critique of ideology lies in its one-sided Marxist lesson. For

Žižek, the postcolonial critique limits itself to resisting only false universality, to abstractions such as "Man" as the bearer of human rights. While postcolonial critics are fully justified in denouncing the false ideological universality that masks, naturalizes, and legitimizes a neocolonial condition and agenda, Žižek insists on the need to go further. At best, this intervention constitutes only half of the Marxist critique; at worst, it succumbs to a depoliticized call to respect the non-European other—which amounts to a toothless "politics of difference."[26] Effective critique requires a dialectical next step:

> It is no longer enough to make the old Marxist point about the gap between the ideological appearance of the universal legal form and the particular interests that effectively sustain it—as is so common among politically correct critics on the left. The counter-argument that the form is never a "mere" form, but involves a dynamic of its own which leaves traces in the materiality of social life … is fully valid.[27]

The Left, then, must appropriate and harness the tension or ambiguity between formal democracy and the economic reality of exploitation and domination. This appearance—the experience of the gap—must be re-articulated to mean more than illusion: "The authentic moment of discovery, the breakthrough, occurs when a properly universal dimension *explodes from within a particular context and … is directly experienced as universal*."[28] The pursuit of concrete universality—instead of the postcolonial "reactionary" defense of difference—is thus posited as the real alternative to ideological universality. The Israeli–Palestinian conflict illustrates that the problem is not only with the false universality of equality—Israel's claim of being a democracy is an ideological lie—but with the challenge in realizing universality, insisting on its actual practice, or simply, in affirming with Said, "equality or nothing, for Arabs and Jews."[29] Achieving genuine universality becomes synonymous with overcoming Israeli ethnocracy and its identitarian logic.

Zionism, then, stands as a major obstacle to this realization. Those who charge that Israel is an apartheid regime, that Zionism is a form of settler colonialism, are typically met with the expected, but not any less effective, counter-charge of anti-Semitism, or, in some of the less polarizing circles on the Left, are dismissed as merely unhelpful. For example, in her review essay of Butler's *Parting Ways*, Seyla Benhabib writes, "I do not believe that we will get very far by repeating the formula that 'Zionism is a form of settler colonialism'"[30] (incidentally, Benhabib also objects to Butler's characterization of Hamas and Hezbollah as part of the global Left[31]). But how else to describe the "legal" demolition of Palestinian

homes for the construction of Israeli settlements in the Occupied Territories and East Jerusalem? This might be an inconvenient truth for Israeli liberals, or likeminded supporters, who are opposed to the Israel Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Movement, preferring a less accusatory tone. Benhabib paints a rather apologetic narrative of Zionism:

> Unlike Butler, I do not believe that Zionism was a colonial-settler project from the start, intending to dispossess the Palestinian people and to rob them of their land. Hatched in the mind of a Viennese journalist (Theodor Herzl), and adhered to by idealists with the vision of creating a new Jewish people who would not suffer under the yokes of inequality, insult, and oppression that had been their lot in Christian Europe in particular …, this community in the *Yishuv* would not have become a state had it not been for two historical events: the Balfour declaration which showed the same blindnesses that all nationalist self-determination movements of the early twentieth-century held towards the claims of others and, more importantly, the Holocaust of European Jewry. Had it not been for the Holocaust, the small community of idealistic dreamers in Palestine would certainly have held the sympathy of the world Jewish community, but sooner or later they would have disappeared as a separate political entity.[32]

Nationalists will be nationalists. So Zionists should not be singled out for the excesses of their nationalist adventures and their murderous results. Benhabib, though, feels compelled to add a note after "the claims of others," in order to distinguish between political Zionism and cultural Zionism. Advocates of each clashed over the ways to deal with the land's indigenous population. The latter desperately sought a form of co-existence, whereas the former were determined to push out the Palestinians. I agree that the settler mentality of political Zionism did not exhaust the Jewish perspective on the question of the Palestinians, but it clearly and quickly became the dominant discourse in Israel, shortly after its founding, and thus justifies the claim for a *continuous* link between early Jewish migration to Palestine and the current practices and policies of the Israeli government.

Badiou gives a more nuanced account of the originary motivations of Zionism, without, at the same time, diminishing his critical assessment of its current hegemonic presence in Israeli politics:

> I think that the Zionist project has two different and opposite significations. On the one side, it was in the framework of the idea of emancipation. It is true that many Zionists had the general idea to create a new form of state with a collective democracy and so on. So there is a part at the beginning of the Zionist project

> which is in fact a part of the general idea of progress in the nineteenth century. But there is another part which is purely within the ideology of colonialism. So the Zionist project is the result of a strange mixture between the European idea of emancipation and the colonialist ideas. There is an initial contradiction. Today we have the dark side of this contradiction and we have to go beyond the Zionist project.[33]

For Badiou, this emancipatory narrative of Zionism—the emancipation of all *Jews*—can only continue through its negation and transcendence by adopting a genuinely Greek project: the emancipation of *all*, that is, of Palestinian Arabs and Israeli Jews.

But Badiou's "Greek" solution, his emphatic anti-Zionism, is frequently misread as emblematic of the new form of anti-Semitism sweeping intellectual Europe (especially in France) and the rest of the Western world. Anti-Semitism and the Palestinian question go hand in hand: "In Europe, the Palestinian question has quietly relegitimated hatred of the Jews,"[34] writes Pascal Bruckner. Whereas in the past anti-Semitism was explicit about its hatred and suspicion of Jews as strangers or intruders (who is the Jew really loyal to?), now it takes a more latent form, underpinning the accusations against the State of Israel. The new anti-Semitism is not concerned with the biology of race; rather, it paradoxically "speaks the idiom of anti-racism."[35] It is for Bernard-Henri Lévy none other than the language of the Left.[36] Palestinian activist and leading voice of the BDS movement Omar Barghouti has argued that shifts in international law and rhetoric have contributed to this conflation of anti-colonial critique and anti-Semitism. When, in 1991, after a systematic campaign by Israel and the United States, the UN General Assembly formally revoked Resolution 3379, passed in 1975, which stated "Zionism is a form of racism and racial discrimination," the calculated effect was, Barghouti argues, to transmute Israel's global image from that of "a colonial and inherently exclusivist state into a *normal* member of the international community of nations, one that is merely engaged in a territorial dispute."[37]

Under this new normal, the claim "Zionism is a form of racism" is not to be evaluated as a critical assessment of the exclusionary logic at the heart of the Zionist worldview (which asks such questions as: Does upholding political Zionism legitimize the dispossession of the Palestinian other? Is the argument about Israeli apartheid convincing or not?[38])—but to be read as an anti-Semitic formulation aimed at vilifying and delegitimizing Israel.[39] Objections to Zionism provoke a *paranoid* reading,[40] a hermeneutics of suspicion that obsessively sees traces of anti-Semitism everywhere. To raise the question of Israel's Zionism is tantamount to evoking an anti-Semitic horizon of expectations. A

defense of equality, for example, hides another agenda—a devalorization of and a challenge to Jewish life. A paranoid reading, in its insatiable desire to expose conspiratorial connections (the radical Left and radical Islam joining forces to destroy Israel), is a kind of ideological critique *raté*. It does not demystify, but rather mystifies the material reality of the situation by elevating Israel above the here and now of earthly criticism.

For the proponents of this view that anti-Zionism is anti-Semitism, Balibar and Badiou exemplify "radical French thought,"[41] a Left said to be dangerously aligned with Third World anti-colonialism and radical Islam's rejection of Western values.[42] For Alain Finkielkraut, perhaps the most paranoid of France's post-Holocaust public intellectuals, the growing anti-Zionist discourse, which seeks to isolate Israel, to globally shame Israel for its wrongdoings, is ultimately bad for Europe and the rest of the civilized world.[43] If Israel stands for the West, as Finkielkraut believes, then to question its legitimacy is to question Europe's heritage. Simply put, anti-Semitism turns out to be a stance against the universality of the European ethos. Expressions of *Judeophobia* in France are also expressions of *francophobia*. Finkielkraut's defense of Israel, then, is not a defense of Israel's particularism. Rather, he conceives of Israel as the West's protective shield against the obscurantism of Islam, which is infiltrating the minds of the Muslim youth in France and elsewhere in Europe. Not unlike Badiou, Finkielkraut's stance is decisively anti-relativist and anti-communitarian; indeed, he has no patience with multiculturalist discourse and its political correctness. Defending the example of Israel is not about embracing and preserving the nation's ethno-religious difference, but about recognizing Israel's universal (that is, European enlightenment) ideals.

Not all of the objections to the Left follow the path of the paranoid reading. In "The Jews Who are Not One: Politics and Intellectual Life in France," Lawrence Kritzman offers a more measured assessment, arguing that Badiou's political critique of Zionism comes at a great interpretive cost. Kritzman contends that Badiou reifies the identity of the Jew, and thus ignores the rich and diverse history of the signifier "Jew," emptying it of its ethico-religious potential:[44] "Badiou's Jew has been robbed of any religious content and reduced to the worst imperatives of a nationalist ideology. I would like to suggest that Badiou is a victim of a presentist and temporalized ontology that has robbed Judaism of its spiritual content."[45] Kritzman finds problematic Badiou's compulsion to abstract the meaning of "Jew" from the policies and practices of the Israeli government, "to equate all Jews with the most belligerent aspects of Israeli politics."[46] It is true that Jewish difference is not exhausted by Zionist narratives of Israel (this is a

valid point to which we shall return in Chapter 4). And Kritzman's Jew is admittedly more complex, more than the sum of his or her symbolic representation. This Jew is spiritual, religious, and cognizant of the plight of the Palestinians. Speaking as a Jew, Kritzman writes: "I believe that it is high time that the Palestinians have a homeland and that the Israeli fundamentalists stop building additional settlements."[47] There is certainly daylight between Kritzman's position and that of the Likud party. This Jew is, indeed, *more* than a political Zionist. But we may ask: What about existing settlements, acknowledgment for the Nakba and the refugees of 1948? Doesn't Kritzman's neglect of this historical wrong/trauma—and its lingering effect—reflect his own presentist ontology of the Palestinians? What about the nature of this Palestinian homeland? Is it going to be the creation of a viable and contiguous state? Finally, what about the current treatment of its national minority, Israel's Palestinian citizens, as second-class citizens (a condition which the idea of a Jewish State effectively helps naturalize and normalize)?[48]

Kritzman's silence over these issues points to a larger neglect of the complexity of the Palestinian question. There is no doubt that "the state of Israel" must be seen "as a response to the Holocaust and European anti-Semitism," but an intervention into the present condition of the conflict must do more if it hopes to change the status quo; the two-state solution—evoked as an idea without any significant pressure put on Israel for its implementation—serves to create the illusion of Western involvement and appease the conscience of liberals. An intervention must interrupt a Zionist hegemonic framework that determines any criticism of Israel's occupation, any challenges to the sanctity of Israel as a Jewish State, as a priori anti-Semitic, making it illegitimate and unworthy of serious consideration. At the core level, liberals fail to see the need for contesting Zionism, or, at the very least, a politicized version of Zionism actively promoted by apologists of Israel's draconian policies.

For liberals, pulling back on Israeli excesses and granting the Palestinians a state of their own (though leaving its sovereign status quite vague) will be sufficient to curtail any legitimate objections to the State of Israel. For the "Greek" Badiou, however, these concessions do little to challenge the cult of identitarian thought nurtured by Zionism. What is needed is nothing short of a reconceptualization of identity for both the Israelis and the Palestinians. An embrace of universalism is Badiou's answer to the conflict. But unlike Finkielkraut's universalism, which re-enforces the binary logic informing the dubious "clash of civilizations" narrative, and thus does little to challenge the status quo, Badiou's seeks to reconfigure the terms of the conflict or break the current formulation of

the problem. Examining more closely their competing universalisms and their corollary examples—the Jew for Finkielkraut and the Jew/Palestinian to come for Badiou—will enable us to better appreciate the fault lines of the debate.[49]

The politics of universality: Exceptionalism and its discontents

For Finkielkraut, Republican universalism serves as a defense against a series of threats to the well-being of the West in general and of France in particular: postmodern relativism, multiculturalism, communitarianism, and Islam. Finkielkraut laments the state of philosophy today, the absence of intellectual courage; he yearns for the days of the Dreyfusards, where critique was always made in the name of Republican universalism—and not "in the name of the Other." At the source of the misplaced valorization of relativism is the philosophy of decolonization and the legacy of May 1968. While Finkielkraut had enthusiastically participated in the cultural revolution of the late sixties, he now entertains greater skepticism about its emancipatory value. In his eyes, excessive sensitivity to questions of difference has led to interpretive paralysis and self-destruction. Since "there was violence at the root of any process of evaluations,"[50] Western intellectuals are now governed by "a desire to atone for past sins";[51] they feel compelled to suspend (critical) judgment lest they be labeled racist or intolerant. This involves a betrayal of the Enlightenment, a weakening of its rational spirit. Reason has corrosively turned on itself: "The objective remained the same: destroy prejudice. But to achieve this goal it was no longer a matter of opening others to reason, but of opening ourselves to the reason of others."[52] By suggesting that the Enlightened/Enlightenment subject is on the same footing as the non-Western other, cultural relativists have undermined the labor of reason as such. "In Finkielkraut's discourse," as Robert Stam and Ella Shohat demonstrate, "ethno-national narcissism goes hand in hand with the otherization of Arabs/Muslims and the endorsement of the *mission civilisatrice*."[53] Even the teaching of history has become myopic in its orientation, neglecting to attend to what was "good" about colonialism: "In France … they teach colonial history as an exclusively negative history. We don't teach anymore that the colonial project also sought to educate, to bring civilization to the savages. They only talk about it as an attempt at exploitation, domination and plunder."[54]

Failure of judgment characterizes the postmodern condition. This subject's hunger for otherness fosters not only feelings of shame and disgust at Europe's

colonial past but also over-correction. If the Nazi sought to eradicate Jews, the postmodern subject now enthusiastically identifies with this figure of otherness. The slogan "We are all German Jews" captures this postmodern ethical ethos. During the May 1968 protests, French students uttered this slogan as an expression of solidarity with the movement's radical leader Daniel Cohn-Bendit, described by the French government as a "German Jew." Cohn-Bendit, who had been refused re-entry into France after participating in a demonstration in Berlin, occasioned this spontaneous chant of support. A witness to this affective and linguistic solidarity, Finkielkraut, a child of Holocaust survivors, emerged highly ambivalent about his experience, somewhat troubled by the ethical implications of this type of identification. Clearly, embracing rather than condemning Jewishness was an improvement in the eyes of the young Finkielkraut. France's allergy to Jewish alterity—reaching its apogee with the Vichy regime—metamorphosed into empathetic imaginings with the previously excluded. Thousands of youths rebelled against their government's lingering anti-Semitism. But, writing about this episode in *The Imaginary Jew*, over a decade later, Finkielkraut also registers his uneasiness about the students' appropriation of Jewish identity. Apparently, "Jewish identity was no longer for Jews alone."[55] This gesture is emblematic of a larger trend. Now, the signifier "Jew" is available to all. Finkielkraut found its cross-cultural iterability improper and alarming, since "every child of the postwar era could change places with the outsider and wear a yellow star."[56] The promiscuity with the signifier "Jew" leads to a desacralization of the Shoah, to a "sudden democratization"[57] of victimhood. We now have *Shoah for all*: "Colonized peoples fighting for their independence, Black Power, the Third World reconquering its dignity: these were, for them, the new Jews of history."[58]

For Finkielkraut, an empathetic identification with the Jews of the Shoah ("we are all German Jews") took a wrong turn; it paradoxically resulted in the displacement of the Jews as singular victims and in the unending quest for "the new Jews of history." Consistent with his ethico-interpretive concerns with appropriation, Finkielkraut does not exempt himself from this critical judgment; he judiciously subjects himself to self-critique, questioning his ideality as Victim, his original identification with the actual victims of the Holocaust, that is, the privileged voices of an irretrievable past. He was an imaginary Jew: a Jew living a life of fantasy and inauthenticity. But Finkielkraut finally came to realize that his Jewish heritage does not permit him to claim identification with the Jews of the Shoah. Melancholia characterizes Finkielkraut's Jewish identity, constitutively absent, irremediably lacking any *being* (whence the foreclosure of becoming an

"*authentic* Jew"[59]): "Unquenchable nostalgia for the Jewish life of Central Europe is the entire legacy I have been left. Jewishness is what I miss, not what defines me, the base burning of any absence, not any triumphant, plentiful instinct."[60] And if this identification is not available to him, it is surely not available to anyone else—*past or present*.[61] Finkielkraut emphatically denies any analogy between colonialism and the Shoah. He strongly objects to those who argue that

> Europe did not lose its innocence in Auschwitz. Its criminal record is heavier and larger than that. It has committed, says the voice, other atrocities. The Jews are not the only victims of European hubris, far from it. Before Hitler and the conquest of *Lebensraum*, there was the colonial conquest and before colonialism, the slave trade. It is time to make room for these other tragedies now that many of their descendants live on our soil.[62]

On Finkielkraut's view, colonialism was not strictly speaking a "crime against humanity," to colonize is *not* to exterminate.[63] As we saw above, colonialism had redeeming qualities. For this reason, those who make the argument of analogy are quickly dismissed as having "Jewish 'narrative envy.'"[64] What is problematic about the postcolonial demand is not the need to recognize European wrongdoing but the desire to lessen the exclusive claim of Jews on their ultimate suffering: they want a piece of the moral "pie." The Shoah has become less a "historical event" than a "pattern." It has transmuted into an "entitlement," a right for every oppressed minority: "every minority is entitled to it. Jews are invited to share the pie. That is what diversity is all about in today's Europe."[65] To Finkielkraut's dismay, "the heirs of the slaves or the colonized don't ask for truth. They ask for the biggest crime. They ask for *Shoah*. And as strange as it sounds, they won't compromise. They won't accept any other deal."[66] Europe, far more than the United States, capitulated to this new hegemony:

> Democratic America and democratic Europe find their common principles in the commemoration of the Holocaust. But there is a crucial difference: America is victorious; Europe plays the roles of vanquisher, victim, and criminal all at once. The Final Solution took place on its land; the decision was a product of its civilization; and the enterprise found no shortage of accomplices, mercenaries, executors, sympathizers, and even apologists well outside Germany's borders. Democratic Europe may have won the war against Nazism, but Nazism was nonetheless European. The Holocaust reminds America of its calling, Europe of its fragility.[67]

Haunted by its tragic past, Europe became hyper-vigilant about racism, acquiesced all too easily to minority outrage and (revisionist) demands.

But, for Finkielkraut, the Jewish example is incomparable, not available for exemplification, foreclosed to the non-Jew (and even to Jews like Finkielkraut). To compare oneself to the singular victims of the Shoah is not only to usurp the latter's moral authority but also to distort the historical eventness of the Shoah. The original meaning of "Never again" must be preserved. Multiplying its use, to repeat it in different contexts, risks undermining, or at the very least minimizing, the rationale for Israel as a Jewish state:

> In that "Never again" there was something more than just the redemption of the passive Jew by the heroic Israeli pioneer. The survivors weren't ashamed; they were well aware that it wasn't they who had lost their dignity during the war but the Nazis, their accomplices, their proxies, and all those who were free to do whatever they wanted to the Jews. It's just that they had been the scum of the earth, and Israel, a Jewish state, was necessary so that could never happen again in any way.[68]

"Never gain," however, has come to mean something quite different today. It has come more to reflect Europe's fear of falling back into Eurocentrism, its failed adventures in nationalism. For Finkielkraut, this "Never again me!"[69] fuels the fire of the new anti-Semitism in the guise of a noble defense of the marginalized, excluded, and dispossessed other. Cultivating an eye for difference, for current *figural* Jews—an interpretive antidote for the "dread of radical evil," for keeping at bay the Nazi within[70]—ironically led to ethical myopia. Europe's narcissistic preoccupation ("Never again *me*!") has eclipsed a more primary preoccupation with the condition of Jews.

The problem is further compounded, Finkielkraut argues, when the so-called new Jews of history are deployed to the detriment of the "real" Jews of Israel. Such is the case with the Palestinians—today's latest contenders for "Jewification." Balibar's elevation of the Palestinian question to the sphere of universality is symptomatic of the anti-Semitic logic at work in leftist circles.[71] According to this new Manichaean doxa, there are really two types of individuals: Nazi and Victim. With Palestinians occupying the position of the victim (as the new Jews), Israelis find themselves in the position of the Nazi, with whom no compromise is tolerated. This framing of the conflict urges the public not to designate the Palestinians as "enemies" but to elevate them to the status of the "Other," which requires its own protocols of engagement:

> The Palestinians are no longer the enemies of the Israelis, but their Other. The result is clear: Being at war with one's enemy is a human possibility; waging war on one's Other is a crime against humanity. For in the former case, the

> relationship is political, and may eventually result in a compromise, despite any extreme views which are held by the other side. In the latter case, however, the relationship is charged with racism, and everything racist must disappear.[72]

For Finkielkraut, aligning Israelis with Nazis entails a perversion of logic. The saying "Never again" has lost its moral currency. The necessity of a Jewish state is no longer seen as a response to Jewish trauma and precarity but as an unending source of violence and injustice toward the Palestinian other, which Finkielkraut at once essentializes and de-substantializes: "Is there anything else to Palestinian identity besides the rejection of Israel?"[73]

Yet, if Finkielkraut were only to uphold the Jews' status as singular Victims, making them an exception to international law—incapable, as it were, of committing any crimes against humanity—he would be flirting with communitarianism, setting Judaism and the State of Israel fundamentally at odds with Republican ideals. Unlike, for example, French philosopher and linguist Jean-Claude Milner[74]—who warns against Europe's "criminal tendencies" (from the Enlightenment to Hitler's "Final Solution," to the Left's critique of Israel), and argues for Israel's stubborn difference against its current hegemonic post-national or cosmopolitan sensibilities—Finkielkraut seeks an alternative explanation for Israel's uniqueness, one that passes through the discourse of universality. He quotes Blanchot favorably:

> Election is not a privilege. If the revelation of the Torah chooses a people to bear it, this was meant to tell them not that because of this choice they are the best, but rather that they are privileged to make it known that they are not. "Absolute rule for your generations: you and the stranger will be equal before the Eternal."[75]

Judaism's proto-Enlightenment message of universality, in part, authorizes and explains Finkielkraut's fidelity to Israel. We might say that the Jews were more Greek than the Greeks when it came to the universalization of equality.[76] As Blanchot observes, "a revelation that is unique, and also of the unique. Never were the Greeks, the bearers of logos, aware that there should be equality of speech and law with the barbarians. This is an astonishing situation."[77] This universalizing Judaism—its intersubjective hospitality to non-Greeks (*barbaroi*)—ostensibly shields Finkielkraut from the charge of communitarianism. The State of Israel is on the side of the West—integral to the Judeo-Christian West—fighting the just fight of the Enlightenment against the obscurantism of Islam. Nostalgically, Finkielkraut laments that we are no longer living in an "age of ideology," where struggles about values, as with the Cold

War, defined the critical interpretive spectrum. He yearns for the days of the Enlightenment, when "philosophers fought to give everyone access to culture while releasing the individual from the power of the state and the control of tradition."[78] The events of May 1968 gestured toward that spirit, but ultimately failed to deliver on their emancipatory goals. On the contrary, the Left helped to usher in an "age of culture"—an age of *culture for culture's sake*. For Finkielkraut, nothing remotely utopian came out of that time. The debris of Modernity is all that remains. In short, the displacement of timeless values for identity politics, or "the need for roots,"[79] has been detrimental for thinking and Israel/France.

Badiou does not object to the idea that a wrong turn in critical discourse has indeed taken place. He also rejects the cultural turn in politics, its absolutizing of difference, but questions Finkielkraut's remedy to the problem. To put it simply, the fight for universality against the "new sophists" cannot be selectively deployed.[80] Whereas Finkielkraut highlights Israel's "positive" exceptionality (it is a beacon of Western light in the darkness of the Middle East), but obscures or passes over Israel's "negative" exceptionality (all Israeli men have inalienable rights, with the exception of Israel's Palestinian [non-]citizens), Badiou moves to de-couple Judaism and universality, or better yet, to de-universalize Israel. He seeks to leave behind all rhetoric of singularity and exceptionality, clearing the interpretive path for a cosmopolitan answer to the Palestinian question. Toward that end, Badiou turns to the universalism of Saint Paul as a model for thinking identity *otherwise than communitarian*.

Inventing sameness: The immortal Palestinian

Writing after and in light of a mixed reception of May 1968 (ranging from unabashed nostalgia to reactionary denial à la Finkielkraut), Badiou talks of a certain fidelity to that time, to the movement's unrealized universality: the promise of a truly emancipatory and egalitarian politics. For Badiou, May 1968 offers us lessons in ideology; its aftermath revealed the emergence of the so-called *nouveaux philosophes*, philosophers who unambiguously disavowed the anti-humanism of the previous generation, wanting to free philosophy from its postmodern excess and return philosophers and public intellectuals to their more traditional role, as defenders of "human rights," for example. The call to return to Kant mixed with an utter fascination with Levinas and his philosophy of the other effectively neutralized the role of the political in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Writing against the philosophical grain, against what he sees as the reactionary cult of alterity,[81] Badiou makes a plea for Sameness, for its *inventive* political potential:

> Otherness is in any case invincible. It has tradition, heritage, the differential disposition of bodies, the disposition of the sexes, and so forth, going for it. One individual is, as such, a huge bundle of differences. It's *Sameness* that is fragile; it's Sameness that is humanity's invention and is practically nonexistent. And so to be urgently concerned about Otherness and defending identities, as though that were a priority, is to reverse completely the order of the problems.[82]

Badiou is not so much calling for the "closure of Otherness" as for the "expansion of Sameness."[83] A philosophy of otherness—an ethics of difference—must give way to an ethics grounded in the recognition of the Same. Badiou makes the recognition of the Same central to his ethics, and links ethics to truth, "the coming-to-be of that which is not yet":[84]

> The whole ethical predication based upon recognition of the other should be purely and simply abandoned. For the real question—and it is an extraordinarily difficult one—is much more that of *recognizing the Same*. [...] Infinite alterity is quite simply *what there is*. [...] The Same, in effect, is not what is (i.e. the infinite multiplicity of differences) but what *comes to be*. I have already named that in regard to which only the advent of the Same occurs: it is a *truth*. Only a truth is, as such, indifferent to differences.[85]

> That every truth procedure collapses differences, infinitely deploying a purely generic multiplicity, does not permit us to lose sight of the fact that, in the situation (call it: the world), *there are differences*. One can even maintain that there is nothing else.[86]

Badiou's understanding of truth here has a peculiar meaning. Distinguished from knowledge or opinions ("a truth punches a 'hole' in knowledges, it is heterogeneous to them, but it is also the sole known source of new knowledges"[87]), truth takes the form of a commitment, a response to the demand of what Badiou designates an "event": "the event, which brings to pass 'something other' than the situation, opinions, instituted knowledges."[88] The event is unexpected; it creates a space for the "possibility of the impossible."[89] As "a locus of antihegemonic insight,"[90] the event is anathema to the political status quo. Analogous to the Lacanian Real, the Badiouian event discloses a "void" in the order of being (the Symbolic); it reveals things about the word unperceived prior to the event, interpellating and initiating its *subject* in an unending task of

responsibility: "If I want to be *really* faithful to it [the event], I must completely rework my ordinary way of living my situation."[91]

The saying "We are a people like any other people" illustrates and enacts such a truth procedure. Sanbar talks about its cognitive force and affective appeal as

> the kind of truth which, once it has been recognized, will make things very difficult for anyone still counting on the disappearance of the Palestinian people. In the end, what this truth says is that every people has "a right to its rights," so to speak. This is self-evident, but so powerful that it represents the point of departure and the destination of every political struggle. Look at the Zionists: What do they have to say on the subject? You will never hear them say: "the Palestinian people have a right to nothing." No amount of force can maintain such a position, and they know it. But you will hear them say: "there is no Palestinian people." This is why the affirmation of the existence of the Palestinian people is so very powerful, much more so than it might at first appear.[92]

Sanbar is echoing Hannah Arendt's formulation of "right to have rights"[93]—the most basic human right. Zionist domination, from the very beginning, avoided crude forms of racism of the type: "the Palestinian people have a right to nothing." Palestinians were not singled out as *Palestinians* in the realm of public and media discourse. Instead, Zionist ideology worked subtly to deny Palestinians any history and ontology. They are refugees with *no* right to have rights.[94] In 1969, Golda Meir, then Israeli Prime Minister, put it most bluntly: "How can we return the occupied territories? There is nobody to return them to."[95] The pro-Zionist American government also did its share to disseminate the view that Palestinians "are Arabs from somewhere else, and who can go back."[96] For the Zionist, then, Palestinians do not count because they do not exist.[97]

The first Intifada—a popular Palestinian uprising against Israeli occupation of the Gaza Strip, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem, which began in 1987 and ended in the early 1990s—did much to challenge this Zionist narrative. Like Hallward, I interpret the Intifada as an example of a political event. Triggered by the killing of four Palestinians by an IDF truck in the Gaza Strip, it brought into being a new, and *unanticipated*, collective Palestinian subject, and yielded unforeseeable change; it effectively challenged the knowledge sanctioned by Zionist discourse, affirming a new reality: *The Palestinian people are not landless migrants*.[98] Moreover, the Intifada made visible to the rest of the world, and to Israelis themselves, a less than democratic Israel, where the "situation" of democracy was seen to falter, to malfunction when confronted with an unmanageable *excess*: its previously hidden and repressed but now rebellious

Palestinians. So if, as Rancière argues, politics is the struggle for "a new landscape of the possible"[99]—the unsettling of what he calls *le partage du sensible*, "the distribution/partition/sharing of the sensible"[100]—the first Intifada irrevocably altered the existing "field of experience,"[101] troubled the unjust "distribution of places and roles,"[102] Israel's "order of the visible and the sayable."[103]

"Before the intifada," writes Todd May, "the Palestinians had not been entirely invisible, either to the Israelis or to the world. But they were not visible as a Palestinian people, and especially as a demos."[104] The Palestinians, after the Intifada, became what Badiou would say "immortal." Immortality here is emptied of its religious signification, and basically attests to the possibility of transcendence, albeit in anthropocentric fashion, to our capacity not to be limited by the given ("*what there is*"[105]).

Badiou distinguishes between an ethics of victimization and an ethics of truth-events. Badiou concedes that "man is *the being who is capable of recognizing himself as a victim*."[106] But he quickly moves to underscore the irreducibility of this status. "Man" is more than "his animal substructure."[107] His identity is not exhausted by his designation as a victim. We are unlike other animals to the extent that we are capable of transcendence: "we are dealing with an animal whose resistance, unlike that of a horse, lies not in his fragile body but in his stubborn determination to remain what he is—that is to say, precisely something other than a victim, other than a being-for-death, and thus: *something other than a mortal being*."[108] What makes every human being "*capable* of being this immortal" is an openness to the truth-event.[109]

It is, then, clearly not Palestinian bare life that interests Badiou. He sees little political value in the circulating discourses on victimization (though this is a right—the right to be seen as a victim, as a grievable being—that Palestinians had to fight for, and continue to fight for, given Israel's monopoly on victimhood). We might say that Badiou's Palestinians are not *only* dispossessed victims (it is important here to see Badiou as still recognizing the Palestinians as victims[110] and not see their "victimization [as] something that can be avoided or rejected at will"[111]), *objects* of Israeli power, dwelling in a state of Butlerian precarity, but *subjects* as well, immortal subjects defined by their resistance to occupation.

Faithful subjects of the Intifada-event, these Palestinians—these "militants of truth,"[112] as Badiou would call them—thirsted for more and persevered in their commitment. By their courageous protests, by their unaccommodating *presence*, they disrupted Israel's order of things. They questioned the proper counting of those who are part of society and those who have no part ("the part of no part" to use Rancière's important formulation[113]). They exposed and unsettled the

Zionist's logic of disavowal: *I know there are Palestinians living on this land, but I act as if I believe they didn't*. That is to say, the first Intifada dealt a heavy blow to the Zionist-colonial fantasy of *Terra Nullius* (an eighteenth-century legal concept, which literally means "a land of no one," used to justify or legitimize the dispossession of indigenous peoples' lands by European colonizers), of a Palestine free of Palestinians—a concept suggested by Levinas's "They call themselves Palestinians,"[114] authorized by Golda Meir's "There is no Palestinian people," and vulgarized by the slogan, *A land without a people for a people without a land*. Prior to the Intifada, then, this Palestinian other was in a sense invisible to the Jewish colonizers; he or she was a global casualty of the *Terra Nullius* narrative,[115] even erased from the colonizer's mind.[116] In this respect, as Sanbar argues, Palestine was "not just colonized—it 'disappeared.'"[117] Palestine's Arab reality was *cancelled* and *transcended*.[118] But the Intifada effected a breach in Zionist doxa, and infused life back into Palestine. It decisively reordered the possibilities of Palestinian representation, transforming the image of the Palestinian as a *specified* victim, a docile body fully compliant with Israel's racist regime. It ostensibly reshaped the situation of the Palestinian other, substantializing him or her as a collective subject, as a *specific* subject who had something to say, who both demanded and presupposed equality. As Rancière puts it, "equality is a presupposition, an initial axiom—or it is nothing."[119] The Palestinian people claimed the *universality of equality*: they are equal (they have an equal claim to self-determination) to the Israelis who consider them less than equal (they are not a *people* like the Jews).

Yet, after the failure of the Oslo Accords, the increase in Palestinian land confiscation, and Ariel Sharon's provocative visit to the Temple Mount in September 2000, the second or "al-Aqsa" Intifada ignited. Yet, unlike the first Intifada, which was a site of *opportunity*, this one was less egalitarian, more centralized, and decisively more identitarian (Fatah and Hamas vying for the will of the Palestinian people), and more violent (moving from stone-throwing to suicide bombings as a form of resistance). The second Intifada, which lasted five years, undeniably expressed the frustration and disillusionment of many Palestinians, yet, this time around, the uprising lacked the novelty of the first Intifada, ostensibly doing little to interrupt or change the "field of experience" of both Israelis and Palestinians.[120] Quite the contrary, Palestinian actions fed all too well the Zionist narrative, solidifying the image of Palestinians as irrational terrorists—on the side of evil in the global War on Terror.[121]

To revive the Palestinian struggle for equality—to renew, we might say, a certain fidelity to the first Intifada—requires new political truth procedures,

universalist interventions into the Israeli–Palestinian conflict. "The production of equality and the casting off, in thought, of differences are the material signs of the universal,"[122] writes Badiou. But unlike Finkielkraut's predilection for a type of universality that celebrates Republican ideals while explicitly or tacitly upholding the exception (Israel as immune from critique and international law, or the Palestinians as *homines sacri*, unprotected by Israeli law), Badiou favors a rhetoric of the concrete universal, synonymous with today's much-needed task of *inventing the Same*. Theorizing universality is not about the suppression or the negation of differences—be they natural or cultural. Rather, it involves negotiating with differences and thinking about the ways "something new and universal can be possible in conditions of particularity."[123] Universality does not erupt "out of thin air";[124] indeed, its production relies on encounters with otherness (to recall, for Badiou, otherness, differences/particularities are the ontologically given; *it is all there is*). Nevertheless, Badiouian universality must begin with the affirmation that *particularity is not destiny*. If it were, all we would ever have are ontologically "closed communities."[125]

Accordingly, Badiou subjects both Israelis and Palestinians to his universalist framework. Badiou is even-handed here, scrutinizing any identitarian deployment of the Palestinian or Arab signifier. Reminiscent of Said's remarks, which contested the long-term value and the "efficacy of religious forms of nationalism,"[126] Badiou unsparingly objects to Arab tribalism, to "Hamas-type forces," which all but negated the earlier democratic, secularist, and universalist aspirations of the PLO:[127]

> I've always thought that political groups like that, based on a so-called religion, were identitarian groups in the worst sense of the term, typical representatives of closed particularity. They're the symmetrical counterparts of the Israeli far right.[128]

Badiou contextualizes the rise of Islamism as a consequence of the weakening of the Left in the Middle East: Hamas and other Islamic groups' "power comes mainly from the notable weakness of Marxist-inspired revolutionary politics in the Arab world, a weakness all the Western governments have long fomented, including by financing and arming the Islamists."[129] But at the heart of Badiou's troubling of the Palestinians'/Israelis' religio-nationalist identity really lies his appeal to a Pauline sensibility:

> A more immediately relevant consequence is that the signifier "Palestinian" or "Arab" should not be glorified any more than is permitted for the signifier "Jew." As a result, the legitimate solution to the Middle East conflict is not the

> dreadful institution of two barbed-wire states. The solution is the creation of a secular and democratic Palestine, *one subtracted from all predicates*, and which, in the school of Paul—who declared that, *in view of the universal*, "there is no longer Jew nor Greek" and that "circumcision is nothing, and uncircumcision is nothing"—would show that it is perfectly possible to create a place in these lands where, from a political point of view and regardless of the apolitical continuity of customs, *there is "neither Arab nor Jew."*[130]

To be clear: what Badiou privileges in Paul is not his religious message, that is, his displacement of Judaism with Christianity. All regions promote communal interests, and are irremediably particular—none can offer identity as a "transcendent value."[131] In this respect, Saint Paul is not an "example of universality" but an "example of a *theory* of universality."[132] It is Paul's principle of *adiaphora* (ethical indifference toward ethnic and cultural particularities) that Badiou harnesses in his politics of subtraction.[133]

Badiou and Žižek also remind us that the Pauline cosmopolitan impulse is not foreign to Jewish thinkers:

> From the apostle Paul to Trotsky, including Spinoza, Marx and Freud, Jewish communitarianism has only underpinned creative universalism in so far as there have been new points of rupture with it. It is clear that today's equivalent of Paul's religious rupture with established Judaism, of Spinoza's rationalist rupture with the Synagogue, or of Marx's political rupture with the bourgeois integration of a part of his community of origin, is a subjective rupture with the State of Israel, not with its empirical existence, which is neither more nor less impure than that of all states, but with its exclusive identitarian claim to be a Jewish state, and with the way it draws incessant privileges from this claim, especially when it comes to trampling underfoot what serves us as international law.[134]

> The privileged role of Jews in the establishment of the sphere of the "public use of reason" hinges on their subtraction from every state power. Theirs is this position of the "part of no-part" of every organic nation-state community, and it is this position, not the abstract-universal nature of their monotheism, that makes them the immediate embodiment of universality. No wonder, then, that, with the establishment of the Jewish nation-state, a new figure of the Jew emerged: a Jew resisting identification with the State of Israel, refusing to accept the State of Israel as his true home, a Jew who "subtracts" himself from this State, and who includes the State of Israel among the states towards which he insists on maintaining a distance, to live in their interstices.[135]

In solidarity with those Jews who, throughout history, subjected their exclusion to a process of transvaluation by rejecting the comfort of conformity and lure of

their insular communities, some Israeli Jews today resist the prevailing, and much safer, identitarian norm. For Zionists, praise for this "uncanny Jew"[136] by non-Jews is tantamount to anti-Semitism. Zionists, of course, also pathologize this cosmopolitan subject as a self-hating Jew (or, in more patronizing fashion: "the useful idiot of anti-Semites"[137]), treating him or her as a "foreign excess disturbing the community of the nation-state."[138] In declining a programmatic attachment to his or her ethnic and religious rootedness, this universalist Jew experiences a new form of racism, which Žižek aptly dubs "Zionist anti-Semitism."[139]

Uncompromisingly critical of Zionist identity politics, which seeks to safeguard existing Jewish identity, Badiou advocates for a subtractive philosophy, a philosophy that suspends or strips away the inessential in order to get at what he calls a "generic humanity."[140] Only by practicing "affirmative thought," which Badiou defines as "the capacity to invent and create something that 'sublates' … identity, i.e., something that includes identity in a perspective wider than itself,"[141] can a particular subject effectively rupture with and gain critical distance from his or her organic community. In search *of possibilities yet to come*, Badiou can be seen here as extending Deleuze's own illuminating observation in "The Indians of Palestine" on the distinct and competing types of identitarian claims made by Israelis and Palestinians.

Both Deleuze and Badiou highlight a different aspect of Palestinian exemplarity. While Deleuze's claim that Palestinians are "'a people like any other people,'" as we have seen, underscores their open ontology and representative status (they too hunger for recognition and suffer from the lack of it), Badiou's passage is perhaps more abstract, pointing to a collectivity and social reality still to come, to be created, where in their secular appeal—an appeal open to *all* political subjects—Palestinians will compel Jews and Arabs alike to universalize themselves, to bracket their "immediate national or communitarian belonging,"[142] to overcome their internal limitations and outdated logic of particularism, their pragmatic and phantasmatic attachments to religious and ethnic differences, and embrace a shared co-existence under new universal ideals. They will show "how the space of the possible is larger than the one we are assigned—that something else is possible."[143] Israelis could, then, affirm an alternative universality by deciding to rethink the very notion of a "Jewish state," abandoning its myth of a sacred origin and destiny in favor of a more democratic and egalitarian political regime. On this view, the exemplarity of the Palestinians would reside not in their particular interests and uniqueness, instantiated in their victimhood and suffering (past and present), but in the boldness and courage of their political vision, in their practice of subtraction.

4

The Exilic Palestinian: Difference Otherwise than Being

> *Once the self-identity of a Jew or of Judaism consisted in this exemplarity—in other words in a certain non-self-identity, "I am this," meaning "I am this and the universal"—well, the more you break up self-identity, the more you are saying "My self-identity consists in not being identical to myself, in being foreign, the non-self-coincident one," etc., the more you are Jewish!*
>
> Jacques Derrida[1]

> *Of course. I'm the last Jewish intellectual. You don't know anyone else. All your other Jewish intellectuals are now suburban squires. From Amos Oz to all these people here in America. So I'm the last one. The only true follower of Adorno. Let me put it this way: I'm a Jewish-Palestinian.*
>
> Edward Said[2]

Objections to identitarian politics, to communitarianism, need not follow an exclusively universalist path. A warning against fetishizing difference, or otherness, can be met with a defense of difference, or rather with what we might call an "anti-anti-difference."[3] To the extent that identity politics works to commodify difference, producing a self-enclosed notion of otherness, a return to difference cannot simply amount to reinvesting in a positive or substantial account of difference; it cannot afford to by-pass the universalist (anti-difference) position if it wants to avoid the trappings and shortcomings of difference. Toward formulating a viable ethico-politics of difference, this chapter reframes the choice between an ethics of difference (a resilient particularism) and the unity of Humanity (a prescriptive universalism). In the context of the nation-state, preserving difference frequently takes the form of social antagonism, of competing differences, where some differences count and others do not. The historical phenomenon of Israel dramatizes this point, since its antagonism is directed not only against Palestinians and their defenders but also

against other Jews—those who "*dis*identify"[4] with Israel as a Jewish state, and choose instead to cherish the ideal of the diasporic Jew, a figure who declines the Zionist lure of national and religious rootedness and affirms the virtues of nomadism. As Derrida muses, in relation to *another* Jewish exemplarity, this Jew preserves his or her Jewishness paradoxically by rejecting and rebelling against his or her self-sameness or *identity* as Jew.[5]

Rescuing and updating this other, more productive, genealogy of the Jew as perpetually uprooted, errant, and profoundly other to him- or herself, always in excess of his or her existing phantasmatic and symbolic identity, provides an alternative to the choice between universalism (the transcendence of one's facticity) and particularism (the mystification of one's predicates). To be sure, this nomadic Jew resembles the universalist Jew celebrated by Badiou and Žižek. He or she embodies the dream of cosmopolitanism, an indifference to differences. But the question is: What kind of cosmopolitan subjectivity does this figure truly embody? Not all cosmopolitanisms are created alike. Take for example the cosmopolitanism of Derrida. Though he joins Habermas in his urgent plea for Europe "to defend and promote a cosmopolitan order on the basis of international law against competing visions,"[6] Derrida still legitimately warns against an uncritical investment in the idea of cosmopolitanism. For Derrida, the cosmopolitan spirit is not immune from critique but rather is something that must be perpetually scrutinized and endlessly perfected:

> If we must in fact cultivate the spirit of this tradition (as I believe most international institutions have done since World War I), we must also try to adjust the limits of this tradition to our own time by questioning the ways in which they have been defined and determined by the ontotheological, philosophical, and religious discourses in which this cosmopolitical ideal was formulated … . What I call "democracy to come" would go beyond the limits of cosmopolitanism, that is, of a world citizenship. It would be more in line with what lets singular beings (anyone) "live together," there where they are not yet defined by citizenship, that is, by their condition as lawful "subjects" in a state or legitimate members of a nation-state or even of a confederation or world state.[7]

Cultivating an alternative cosmopolitanism today—one that is responsive to those marginalized subjects of globalization, to those who "call out for another international law, another border politics, another humanitarian politics, indeed a humanitarian commitment that *effectively* operates beyond the interests of Nation-States"[8]—goes hand in hand with the task of rethinking democracy and its paradigmatic relation to the other:

> The demos is *at once* the incalculable singularity of anyone, before any "subject" …, beyond all citizenship, beyond every "state," indeed every "people," indeed even beyond the current state of the definition of a living being as living "human" being, *and* the universality of rational calculation, of the equality of citizens before the law, the social bond of being together, with or without contract, and so on.[9]

> There is no democracy without respect for irreducible singularity or alterity, but there is no democracy without the "community of friends," without the calculation of majorities, without identifiable, stabilizable, representable subjects, all equal. These two laws are irreducible one to the other.[10]

A double bind informs Derrida's cosmopolitanism, his "democracy to come." For Derrida, "democracy to come" indeed entails a permanent condition of (self) critique; he reinterprets the eighteenth-century notion of democracy's perfectibility as a call for "interminable analysis."[11] "Democracy to come" is thus clearly not governed by a "regulative idea"; it is, as Derrida says, "foreign to the order of my possibilities."[12] The double bind must respect the other's "incalculable singularity"—the unforeseen possibilities of the other—while attesting to his or her equality with other citizens "before the law." Derrida's other is not an exception to the law but nor is he or she reducible to the law.

Derrida blurs the boundaries between ethics (my dyadic relation to the other) and politics (my relation to others), pointing to the imbrication of the two. When, for instance, he objects to identity politics (a group "fighting for [its] own identity"), he does so not because of its reliance on an outdated politics of difference, or its fixation on the other *qua* other, but because it fails to address the question of difference adequately: "Once you take into account this inner and other difference, then you pay attention to the other and you understand that fighting for your own identity is not exclusive of another identity, is open to another identity. And this prevents totalitarianism, nationalism, egocentrism, and so on."[13] Derrida does not so much reject the desire for recognition and identity (in) politics ("who could be against 'identity'?" he asks) as call attention to the potential effects of its exclusionary logic: "Like nationalism or separatism, pro-identity politics encourage a misrecognition of the universality of rights and the cultivation of exclusive differences, transforming difference into opposition," an opposition which "also tends, paradoxically, to erase differences."[14]

It is this interpretive sensitivity to the perplexities of difference, this unwavering eye for the double bind, that I find lacking in Badiou and Žižek, who implicitly ask: *Why valorize difference when difference is, in the final analysis, an obstacle for emancipatory politics?* The problem, as I see it, lies in Badiou's and

Žižek's monolithic understanding of difference, which leads them to generalize and condemn multiculturalism, postcolonialism, and poststructuralism in one stroke. This is puzzling given the postcolonial and poststructuralist resistance to the type of identity politics (the commodification of difference) so prevalent in multiculturalist circles. Thinking the Jew from the standpoint of a partisan of postcolonial difference can yield another image of Jewishness. Playfully troping the signifier Jew, for example, the exilic Said creatively gestures toward the possibility of thinking beyond the Jew and Arab as monolithic differences, producing his own unlikely hybrid example of the Jewish-Palestinian.

Said's hybridization of Jewishness seeks to disrupt the terms in which ethico-political choices are framed and made, and in so doing prompts misunderstanding and rejection. Alain Finkielkraut has taken issue with Said's critique, vehemently objecting to his assimilation and policing of Jews:

> These are strange times for real Jews. Not long ago, they were on the lookout, ready to strike down anti-Semitism wherever it dared rear its head. They were determined never again to succumb to hatred, and to clip the wings of anyone who spoke of them as "dirty Jews." What they weren't expecting—and what makes it all the more disconcerting—was to be faced with a grievance that is in its form moral and not brutish, virtuous and not vile, an altruistic grievance, sure of its legitimacy, full of kindness, and steeped in concern. While they are used to hearing themselves denounced as Jewish traitors, they did not expect to be denounced as traitors to their Jewishness.[15]

What Finkielkraut fails to appreciate about Said's comment is its profound ethical thrust, its demystifying and denaturalizing call, a call not intended to diminish the agency of "real" historical Jews but to unsettle reified and exclusionary narratives about "authentic" Arab and Jewish identities. Indeed, detaching the signifier Jew from any ahistorical ontological claims opens it up to inscription within different, less totalizing, less certain and more provisional systems of signification. Thinking Jewishness as a project in which Palestinians can also take part today is not an attempt to silence Jews, to speak for them, or to appropriate their history or trauma, but, in a perversely Levinasian fashion, a gesture toward rethinking Jewishness (and Palestinian identity) as *otherwise than being*—not by abandoning the language of difference, but by traversing and adapting it, inventing it anew.

Exilic feelings

The exilic Palestinian follows in the footsteps of the nomadic or wandering Jew. Of course, it is important to recognize that the representation of Jews as nomads in European discourse frequently stemmed from anti-Semitism—the hermeneutic need to racially distinguish "genuine" Europeans from "foreign" Jews. As Jacques Kornberg puts it, "the image of the Jew as a nomad, an oriental migrant into Europe's heartland, rootless and parasitic, bent on employing mercantile acumen to subdue honest Christians, shaped modern European sensibilities."[16] Yet after the birth of modern Israel the relation between the Jew and the nomad has become noticeably less obvious or self-evident. To insist on the importance of nomadism to Jewish thought and history is to insist on the Diaspora and alternative perspectives on settlement; more importantly, to return to the diasporic legacy of the Jewish people is to run up against a dominant vision of Zionism that very much desires to foreclose alternative traditions of being Jewish. In other words, fidelity to Jewish nomadism is met time and again with resistance from Zionist anti-Semitism.

But to be clear, nomadism is an irritant not only to the State of Israel but to any nation-state—and the territorialized vision of belonging that it necessarily fosters. For this reason, philosophers and social theorists have been somewhat fascinated by this figure of the nomad, in so far as it affords another, non-appropriative way of being-in-the-world. For example, for Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, the nomad functions as a "conceptual persona,"[17] a way of thinking deterritorialization, in their philosophical project to destabilize the State apparatus, "the State's pretension to be a world order, and to root man."[18] They write: "the nomads make the desert no less than they are made by it. They are vectors of deterritorialization."[19] Making explicit nomadism's figurality and interpretive potential, Rosi Braidotti writes: "Not all nomads are world travelers; some of the greatest trips can take place without physically moving from one's habitat. It is the subversion of set conventions that defines the nomadic state, not the literal act of traveling."[20]

The idea that there is "no necessary or eternal *belongingness*"[21] has been particularly attractive for postcolonial theorists with cosmopolitan sensibilities.[22] Frequently associated with nomadism is the figure of the rhizome, as a means of expressing the relational quality of identity. As Martinican theorist Édouard Glissant put it:

> Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari criticized notions of the root and, even perhaps, notions of being rooted. The root is unique, a stock taking all upon

> itself and killing all around it. In opposition to this they propose the rhizome, an enmeshed root system, a network spreading either in the ground or in the air, with no predatory rootstock taking over permanently. The notion of the rhizome maintains, therefore, the idea of rootedness but challenges that of a totalitarian root.[23]

But nomadic migration—conceived here both as literal displacement and as figurative parallax—is no doubt also ripe for abuse. The philosophical/postcolonial theorist as nomad is not the *same* as the nomad who is subjected to colonial or statist violence:[24] "Migrants, refugees, and nomads don't merely circulate. They need to settle, claim asylum or nationality, demand housing and education, assert their economic and cultural rights, and come to be legally represented within legal jurisdictions."[25] Mobility can be an unmarked luxury, a capacity assumed to be available to all, including society's excluded or vulnerable bodies.[26]

The caution to not romanticize the nomad—by paradoxically silencing him or her, by downplaying any actual reasons to settle or visceral desires for belonging[27]—is amplified in the context of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: Isn't the seemingly endless Palestinian struggle for territorial sovereignty irremediably at odds with our Saidian image of the exilic Palestinian? It all depends of course on the meanings of sovereignty and exile. The next and final chapter will deal more extensively with this question of sovereignty, with bi-nationalism as an ethico-political alternative to the tribalism of the nation-state. But for now we can say in Kantian fashion that territorial sovereignty is, at the very least, not a good without qualification. *Territorial* sovereignty always risks fetishizing rootedness, resulting in the inhospitable rhetoric of *Blut und Boden*, blood and earth.

In *Reflections on Exile*, Said recognizes and addresses such concerns about carelessly conflating the contemplative with the traumatic: "Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience,"[28] he writes. Said continues by describing exile as a melancholic disposition, as "the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home: its essential sadness can never be surmounted."[29] At the same time, he cautions against ontologizing this Palestinian sadness by tying it to a *mythical* lost object. Said associates this latter type of sadness with the concept of Jewish diaspora:

> The difference is that the Jewish people claim that their relationship to Palestine goes back 3000 years, and that they were exiled from it and displaced 2500 years ago. But the expulsion of the Palestinians from Palestine began just yesterday.

> Still, we should not forget that the Zionist official history was founded on the diaspora and the idea of permanent exile—this history uses many myths. I think we as Palestinians should avoid myths, and it appears to me that we as intellectuals must focus on the historical and concrete facts and refuse to utilize mythological dimensions. […] I naturally reject the term 'diaspora.' […] The Jews used it to fulfill their own imagination, but we are talking about a different situation for the Palestinian. The Palestinian situation and the society Palestinians desire is peculiar to that nation.[30]

There is a double bind at work here in Said's texts. As a *Palestinian* intellectual, Said cannot simply jettison the idea of a "true home"—that is, a historical home that is not a "myth of imagination,"[31] and thus makes a return home not a priori mythical. Yet, as a Palestinian *intellectual*, Said is also affectively and cognitively invested in the virtues of exile as a modality of being and seeing. Exile declines what diaspora promises, "a kind of redemptive homeland."[32] "Unlike the term 'diaspora,'" Bryan Cheyette writes, "'exile' is supposedly disruptive and intransigent and not redeemed by a sense of nationalist return."[33] An exilic self embraces the unknown, even derives enjoyment from it. We might say that exilic feelings entail a transvalution of discomfort; they unsettle the cultural script of rootedness and national belonging.[34]

Feeling the demands of the double bind, Said's exilic self is, to borrow Spivak's formulation, "learning to live with contradictory instructions":[35] he desires to return home (it is his irrevocable right as a Palestinian) and he must resist the lures of provincialism (it is his unconditional duty as an intellectual). Exilic selfhood—or "exilic humanism/nationalism"[36]—involves tirelessly negotiating between these conflicting demands. There are no formulaic responses. Each response will undoubtedly vary depending on the situation and the type of pressure that the double bind exerts on its interpretive subject.

On Said's reading, a rhetoric of diaspora ultimately proves inadequate, too reliant on a myth-making that can only encourage phantasmatic constructs of the Nation and its people. But would Said be more open to Stuart Hall's less essentializing definition of modern diaspora? Hall underscores the term's contingency and pure negativity:

> I use this term here metaphorically, not literally: diaspora does not refer us to those scattered tribes whose identity can only be secured in relation to some sacred homeland to which they must at all costs return, even if it means pushing other people into the sea. This is the old, the imperialising, the hegemonising, form of "ethnicity." We have seen the fate of the people of Palestine at the hands of this backward-looking conception of diaspora—and the complicity of the

> West with it. The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; by a conception of "identity" which lives with and through, not despite, difference; by *hybridity*. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference.[37]

Jewish diaspora, on this account, is about metaphysical *origins* (the return of the chosen people to their sacred national homeland), whereas Palestinian diaspora is about historical *beginnings* (hybridity is a shared global condition).[38] On one level, Hall's deconstructive account of modern diaspora translates well Said's wager on the benefits of exile. The newness in perspective that it affords is irreducible to existing knowledge. Exile's rhizomatic or unruly ways "cannot be made to serve notions of humanism."[39] But what I find wanting in Hall's definition is the full force of the Saidian double bind. A euphoric embrace of hybridity is not enough; it does not capture the complexity of Said's position. Hall's modern and forward-looking conception of diaspora must be counter-balanced by Said's persistent yearning for a homeland. Conversely, to underscore Said's unwillingness to abandon the idea of a homeland—as does Patrick Williams[40]—does not negate Hall's praise of hybridity as modern diaspora either. It is not a question of choosing between the two demands, or between the two Saids, as Said's readers have often sought to do, especially in relation to his stance on Palestinian nationalism (one form that his desire for a homeland can take).

In his somewhat fraught homage to Said, Homi Bhabha faults his postcolonial comrade for his *parti pris*, his insistence on Palestinian "territorial *integrity*," and his "rage [which] sometimes drives him toward a dark two-dimensionality."[41] According to Bhabha, Said's commitment to the Palestinian cause came, so it seems, with hermeneutic costs: it "led him, at times, to pass over distinctions, to resist shades of meaning and interpretations that might have widened the circle of empathetic dialogue."[42] But in viewing Said's rage—or better his "anger"—as solely an initiating address to others with whom he wants to engage dialogue, Bhabha neglects the fact that this anger emerges first and foremost as an ethico-political response to an unacceptable status quo:

> I think this is the folly of Zionism. Putting up these enormous walls of denial that are part of the very fabric of Israeli life to this day. I suppose that as an Israeli, you have never waited in line at a checkpoint or at the Erez crossing. It's pretty bad. Pretty humiliating. Even for someone as privileged as I am. There is no excuse for that. *The inhuman behavior toward the other is unforgivable. So my reaction is anger. Lots of anger*.[43]

Not unlike Holocaust survivor Jean Améry—who stubbornly declined his culture's psychically violent demands for *cheap* and *lazy* forgiveness (he was writing in the 1960s, when German culture was actively promoting forgiving and forgetting)—Said insisted on the unforgivability of Israeli treatment of Palestinians,[44] on "nailing the criminal to his deed," to borrow Améry's words.[45] In his own anachronistic stance, writing in the early 1990s, when Western powers were actively promoting the Oslo Peace Accords and the spirit of reconciliation, Said denounced the deal as a sham, refusing to normalize Zionist aggression and domination, to buttress the Zionist "walls of denial," while, at the same time, insisting on the need for real justice—which is synonymous here with the decolonization of Zionist Israel. Anger, then, is not so much a loss of interpretive mastery as a "productive" source for oppositional thinking.[46] Said, *pace* Bhabha, is in the business of painful exposures and not the neat (that is, false) resolution of problems.

If Bhabha takes issue with Said for his lack of ambivalence with respect to Palestinian nationalism, Peter Hallward objects to the exact opposite: "The admirable consistency of this commitment [for the Palestinian cause] cannot mask, however, an apparent inconsistency or ambivalence regarding the decisive questions of territorial sovereignty and an independent Palestinian state."[47] Hallward perceives in Said a slippage from the "specific" to the "singular." That is to say, there is a retreat from the realm of the political—the world of others—to the realm of the rootless, *singular* interpreter. To recall, Hallward uses the term singular in a precise sense: "The singular, in each case, is constituent of itself, expressive of itself, immediate to itself. That the singular creates the medium of its existence means that it is not specific to external criteria or frames of reference."[48] The singular is inherently monadic; it "claims its power from its own autonomy, its own self-constituent authority," absent any "workable relations *with* others."[49] For Deleuze, a singularity is defined by its "internal difference," meaning that it is univocal and unmediated (linguistically or culturally), and not to be understood in terms of sameness, analogy, or opposition, for instance. Deleuze states starkly that a singularity, ontologically speaking, inhabits "a world without others."[50] Hallward rejects Deleuze's postidentitarian metaphysics, and laments its infiltration in Said's thinking, spoiling its specific potential. This Deleuzian contamination is especially visible, Hallward tells us, in Said's notion of the contrapuntal. Again, Hallward's main point of contention (that he has with an array of postcolonial theorists, including Bhabha, Glissant, and Spivak) is that the turn to the singular is inefficient if not detrimental to politics. It stimulates "a contemplative rather than a militant stance."[51] But, as we shall see,

Hallward's reading of Said is decidedly one-sided, overlooking the nuances and range of the contrapuntal mode.

Against identity, or the politics of the contrapuntal

As with exile, Said invests the musical notion of the contrapuntal with a strong hermeneutic quality. Reading contrapuntally can take many forms, depending on the object of study. Said's musings on the contrapuntal stress the antagonistic character and temporal dimensions of reading, which unfolds in a present composed of multiple (point against point), simultaneous movements or traces, traces that extend across present and past:

> Most people are principally aware of one culture, one setting, one home; exiles are aware of at least two, and this plurality of vision gives rise to an awareness of simultaneous dimensions, an awareness that—to borrow a phrase from music—is *contrapuntal*.[52]
>
> […]
>
> Having allowed myself gradually to assume the professional voice of an American academic as a way of submerging my difficult and unassimilable past I began to think and write contrapuntally, using the disparate halves of my experience, as an Arab and an American, to work with and against each other.[53]

> I am always trying to understand figures from the past whom I admire, even as I point out how bound they were by the perspectives of their own cultural moment as far as their views of other cultures and peoples were concerned. The special point I then try to make is that it is imperative to read them as intrinsically worthwhile for today's non-European or non-Western reader, who is often either happy to dismiss them altogether as dehumanizing or insufficiently aware of the colonized people … or reads them, in a way, "above" the historical circumstances of which they were so much a part. My approach tries to see them in their context as accurately as possible, but then—because they are extraordinary writers and thinkers whose work has enabled other, alternative work and reading based on developments of which they could not have been aware—I see them contrapuntally, that is, as figures whose writing travels across temporal, cultural and ideological boundaries in unforeseen ways to emerge as part of a new ensemble *along with* later history and subsequent art.[54]

To read contrapuntally is not simply to read oppositionally but rather relationally or dialogically. The goal, then, is not only to read against the grain, against the given, but to entertain a double consciousness, a parallax perspective: to bear

witness to the interdependence of viewpoints or voices. It takes a kind of critical generosity, a nonhierarchical mode of thinking, to engage with and be hospitable to voices other than your own. As Said tells us, "it is more rewarding—and more difficult—to think concretely and sympathetically, contrapuntally, about others than only about 'us.'"[55]

From his reading of Antonio Gramsci, who argued that "the consciousness of what one really is … is 'knowing thyself' as a product of the historical process to date which has deposited in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory,"[56] Said also quickly came to realize that the quest for self-knowledge was crucial for understanding the complex, simultaneous traces constituting (post)colonial Palestinian reality within a field of power. One of these traces is Zionism, in relation to which the Palestinian was, and continues to be, produced, and which must be taken into account in Palestinian "inventories" of the self.[57] Knowledge of self does not result in the making of a sovereign subject but reveals that one's subjectivity is relational and intertwined with the subjectivities of others.

Said's poetics of the contrapuntal thus leads him to a conceptualization of the self radically different than the one posited by Hallward, who argues that "an individual becomes a subject to the degree that he or she is able to *take* (rather than inherit or adopt) *sides*, in the most active and deliberate sense."[58] The idea of the double bind is utterly foreign to Hallward; his classic subject of philosophy leaves no room for contrapuntality. By contrast, Said reads Said contrapuntally; he reveals the extent to which becoming a subject involves a far messier process:

> I occasionally experience myself as a cluster of flowing currents. I prefer this to the idea of a solid self, the identity to which so many attach such significance. These currents, like the themes of one's life, flow along during the waking hours, and at their best, they require no reconciling, no harmonizing. They are "off" and may be out of place, but at least they are always in motion, in time, in place, in the form of all kinds of strange combinations moving about, not necessarily forward, sometimes against each other, contrapuntally yet without one central theme. A form of freedom, I'd like to think, even if I am far from being totally convinced that it is. That skepticism too is one of the themes I particularly want to hold on to. With so many dissonances in my life I have learned actually to prefer being not quite right and out of place.[59]

Reading with an eye for counterpoint means being receptive to the irreconcilable and the intransigent, along with the hermeneutic difficulties that they might entail. Said clearly took *sides*,[60] but this was rarely done at the expense of interpretation; indeed, Said often talked of a "politics of interpretation."[61] A contrapuntal reading of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict gives a sobering account of the situation:

> This is a dialectical conflict. But there is no possible synthesis. In this case, I don't think it's possible to ride out the dialectical contradictions. There is no way I know to reconcile the messianic-driven and Holocaust-driven impulse of the Zionists with the Palestinian impulse to stay on the land. These are fundamentally different impulses. This is why I think the essence of the conflict is its irreconcilability.[62]

The Oslo Accords, which superficially harmonized the wills of Palestinian and Israeli leaders, passed over this irreconcilability with devastating effects for the Palestinians. But, for Said, it is clearly not a question of fetishizing what is irreconcilable, of dwelling on this tragic missed "opportunity" for peace. The interpretive task rather is to painfully recognize the impasse of the two peoples, to admit to the irreconcilable perspectives on the land, and still proceed *together*—that is, contrapuntally and polyphonically—to look for an inventive alternative, and more worldly modes of relating and belonging.

The contrapuntal mode, then, does not feed the bliss of transcendence (the facile celebration of hybridity) nor the certitude of pessimism (the defeatism of "nothing can change"), but the uneasiness of skepticism (its "corrosive questioning"[63]): the negativity of critique. This explains Said's admiration for Theodor Adorno. Said clearly shares Adorno's aversion to the logic of identity and the positive knowledge that both sustains it and derives from it. Adorno's claim that "it is part of morality not to be at home in one's home"[64] functions for the exilic Said as a cosmopolitan dictum. Adapting the diasporic (anti) tradition of the Jew, Said performs his "out-of-placeness" in his self-designation as a "Jewish-Palestinian." The hyphen here joins and disjoins, suggesting both a conjunction and a disjunction. The hyphen is foreign to culture's "all-subjugating identity principle";[65] it points to what is nondialectizable, to what is recalcitrant to the identity principle: this Palestinian is *not* the new Jew. Said is *and* is not Jewish. In Adornian fashion, Said, as "the last Jewish intellectual," takes the task of liberating difference from its identitarian prison as an urgent one.[66] For this reason, he prefers postcolonial works that do not mystify cultural difference but that "submit … composite, hybrid identities to a negative dialectic which dissolves them into variously constructed components."[67] What is gained from this contrapuntal practice is a denaturalization of hybridity, a demystification of wholeness, and a return of hybrid identities to less secure grounds: "What matters a great deal more than the stable identity kept current in official discourse is the contestatory force of an interpretive method whose material is the disparate, but intertwined and interdependent, and above all overlapping streams of historical experience."[68]

Hallward questions the political usefulness of a less tame, more rhizomatic hybridity. Though Hallward accepts the relational character of the self (it *is* axiomatic of the specific), he is suspicious of Said's ethico-politics of hybridity. He rejects Said's interpretive next step, namely that "all identities should conceive of themselves as fluid, contingent, or, that all should act in keeping with a method Said defines as 'collaborative or cooperative.'"[69] Said's *ethical* call to practice contrapuntality on the self and others overreaches and transgresses into the realm of politics, unduly limiting its impact and transformative potential: "In trying to deduce his conciliatory political principles directly from his contrapuntal conception of culture and identity, Said can only restrict the properly political realm of argument, decision and responsibility."[70] What should drive politics, Hallward argues, is not a better translation or expression of hybridity. What politics needs are universal principles: such as freedom, equality, solidarity, justice.[71]

But it would be a mistake to see a Badiouian "indifference to differences" as that which separates Hallward from Said. On the contrary, Said also asks us to check our narcissistic impulse, to question our affective attachment only to "differences" that are like us, that reflect us. This is after all the persisting problem of a politics grounded on filiation (one's given organic or naturalized community—the neighbor as mirror image) rather than affiliation[72] (one's fashioned cosmopolitan community—the neighbor as stranger). Cultivating the exilic feeling of being "out of place"—belonging without belonging—enables Said to maintain critical distance and to push back against the ideology of difference, the parochial seductions of nationalism, and "the fetishization of national identity."[73] Said expresses his postidentitarian sensibility in broader terms: "Identity as such is about as boring a subject as one can imagine. Nothing seems less interesting than the narcissistic self-study that today passes in many places for identity politics, or ethnic studies, or affirmations of roots, cultural pride, drum-beating nationalism, and so on."[74] Contrapuntality allows for a more productive pursuit for truth, in a way that resonates with Foucault's claim that "the more I decenter myself the better I can see the truth."[75]

So like Hallward, Žižek, and Badiou, Said is quite cognizant of the shortcomings of a politics of difference, of its propping up of a toothless difference that official discourse celebrates only to better contain. But unlike them, Said does not throw out the baby with the bathwater. Difference *does* still matter. Reading identity contrapuntally—that is, as otherwise than being—does not have to be a regressive, contemplative, or misguided political move, but can be, must become a vital *prerequisite* for resisting the status quo. The legacy of Said,

as Judith Butler aptly put it, lies in "whether [the] idea of an ethics of alterity—an alterity that is built into the identity itself—can become a basis for a new political vision."[76] Said's challenge to us is to think *with* and *against* Palestinian difference, that is, to think the Palestinian question contrapuntally—beyond its current proliferation, and what we have been calling the Jew and the Greek.

"All lives matter," or "Palestinian lives matter"? Yes, please!

Like the slogan "Black Lives Matter,"[77] which has helped highlight the precarity and vulnerability associated with racial difference in the United States, "Palestinian lives matter" illustrates and enacts a resistance to the violence and domination intrinsic to Israeli nationalist othering. The solidarity between the activists of the "Palestinian Lives Matter" and "Black Lives Matter" movements produced a powerful short video titled "When I See Them, I See Us,"[78] in which participants hold up signs carrying messages including "Gaza stands with Baltimore," "I remember: Deir Yassin, Greensboro, Gaza, Charleston," and "solidarity from Ferguson to Palestine." This video seeks to make visible the way in which:

> the onslaught on Black and Palestinian lives is rife with a discourse of victim-blaming that softens the edge of systematic violence and illuminates the dehumanization process. [It] is a message to the world as much as it is a commitment among ourselves that we will struggle with and for one another. No one is free until we all are free.[79]

The utterance that African American and Palestinian lives matter thus discloses both the inadequacy in the humanist-universalist notion that all life matters and the necessity for the universality, for a future state where we are all free.

The formulation "Palestinian Lives Matter" asks us to do three things: first, to return to the specificity of the Palestinian condition, to the historical frames of Israeli occupation; second, to question the marginality of Palestinian bodies, that is, why they do not matter, why life in Israel or in the Occupied Territories[80] is lived under a cloud of suspicion, where Palestinian bodies are perceived as dangerous by an increasing number of Israelis who judge their Arab neighbors as always already terrorists; and third, to resist the dialectical next step that would see the call for Palestinian difference (manifested as a yearning for Palestinian nationalism) as the dialectical negation of Zionist supremacy, and thus only a moment in the journey toward real liberation.

I will address the last point first. In the previous chapter, we saw Žižek's rejoinder to the postcolonial critique of universalism, which, he argues, mischaracterizes the problem as only one abstraction and distortion, leading to an unwarranted retreat to identity politics (that is, to the fetishization of difference). Žižek urges the partisans of difference to think more dialectically, and bring about a state where "a properly universal dimension *explodes from within a particular context and … is directly experienced as universal*."[81] Again, Said is not a priori opposed to this emphasis on the concrete universal. The question, rather, is whether the next step after the demystification of abstract universalism is only concrete universalism. Might we not think difference more deconstructively and contrapuntally, not arguing either for or against difference, but *both* for *and* against it? To think with this contrapuntal logic is to offer Žižek's own answer, "Yes, Please!"—to affirm, in other words, the "refusal of choice"[82]—in response to the question of Universalism versus Difference.

In this light, then, we might ask: Is the movement behind the rallying cry "Palestinian Lives Matter" guilty of intellectual stagnation, too tempted, as it were, by the rewards and short-term gains of identity politics (reified difference)? Is this nascent movement of protest vulnerable to both a Žižekian critique and a Saidian one? I propose to answer these questions by way of a temporal detour, looking back at the well-known exchange between Jean-Paul Sartre and Frantz Fanon over the status and long-term viability of the *négritude* movement.

"Black Orpheus," Sartre's preface to Léopold Sédar Senghor's 1948 anthology of *négritude* poetry, and its critical gloss by Fanon, in his 1952 *Black Skin, White Masks*, stage an encounter between existential-Marxism and anti-colonial theory. Sartre clearly praises Senghor's anthology, seeing it as a productive form of engaged literature. But Sartre also highlights its shortcomings, namely its insufficiency, how "Negritude appears as the weak state of a dialectical progression."[83] *Négritude* suffers from a "particularistic logic."[84] In the road to emancipation, *négritude* is the point of departure, not the final destination. For Sartre, a truly emancipatory critique does not preserve but effaces all differences; accordingly, anti-colonialism must "lead to the abolition of racial differences."[85] Fanon takes issue with Sartre's paternalistic reading, objecting to Sartre's "helleniz[ing]" of *négritude*, to his "Orpheusizing" of the black colonial body.[86] Against Sartre's interpretive machinery, Fanon affirms agonistically the sufficiency of his otherness:

> The dialectic that introduces necessity as a support for my freedom expels me from myself. It shatters my impulsive position. Still regarding consciousness,

> black consciousness is immanent in itself. I am not a potentiality of something; I am fully what I am. I do not have to look for the universal.[87]

Fanon's objection to Sartre's dialectical reading is twofold. First, Fanon denounces Sartre for the latter's unmarked universal perspective, which, he argues, blinds Sartre to a careful consideration of the specificity of the black lived experience. He decries that "Sartre forgets that the black man suffers in his body quite differently from the white man."[88] Sartre's intervention, predicated on a European *telos* of history, ends up "destroy[ing] black impulsiveness [*l'enthousiasme noir*]."[89] Second, Fanon points to a deficiency in the application of the dialectical method. Sartre's cognitive explanatory framework—which dutifully discerns the epiphenomenal from the real determinants, the symptoms from the causes—fails to register the affect of *négritude*, the movement's impact on Fanon's psyche: "When I tried to claim my negritude intellectually as a concept, they snatched it away from me. They proved to me that my reasoning was nothing but a phase in the dialectic."[90] That is to say, subjecting *négritude* to a cold dialectical reading neglected to account for the movement's affective appeal, the utter joy "in the intellectualization of black *existence*."[91]

Yet Fanon also kept his distance from *négritude* and other similar movements. He vigorously fought the impulse for rootedness, the impulse to ontologize or homogenize black experience:

> No, I have not the right to be black [*un Noir*]. It is not my duty to be this or that. [. . .] I acknowledge one right for myself: the right to demand human behavior from the other [*exiger de l'autre un comportement humain*]. [. . .] The black man is not. No more than the white man.[92]

The shift from difference as experiential rootedness (the stuff of tribalism and identity politics) to difference as experiential relatedness helps to revive a universalist humanist framework where what ultimately matters is to be treated humanly. It also might be tempting to read Fanon as offering his own version of Pauline cosmopolitanism: *there is neither White nor Black*. But here we must not forget about the material conditions of colonial life. There is no transcendence of race without the dismantlement of the colonial system, and there is no dismantlement of the colonial system without an affective and cognitive transvaluation of the *difference* of the colonized.

The slogan "Palestinian Lives Matter" is arguably such a gesture. It is, as Butler would put it, a "mode of address":[93] *Hey you—Israeli Zionists—recognize my/our Palestinian humanity!* To utter it is to contest Zionist privilege and what we might call Palestinian *dis*privilege. As David Theo Goldberg observes, "Israelis

occupy the structural position of whiteness in the racial hierarchy of the Middle East. Arabs, accordingly—most notably in the person of Palestinians—are the antithesis."[94] Zionism is a relational category that necessitates the racialization of the non-Jewish other inhabiting the same contested land. Zionist privilege and Palestinian disprivilege amount to the same thing, since "*it is the racist who creates the inferiorized*."[95] But we should add that the racist situation is never simply a dyadic one. It is not sufficient to dispute and debunk the racist's dehumanizing definition. Put slightly differently, racism cannot be genuinely countered only at the level of interethnic encounters—*no matter how epiphanic they are!* Goldberg explains this well in describing "racial Palestinianization"[96] as constitutive of contemporary Zionist reality; in this reality, "Palestinians are treated not *as if* a racial group, not simply *in the manner* of a racial group, but *as* a despised and demonic racial group."[97] Liberal Zionists may be more comfortable with approaching the question of race personally rather than structurally. But to do so is to bracket any serious discussion of the Zionist master code, thus neglecting the racial problem that lies at the very root of Israel's foundation and the institutionalization of its discriminatory practices. Liberals, too, enjoy Zionist privilege and the social power that it affords.

So when Seyla Benhabib writes, "I do not believe that we will get very far by repeating the formula that 'Zionism is a form of settler colonialism,'"[98] I am inclined to say the opposite. From the writings of Theodor Herzl and other founding figures of modern Zionism, we know that "from the get-go," as Nadia Abu El-Haj importantly reminds us, "Zionist leaders represented their movement as a counter-historical struggle *and* as an outpost of European civilization, of whiteness itself."[99] Turning a blind eye to the implicit and explicit Israeli claims of Jewish supremacy[100] is intellectually disingenuous, and pragmatically dangerous. Repeating this damning charge is axiomatic for understanding the current status of Palestinians as disposable bodies. When, for example, the Nakba remains a politically repressed narrative in Israel—when the Israeli government criminalizes its commemoration[101]—it is difficult to see how historical wrongs can be redressed, how traumatic pasts worked through. The ethnic cleansing of 1947–8 is part of Israel's facticity,[102] its founding history; but governments have refused to accept any responsibility for it. At some level, this is quite understandable, since if the State of Israel ever did acknowledge its crimes, on what grounds could it then justify the continuation of Zionist privilege and Palestinian disprivilege?[103]

Conversely, to repeat the claim that "Israel is a form of settler colonialism" is to insist on Zionism's and Orientalism's deep affinity and shared interests.[104]

It is to stress Zionism as a regime of power, a particular kind of arrangement of the partition of the sensible (to use Rancière's language), a form of intelligibility that values Jewish lives (especially those of Ashkenazi or European Jews) and devalues non-Jewish lives (especially Palestinian ones). Said traces the alignment of Israeli and European colonialism with the emergence of the Zionist movement and the subsequent ideological splitting of the Semite: "By a concatenation of events and circumstances the Semitic myth bifurcated in the Zionist movement; one Semite went the way of Orientalism, the other, the Arab, was forced to go the way of the Oriental."[105] Post-World War II Zionism helped bring into existence a new reality where Jews aligned with Western whiteness—or, as Abigail Bakan argues, "moved from less than white to a certain type of whiteness"[106]—and Western interest, while Palestinians were racialized as non-white, and subjected, with the rest of the Arab population, to an Orientalizing gaze. The former were permitted, by the Western powers, to narrate their victorious and redemptive story, the latter narrated, construed unflatteringly as the unassimilable other, incapable of peaceful co-existence with Jews, and thus blamed for their suffering. Needless to say, both storylines served, and continue to serve in a tumultuous post-9/11 world, the political interests of Western powers. So, in this light, we must see the slogan "Palestinian lives matter" as an attempt at undoing Zionist privilege, a counter-narrative, an affective and cognitive plea to see and represent Palestinians as otherwise than Orientalized, that is, as "a murderous race of mindless fanatics."[107] This Orientalist view of the Palestinians still informs Israeli public discourse where "one hears, time and again … that a single Israeli life is worth more than countless Palestinian lives."[108]

While Zionist–Orientalist discourse tries to fix Palestinian difference,[109] to mark it negatively as primitive (Palestinians Arabs were not civilized, as evidenced in their neglect of the land), illegitimate (there were Palestinian natives but no Palestinian people[110]), irrelevant (they are not even exploitable labor), problematic (they are a "demographic problem" in need of "transfer"), and dangerous (Palestinians/Arabs/Muslims are *subjects supposed to terrorize*[111]), the statement "Palestinian Lives Matter" reclaims Palestinian difference as something *not-abnormal*,[112] something that counts. Its expression of nonviolent resistance clashes with the racialized label of Islamo-fascist, which indiscriminately applies, not unlike the charge of anti-Semitism, to any opposition to Israeli policies.[113] Palestinians here are declaring themselves "*for* difference … without at the same time being for the rigidly enforced and policed separation of populations into different groups."[114] That is to say, there is no unique singularity

to Palestinian difference, rooted, as with Zionist difference, in some exclusive or divine-given right to the land. Their claim for difference—not unlike their claim to being "a people like any other people"—is historical and secular.[115] Said's Palestinians decline the "metaphysics of essence like *négritude*, Irishness, Islam or Catholicism," which is tantamount to "abandon[ing] history for essentializations that have the power to turn human beings against each other."[116] For Said, Palestinians do not claim a monopoly on difference. Their reclaiming of difference is inclusive and ostensibly *open to all*: counting Palestinian difference does not dis-count the difference of others (including Jews), but it does de-fetishize Zionist difference and undermine Israel's "ethnoraciality."[117]

But one might ask: Couldn't the universalist mode of address "All Lives Matter" also do the work of restoring rights, of de-Orientalizing the Palestinian by demystifying and demythifying the representational content of Israeli discourse? Said was skeptical, with good reason, of this prospect. "Blithe universalism," as he called it, has had a bad record when it comes to questions of race and representation: "Many cultural theories pretending to universalism assume and incorporate the inequality of races, the subordination of inferior cultures, the acquiescence of those who, in Marx's words, cannot represent themselves and therefore must be represented by others."[118] Universal claims like "All Lives Matter" have "always bolstered racism."[119] As Angela Davis puts it, "any critical engagement with racism requires us to understand the tyranny of the universal."[120] More specifically, "All Lives Matter" tends to ignore the link between Zionism and European imperialism and forgets the historical specificity of the Palestinian situation—what *made* Palestinian lives not matter in the first place. It is not a question of incongruity between the Law and its application: "We live in a 'post-racial' society only in the sense that we are all generalized others in the eyes of the law; but as we learn painfully, not in the eyes of those who administer the law."[121] Benhabib's philosophical distinction between the universal other and the particular other, or what she calls the generalized and the concrete other, is of little or no help in the context of Israel—which upon closer scrutiny only masquerades as a democratic state, for let us not forget that Israel lacks any constitution, let alone one that would affirm equality for all of its citizens, regardless of their religion, race, or ethnicity.[122] In other words, Israel's juridical framework and its justification/perpetuation of state violence is the problem, and not the High Court's fallible application of the Law.[123]

Is the chant "Palestinian lives matter," the insistence on Palestinian difference, then, condemned to fall on deaf philosophical ears? Not necessarily. If the traditional Western philosopher "speaks in the name of the universal,"[124] the

contrapuntal critic infuses philosophy with a negative dialectics, a cosmopolitan sensibility, and speaks in the name of the multiple and the incongruent. To sustain its critical energy, the affirmation "Palestinian lives matter" must remain exilic, and practice a hermeneutics of the "Yes, please!" A contrapuntal reading does not view this mode of address simply as an alternative to "All Lives Matter." Rather, it rejects the terms framing the choice as one between particularism and universalism, the Jew and the Greek, "Palestinian Lives Matter" *and* "All Lives Matter." Such a contrapuntal reading juxtaposes and hybridizes, preferring to dwell in the space of in-betweenness. It is attentive to ways the chant "Palestinian Lives Matter" indulges in the rewards of catharsis, and yet stimulates a self-reflexive moment in the claim to universal value in the statement "All Lives Matter": this latter is, on one hand, very true and axiomatic for democracy but, on the other, terribly ahistorical and depoliticized. More pointedly, we cannot simply denounce the universalist-humanist underpinnings of "All Lives Matter" as ideological and affirm, in its place, the "frozen rigidity"[125] of Palestinian difference. Reading Palestinian difference *with* and *against* the universal—that is, as exilic—preserves rather than neutralizes the productive tension between the two modes of address.

5

This Nation Which Is Not One, or Israel's Autoimmunity

There is no greater love than the love the wolf feels for the lamb-it-doesn't-eat.
Hélène Cixous[1]

How can you reconcile with an enemy who is still oppressing you?
Joseph A. Massad[2]

To many Palestinians, national sovereignty continues to remain a powerful aspiration. It might be said to represent for the Palestinians what they "cannot not want," to borrow a paradoxical formulation from Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak.[3] Though tempting in so far as it affords them independence, a stable and globally recognized identity, advocacy for a Palestinian homeland often leaves unquestioned the ideology of the nation-state—not unlike the ideology of difference—with its racist logic of inclusion and exclusion, of which the Palestinians have felt the ill effects. Since the Oslo Peace Accords, Palestinian statehood has been framed, by all the parties involved, exclusively in terms of the two-state solution. While initially appealing to a majority of Palestinians (and Israelis), support for the two-state solution has been steadily dwindling, dipping below 50 percent in a December 2015 poll for the first time.[4] To be sure, polling Palestinians after the latest Gaza war captured a particularly disenchanted and pessimistic outlook. A majority of Palestinians are decrying the implementation of a two-state solution, but for a variety of different reasons—each reason offering its own response to this political impasse.

A good number see it as a mere ploy, a delaying tactic that only perpetuates the unlivable status quo of the Palestinian people. Read retrospectively, the promise of the peace process now appears as a sham. On this view, Israel never intended to change the apartheid social arrangements in place, and its ostensible engagement in the peace process served merely to delay and preempt such changes. So, believing in the two-state solution created, and still continues to

create for almost half of the Palestinian people and almost all of its political leaders, the conditions for what queer theorist Laurent Berlant calls "cruel optimism."[5] A desire for the two-state solution is a desire for something that is fundamentally detrimental to Palestinian lives, that forecloses the possibility of their flourishing. Palestinians are coming to the sober realization that compliance with Israeli authority, and the will of the international community, will *not* one day pay off.

This chapter examines the ideological premises of the two-state solution as "a relation of cruel optimism,"[6] and looks at why this solution is bad for Palestinians, and good for the West—since it lessens the guilt of Western powers, creating the illusion of Western involvement and attentiveness to the Palestinian question. It considers the strong appeal the two-state model has had and continues to enjoy among opposing factions, as well as what the dominant terms of debate have masked. The chapter then turns to bi-nationalism as a contrapuntal intervention, an ethico-political response to the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

The two-state solution proposes what we might call in Žižekian fashion "a Zionism with a human face." No longer denying "in theory" a land for the Palestinians, Israel repeatedly says that it is willing to make serious concessions for peace, "giving away land" (that is, returning illegally occupied or annexed territory) for peace. Israel only insists on the "right" kind of peace partner. Netanyahu and others have repeatedly made speeches affirming Israel's "support" for a two-state solution, putting the blame for the failure of progress squarely on Hamas, which still does not recognize Israel's right to exist. Yet recent history shows the extent to which the qualifications for "partnership" are a moving target. We do not have to go very far back in time to recall how the current Prime Minister of Israel, Benjamin Netanyahu, rejected the Oslo Accords, actively opposing Yitzhak Rabin's peace efforts with the Palestinians. At that time the PLO had a status similar to that of Hamas today—it, too, was deemed unacceptable by the majority of Israeli politicians. As the PLO came to make concessions to the Israeli position, however, Hamas emerged as the target of blame; when Hamas showed itself willing to form a coalition with the Palestinian Authority, this move was met not with encouragement as a sign of Hamas's moderation, but with condemnation for the Palestinian Authority. In Netanyahu's words, "Mahmoud Abbas, the Palestinian leader, refuses to recognize the Jewish state, has made a pact with Hamas that calls for the destruction of the Jewish state, and every territory that is vacated today in the Middle East is taken up by Islamist forces, so we want that to change so we can realize a vision of real, sustained peace."[7] In the closely contested 2015

Israeli election, Netanyahu showed his hand most clearly by resorting to race-baiting (in an attempt to drive right-leaning voters to the polls by warning that Israeli Arabs were voting) and assuring his supporters that he will not make peace with the Palestinians—that there will be no two-state solution under his watch. Netanyahu has, of course, walked back this claim, stating in an MSNBC interview with Andrea Mitchell: "I haven't changed my policy. I never retracted my speech at Bar-Ilan University six years ago calling for a demilitarized Palestinian state that recognizes the Jewish state. What has changed is the reality."[8] What Netanyahu masks by subsuming the Palestinian Authority under the general category of "Islamist forces" in the region is the specificity of the PA's claims; what Mahmoud Abbas is rejecting are the expanding boundaries of the State of Israel, the normalization of settler colonialism, the annexation of Jerusalem, and the official abandonment of the Palestinian right of return (all of which would be entailed by the recognition of Israel's Jewish character). Ironically, Israel now blames Abbas's attempt to work with Hamas, after having cited the divisions among the Palestinians as a major cause for the failure of the peace process. Either Israel dismisses the PA for not speaking for all the Palestinians (for lacking the authority to make a genuine deal) or it condemns it for speaking for all, considering it irredeemably compromised from the start by its alliance with Hamas.

Still, the *idea* of the two-state solution persists. The hope that, post-Netanyahu, things could be different can still be held out (if, that is, one disregards the fact that Netanyahu is increasingly becoming a "moderate" voice among the right). In any case, belief in the two-state solution continues to feed the Zionist machine of power, interpellating the colonized Palestinians as would-be equals. Cruelly, the Western promise of personal and national sovereignty remains: you, too, can have a state of your own—on condition, of course, that the PA exclude Hamas (they cannot be included in a Palestinian unity government), give up on the right of return, compromise on Jewish settlements, give up basic principles of national sovereignty (such as control over its own airspace, borders, and territorial waters), and be "moderate" in its demands on East Jerusalem. An oppressive pragmatism here complements a Palestinian cruel optimism.

Despite the fiasco of the Olso Peace Accords, many Palestinians are still, in principle, deeply invested in the two-state paradigm. Their optimism about the future sustains them, tying them affectively to their present life. They have become "addicted" to the peace process and its promise of statehood.[9] Detaching from that life, giving up on their statist desire, then, is more traumatic than living a life under occupation with no prospect of independence. Living with

the two-state solution—no matter how delusional it is—is still "better than none at all."[10] The soothing rhetoric of "road maps to peace" bribes Palestinians, with hope, into renouncing violent and non-violent modes of resistance. The PA stubbornly conforms to this cruel rhetoric, while Hamas emphatically defies it. The latter says *no!* to the will of the occupier, while the former tacitly accepts that Israeli (security) concerns come first. Peace talks feed what Berlant calls a "good-life fantasy,"[11] which repeats a logic of coloniality normalizing Israel's Jim Crow Laws, and perpetuates Palestinian lives that simply do not work or matter.

This line of critique conceives of the two-state solution as an ideological lie that aims to dupe the Palestinians and distract them from the harshness of their social existence, their abject destitution in Gaza—their "slow death."[12] Again, there is no serious plan on the part of the Israelis to implement a sovereign Palestinian state, and Western powers are all-too-hesitant to force the issue. This is why optimism (any hope) about its realization is cruel and detrimental to the Palestinians. Yet for others what is problematic about the plan is not its fraught implementation, not the irreversible conditions on the ground—65 percent of the Palestinians polled in the 2015 survey referenced above list illegal settlement construction, and its unlikely dismantling, as the cause for their opposition to the two-state solution—and not the depressing fact that the Palestinians would have to settle for only 22 percent of historical Palestine, but the very idea of a two-state solution. These critics consider the idea itself to be a grave error. Decolonizing the Palestinian mind—overcoming Israeli "psychological penetration"[13]—then, must begin with a challenge to the two-state paradigm, to collaboration as usual.

What does a Palestinian want?

Against "the peace industry," a rhetoric of peace that injures Palestinians, propagated by Western powers and figured in the two-state solution, Palestinian intellectual and activist Haidar Eid argues that "the two-state solution is a racist solution that calls for a 'pure Jewish state,' and a 'pure Palestinian state,' both of which would be based on ethno-religious identities."[14] While the two-state paradigm works to fortify Israel's regime of ethnocracy, and encourages Palestinian nativism, the one-state paradigm delegitimizes Israel as a racist state and opens up the possibility for genuine change in the current predicament of the Palestinians—for more life-affirming attachment. Eid also dismisses the type of cruel dialectics that combines realism with a dosage of

optimism à la Amos Oz:[15] let us be realistic and adopt a two-state solution now, and then our future generations may move to a one-state solution. Countering this form of reasoning, Eid asserts: "A racist solution cannot pave the way to a just solution."[16] Rather, "transforming Israel from an ethno-religious Apartheid state into a democracy should be the objective of every single person believing in liberal democracy in general."[17] Ali Abunimah, author and co-founder of *Electronic Intifada*, cautions about a solution that does not yield genuine self-determination for the Palestinians, nor effectively deal with the colonial reality of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: "Efforts to 'solve' the situation by creating separate, ethnically homogenous states for the colonizing society, on the one hand, and for the victims of the colonization, on the other—along the lines of apartheid South Africa's Bantustan system—have failed."[18] The two-state solution—by necessarily abandoning the Palestinian right of return—would do very little to contest Jewish supremacy. This alternative line of thinking remains a minority voice among Palestinians, almost nonexistent among politicians, but it has been taken up enthusiastically by a number of Continental philosophers.

This move represents a shift in philosophical discourse. As we have seen, after Auschwitz the image of the Jew as timeless Victim loomed large. Pro-Zionist sentiment dominated the intellectual scene in the 1960s and 1970s. Critiques of Israel as a colonial power were quite sparse among philosophers and social theorists. Now, Continental philosophy—altered by its encounter with postcolonial theory, witness to decades of Israeli brutality—is far more hospitable to the Palestinian question, willing to hear Palestinian grievances. To be sure, projects seeking to decolonize Israel or deconstruct Zionism will still be perceived as anti-Semitic by extreme supporters of Israel. But this trend to intervene in the politics and ethics of Jewishness, to historicize Zionism, to look at its violent beginnings, its foreclosed opportunities, and to re-inscribe its religious and secular meanings within specific relations of colonial power is undeniably increasing. And in this respect, this change in attitude confirms Abunimah's observation that "the Palestinians are winning"—the first sentence of his 2014 book *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*.[19] They are not only winning the PR war (where the BDS movement is having a decisive role in attempting to transform Israel, frequently seen as a Holy Land of victims and for victims, into an international pariah state); they are also winning the philosophical argument for justice (for example, Balibar's elevation of the Palestinian question to the status of a universal cause).

Edward Said was the first to intellectually revive the idea of a "one-state solution," commonly referred to as bi-nationalism. Hesitating to define the

one-state paradigm in exclusively secular terms, Said opted for the more inclusive idea of a bi-national state:

> I would not necessarily call it secular-democratic. I would call it a bi-national state. I want to preserve for the Palestinians and the Israeli Jews a mechanism or structure that would allow them to express their national identity. I understand that in the case of Palestine-Israel, a bi-national solution would have to address the differences between the two collectives.[20]

Said's preference for the term "bi-nationalism" is, however, not shared by all. Haidar Eid contests its descriptive accuracy:

> A bi-national state by definition is a state made up of two nations. These two nations are historically entitled to the land. But Jews do not constitute a nation. Israeli Jews constitute a settler-colonialist community, not unlike the whites of South Africa or the French in Algeria. Settler colonists are not entitled to self-determination. However, the indigenous people of Palestine, Muslims, Christians and Jews, are all entitled to self-determination and they do constitute a nation.[21]

Eid ties bi-nationalism to Zionism, only to dismiss it by its association: "In fact, bi-nationalism is a Zionist idea since it looks at ALL Jews as a nation that is entitled to the land."[22] I am not unsympathetic to Eid's resistance to legitimizing Zionist territorial claims. But I am not sure that a narrow understanding of what constitutes a nation is the answer. The question is not, "Are you a people?" but "If you are, what kind of people are you going to be?" Said makes such a distinction: "If enough people think of themselves as a people and need to constitute that, I respect that. But not if it entails the destruction of another people. I cannot accept an attitude of 'You shall die in order for us to rise.'"[23] Nor could Said accept the notion that *you shall suffer in order for us to be secured and enjoy the land*. He prophetically saw the demise of the Oslo Accords: it is a deal of unequals, doomed to an unjust outcome.[24] Instead, he argues, we must argue for a bi-nationalism that re-establishes equality. As he puts it starkly, "Equality or nothing, for Arabs and Jews."[25] Palestinians must never give way on their desire for equality.

The allusion here to Lacan's seventh seminar, *The Ethics of Psychoanalysis*, is intentional. In that seminar, in his discussion of Sophocles's *Antigone*, Lacan formulates an ethics grounded in the injunction: "do not give way on your desire" (*ne pas céder sur son désir*).[26] Lacan interprets Antigone's indocility, her anti-normative resistance to her uncle Creon's prohibition against burying her traitor brother Polynices, as the paradigmatic ethical act. Antigone's

stubbornness in defying the political order—her unwillingness to compromise her conscience—leads to her death but it also liberates her from the disciplining reach of Creon. The figure of Antigone has proven appealing to theaters across the globe, including the Jenin Freedom Theatre in the West Bank. Turning to a contemporary adaptation of the tragedy, the Freedom Theatre has performed *The Island*, a play written by Athol Fugard in 1974, which is set in apartheid South Africa, bringing the figure of Antigone into a contemporary and more explicitly political context.[27] In its production of the play, the Freedom Theatre changes the setting to Palestine. It focuses on two cellmates, one who is about to be released after a successful appeal, and a second who faces years of incarceration ahead. After completing the mindless and pointless tasks required of their sentence, they spend their nights preparing for a performance of *Antigone* to be given to an audience of prisoners. The play draws parallels between Antigone's condition (her exclusion from the polity) and the abject condition of the stateless Palestinian prisoners (imprisonment serving almost as a rite of passage for male Palestinians). Creon's decree puts Antigone in an untenable position—it requires that she violate one duty in order to respect another; Israel's laws put Palestinians in a similar bind, transforming simply *being* Palestinian and daring to *live* on their own land into a transgression. Antigone serves as a reminder to not give up your desire—despite the brutality of your treatment (in prison, or life under occupation). Antigone, South African Blacks, and now Palestinians express their *no!* to the current political doxa.

The play performs the negativity of this *no!* in at least two ways. First, a Palestinian Antigone is uncompromising in her fidelity to her cause: political resistance and undermining the occupation regime. Second, the play reminds us that Palestinian prisoners are not reducible to bare life. Rehearsing *Antigone* in the prison serves as psychic nourishment, affective replenishment: it keeps the inmates' desire alive. It reminds them, and the spectators, that they are more than passive victims, more than disposable and brutalized bodies of apartheid Israel. Their discussion and rehearsal of *Antigone* express an excess, pointing to their steadfastness and resilience, what Palestinians call *sumud*. These characters unmistakably insist on their will-to-resist, on their status as *subjects* of desire.

But what exactly is the *object* of this desire? What is its truth? Is it exhausted by the Saidian desire for equality? What about the desire to remain on their land, the desire for statehood—what the Palestinians "cannot not want"? How should we read Hamas's unwillingness to cede ground on its demands, expressed in the defiant words uttered by its leader Khaled Meshaa after the 2014 Gaza war, "We will not restrict our dreams or make compromises to our demands?"[28] Is this

form of resistance "truer" to the Antigone example than the ardent resistance of those who seek compromise through the two-state solution? Because the object of desire is multiple, the formula "do not give way on your desire" must be supplemented by a discussion of desire (what do Palestinians want?) and its production (what are the origins of those desires?). These questions are at the heart of the argument for bi-nationalism. To combat the cruel optimism of the two-state solution—in an alternative and more effective way than Hamas—Žižek and Butler question the very desirability of a two-state solution; they advocate for the need to think beyond the lure of a two-state solution, for the political necessity of a truly democratic state. Against the grain, they point to the current reality that a one-state model is already in place. Butler insists that it is a "wretched fact" that is "being lived out as a specific historical form of settler colonialism."[29] Israel and the Occupied Territories constitute a single state, but one that habitually discriminates, counting only Jewish Israeli lives as liveable and grievable.[30] Likewise, Žižek dismisses the pragmatic or realist objection, foregrounding the actuality of bi-nationalism: "What both sides exclude as an impossible dream is the simplest and most obvious solution—a bi-national secular state comprising of all of Israel plus the occupied territories and Gaza. To those who dismiss the bi-national state as a utopian dream disqualified by the long history of hatred and violence, one should reply that, far from being utopian, the bi-national state already is a fact."[31]

So, again, we must resist false oppositions. The question is no longer—if it has ever been—a one-state versus a two-state solution, but what kind of one state should prevail. As it stands, Israel as a Jewish state, Žižek argues, aggressively discriminates in access to land and housing, and is wholly incompatible with the universality of democracy, captured by the civil rights slogan, "one person, one vote"—whence the need "to abolish the apartheid and transform it into a secular democratic state."[32] As an intervention into the hegemonic reality of the occupation, Žižek proposes something of a thought experiment: What if Jerusalem became a site for such coexistence? What if Israelis and Palestinians severed their phantasmatic attachment to Jerusalem and renounced their exclusive claim to the land? What if Jerusalem became "an extra-state place of religious worship controlled (temporarily) by some neutral international force"?[33] This would constitute "a true political act," an act that "renders the unthinkable thinkable."[34] It would derail the logic of sacrifice and compromise: "both parties should experience it as by giving something [political control, religious claim over holy places] we are all gaining."[35] For both Israelis and Palestinians, this act would entail traversing their fantasy of an "ethnically

'pure' nation-state," and would thus be tantamount to undoing their ego—a "strik[ing] back at themselves"[36]—to short-circuiting their affective investment in nationalism.[37]

Derrida, while more ambivalent in his relation to the State of Israel and unwilling to jettison the notion of Zionism altogether (he remains committed to a Zionism capable of entertaining "another politics with Palestinians"[38]), does infuse Israeli nationalism with a decolonizing ethics of neighborliness:

> Although the conditions of the foundation of the state of Israel remain for me a tangled knot of painful questions … (and even if it is considered a given that every state, that every foundation itself is founded in violence, and is by definition unable to justify that), I have a great many reasons to believe that it is *for the best*, all things considered, and in the interests of the greatest number of people, including the Palestinians, including the other states in the region, to consider this foundation, despite its originary violence, as henceforth irreversible—on the condition that neighbourly relations be established *either* with a Palestinian state endowed with *all* its rights, in the fullest sense of the term "state" …, *or*, at the centre of the same "sovereign" and bi-national "state," with a Palestinian people freed from all oppression or from all intolerable segregation. I have no particular hostility in principle toward the state of Israel, but I have almost always judged quite harshly the policies of the Israeli governments in relation to the Palestinians.[39]

Not unlike the concerns raised by Ilan Pappé with respect to Israel's "state of exception" (which aligns Israel with other Western democracies, struggling with the vicissitudes of sovereignty), Derrida's ambivalent language risks "normalizing Israel among the nations."[40] Israel's "originary violence" is like any other "originary violence." Moreover, it is "irreversible" and for the "best" of all involved. The latter is undoubtedly an outrageous claim from a Palestinian standpoint. It effaces the historical specificity of the Nakba—which remains unspoken by Derrida—or subsumes the political choices of ethnic cleansing under the abstract category of "originary violence." For Derrida, the Israeli–Palestinian problem is fundamentally a post-1967, and not a 1948 problem: it is the management of the Occupied Territories, and not the ethnic cleansing of Palestinians (nor the ongoing settler colonial mentality inside Israel proper and the Occupied Territories) that is objectionable. But as Sherene Seikaly points out, thinking of 1948 and 1967 as distinct events distorts the uninterrupted colonial reality of the Palestinian situation: "This unnaming and erasure [of the Nakba] is what allows for the problematic distinction between the 'founding' and the policies of governments as temporally distant and independent from one another."[41]

That Israel, as a Jewish state, is here to stay proves more difficult to discern, given Derrida's deconstruction of national sovereignty.[42] At times, Derrida posits, and supports, Israel as an ontologically unshakable state: "one can remain radically critical … without implying thereby any threatening or disrespectful consequences for the present, the future and the existence of Israel."[43] At other times, his comments unsettle the very metaphysics of Zionism. His call for a neighborly ethics constitutes a decolonizing imperative, one that inevitably entails a challenge to a certain kind of Zionist sovereignty, to what Geoffrey Bennington describes as a "gregarious identification"[44] with one's religious rootedness; it calls instead for a "tormented"[45] sovereignty that would willingly co-exist with Palestinian sovereignty—either in the form of a separate fully fledged state or in a bi-nationalist arrangement. No claims of belonging can be affirmed at the expense of the other. Zionist belonging—what Said calls "the Jewish *rhythm of life*"[46]—is no exception. Derrida's preferred Zionism is a weak Zionism, affirming, as it were, a post-Zionist Zionist, a *Zionist without Zionism*.[47]

In pursuing this line of thought, Derrida muses on the formulation "*il faut bien vivre ensemble*," which is a kind of rewriting of his earlier statement, "*il faut bien manger*." This earlier phrase can be translated into English in two ways: "it really is necessary to eat" and "it is necessary to eat well." With this formulation, Derrida seeks to move beyond the stale and predictable debate over sameness and difference, pointing out that relating ethically to the other is not a matter of opting for either a cannibalistic (purely assimilative) or a non-cannibalistic (purely indigestible) mode of contact. There is no avoiding interpreting others, the question is *how* to do it: "The moral question is … not, nor has it ever been: should one eat or not eat … but since *one must* eat in any case … *how* for goodness sake should one *eat well* [*bien manger*]?"[48] Derrida's injunction to eat well fosters his own version of the "*rapport sans rapport*," a paradoxical relation that unites and separates the subject and object of knowledge. This relationless relation communicates "a non-appropriative relation to the other."[49] We might say that Derrida's "*rapport sans rapport*" insists on a contrapuntal mode of thought.

Like *il faut bien manger*, the imperative *il faut bien vivre ensemble* can be translated as: 1) "It is necessary to live together well"; 2) "It really is necessary to live together." We can see how the debate surrounding a two-state versus a one-state solution maps on to these two versions of *il faut bien vivre ensemble*. A two-state solution captures better the necessity suggested by the second translation. It can be seen as a response to a resigned, if not cynical, attitude among

both parties: we have to live together; we do not really have a choice—we are *Mitsein*, a being-with others; Arab Palestinians are beings-with Jewish Israelis and vice versa—and, finally, neither of us is going to annihilate the other (though the latter point is hardly a symmetrical reality). In contrast, the first translation appears as an ethical injunction rather than a descriptive account: do not settle for bearable coexistence, for limited reciprocity. The formulation contains a normative dimension—an ethical demand—that seems to me more amenable to a bi-nationalist vision. Living together is not merely a structural necessity due to the impossibility of ontological solipsism, but entails a certain faith in the other, a commitment to peaceful co-dwelling. "The best of the 'living together' is often associated with peace," Derrida writes, "a perpetual peace or a messianic peace, whose promise belongs to the very concept of peace and suffices to distinguish it from armistice, from cease-fire, or even from any 'peace process.'"[50]

Derrida exerts further interpretive pressure on the statement *il faut bien vivre ensemble*, drawing attention to the adverbial function of "ensemble" in that formulation. As an adverb, "together" (*ensemble*) makes living something never full nor complete but always already open to the stranger, to the neighbor as stranger:

> There is "living together" only there where the whole [*ensemble*] is neither formed nor closed [*ne se forme pas et ne se ferme pas*], there where the living together [*ensemble*] (the adverb) contests the completion, the closure, and the cohesiveness of an "ensemble" (the noun, the substantive), of a substantial, closed ensemble identical to itself.[51]

As a noun, "ensemble"—under, we might say, a gregarious Zionism—stands for an "organic symbiosis,"[52] a communal whole, a body politics that keeps the colonized Palestinians at bay, subjugated, fixed, and contained behind the wall. A gregarious Zionism displays, at worst, outright hostility toward the Palestinians; at best, conditional hospitality, of the kind favored by France's right-wing politician Jean-Marie Le Pen, a rhetoric that only gestures to an openness to the other by privileging the latter's amenability to assimilation: "Le Pen's organicist axiom … only lets in what is homogeneous or homogenizable, what is assimilable or at the very most what is heterogeneous but presumed 'favorable': the appropriable immigrant, the proper immigrant."[53]

In contrast, Derrida embraces an infectious understanding of difference, an impure difference irrevocably at odds with the ideological function of "France" as a Master-Signifier, capable of changing France's ontological being by contaminating its mystified organic whole ("ensemble"). While Le Pen's nationalist-protectionist

ethos may seem opposed to the hawkish Zionism of the Likud Party, Le Pen and Netanyahu do share one fundamental phantasm: the ethnic or Arab other must be predictable, foreseeable; only under such asymmetrical hermeneutic conditions would this other be most manageable and amenable to assimilation or peace talks. Living together well would also give the lie to liberal Zionists, who in practice are not qualitatively different from their right wing counterparts: they both enjoy Zionist privilege, and thus endorse either tacitly or explicitly a racist regime. There is no sense of sacrifice. Safeguarding their way of life—the feeling of being at home, *chez soi* in the Promised Land—undeniably comes first. To hold this position is to only show conditional or limited hospitality to the Palestinian neighbor, granting them minimal sovereignty.[54] In any case, liberal Zionists prefer their Palestinians "decaffeinated," as Žižek sardonically put it,[55] disciplined and acquiescent in their abject condition.

Deconstruction as skepticism—as a perpetual form of questioning the "ensemble's" composition, of denaturalizing who is included in and excluded from the community, who counts and does not count as a part of the whole—creates the condition for living together well. A hermeneutics of skepticism conditions and enjoins the self to be unconditionally hospitable to otherness;[56] or once again in Derrida's words: "Monsters cannot be announced. One cannot say: 'Here are our monsters,' without immediately turning them into pets."[57] Under Netanyahu's watch, the PA's authority has been systematically degraded, its demands curtailed, its desires domesticated. The PA is reduced to a managerial role, serving Israeli interests, functioning as a client state; in other words, the PA has become Israel's "symbolic pet." Abunimah also warns of the neoliberalization of Palestine, the economic profit of political domesticity:

> In tandem, with the assistance of the United States and Israel, the Palestinian Authority in Ramallah built a repressive police-state apparatus that sought to suppress and disarm any resistance to Israeli occupation and to crush internal Palestinian dissent and criticism with increasing ferocity. [...] But behind a smokescreen of "state-building" rhetoric and flag-waving, a small Palestinian elite has continued to enrich itself by deepening its political, economic, and military ties with Israel and the United States, often explicitly undermining efforts by Palestinian civil society to resist. This catastrophic assault on Palestinians has been masked with the language of "technocratic" government and marketed as nothing less than the fulfillment of the Palestinian "national" project. [...] If these are indeed the foundations of a future Palestinian state, then a people who have struggled for so long for liberation from Zionism's colonial assault can only look forward to new, more insidious forms of economic and political bondage.[58]

Political resistance to bi-nationalism from the Palestinian politician side undoubtedly stems from the reluctance to forgo a somewhat lucrative arrangement with Israel and the United States.

The counter to Zionism's colonial structure and digestive ways necessitates an alternative form of hospitality, an unconditional hospitality—we must think of Cixous's words:[59] "there is no greater love than the love the wolf feels for the lamb-it-doesn't-eat"[60]—while also recognizing that unconditional hospitality is both indissociable from and heterogeneous to conditional hospitality.[61] Hospitality is both negotiation and interpretation. *Living together well is also a mode of eating well.*

Living (together) with autoimmunity

I would like now to relate Derrida's *il faut bien vivre ensemble* to his reflections on autoimmunity, and consider Israel's autoimmunity. Derrida explicitly warns about Israel's "suicidal behavior," and deems that Israel's colonial politics in the Occupied Territories jeopardizes not only the existence of the Palestinians but also that of the Israelis. Derrida is careful not to displace the suffering of the Palestinians in his diagnosis of Israeli politics. He first denounces the unjust and unfair treatment of the Palestinians, and then points to Israel's self-destructive logic, or what he "call[s] 'auto-immunity,' self-immunity," a state "when a body destroys its own protections."[62] The State of Israel suffers a process of autoimmunization, through which, as Derrida writes, a being, "in a quasi-*suicidal* fashion, 'itself' works to destroy its own protection, to immunise itself *against* its 'own' immunity."[63] Autoimmunity unravels the "phantasmatico-theological"[64] character of the sovereign self: "It is not some particular thing that is affected in autoimmunity but the self, the *ipse*, the *autos* that finds itself infected."[65]

Israel's commitment to self-protection is beyond doubt. The separation Wall in the West Bank, the nine-year blockade of Gaza, the Israeli settlements on confiscated Palestinian land, the habitual expulsion of Israeli Palestinians, targeted assassinations of Hamas leaders, and the Iron Dome missile defense system, all work to weaken or kill (physically, psychically, and symbolically) the Palestinian other, to distance Jewish Israelis from their Arab neighbors, to ethnically purify the State of Israel from unwanted Palestinians, and to immunize (fortify) the Jewish sovereignty and community against its external enemy. But, as Derrida insists, the desire for pure immunity—the desire to protect the border, to annex Palestinian land, to preserve Israel as an eternal, undivided,

and self-enclosed whole—is both phantasmatic and suicidal: "There is no absolutely reliable prophylaxis against the autoimmune."[66] Military, economic, and political occupation will never deliver on its promises. Israel's hostile practices of self-protection both protect and destroy its integrity as a democratic nation. They define Israel as a colonial power, corroding the very democratic principles that it aspires to, that it even prides itself on in describing itself as the only democratic state in the region. If an ethical disorder has plagued the State of Israel since its violent creation in 1948, a bi-nationalism worthy of its name might signal a way out of this political impasse; such a bi-nationalism, unlike the two-state solution, contests the racist principle of wholeness: an ipseic Israel, an "ensemble" closed off to the Palestinian other/stranger/neighbor.

Derrida cautions against the dangerous fantasy of a pure community, insisting that for a community to stay "alive," it must remain "open to something other and more than itself."[67] Bi-nationalism, as an ethico-political response to the Palestinian question, does keep Israel's community "alive," does not deny or repress its constitutive exposure to alterity. On the contrary, as Butler and Said argue, bi-nationalism assumes from the start a living with "mixity or the impure";[68] it insists on the idea of a state that is otherwise and more complex than *a* nation:

> Only when binationalism deconstructs the idea of a nation can we hope to think about what a state, what a polity might look like that would actually extend equality.[69]

> Why do you think I'm so interested in the binational state? Because I want a rich fabric of some sort, which no one can fully comprehend, and no one can fully own. I never understood the idea of this is my place, and you are out. I do not appreciate going back to the origin, to the pure. I believe the major political and intellectual disasters were caused by reductive movements that tried to simplify and purify.[70]

Bi-nationalism, then, takes as axiomatic the other's "right to narrate"[71] (and to not be reduced to a Zionist discursive effect: "Whenever we try to narrate ourselves, we appear as dislocations in *their* discourse"[72]). It privileges equality and mutuality, and a contrapuntal approach to the conflict, to the other. A contrapuntal point of view urgently draws on both peoples' historico-existential entanglement and shared traumas:[73] if the Palestinian Nakba is not the same as—or equivalent to—the Jewish Shoah, it does provide a basis for one day relating to another's trauma. As Edward Said once memorably put it, "there is suffering and injustice enough for everyone," and, he added, "the only way

of rising beyond the endless back-and-forth violence and dehumanization is to admit the universality and integrity of the other's experience and to begin to plan *a common life together*."[74] To break with the status quo, which is living together *badly*, requires for Said (along with Derrida and Butler) a relational modality, an openness to each other's traumatic pasts, even a mourning of your enemy's loss.[75]

For this bi-nationalism to succeed—for it to be genuinely transformative—all parties will have to adopt a decolonized gaze on nationalism, and abandon any mythic or trans-historical pretensions of origins and exclusionary claims of rooted-identity.[76] You can still live your life as a Zionist but you must not preclude others from sharing and caring for the same land. Your claim is *historical* just like mine. "They can be Zionists," Said writes, "and they can assert their Jewish identity and their connection to the land, so long as it doesn't keep the others out so manifestly."[77] And when asked whether Jewish sovereignty should be abandoned in the name of a bi-national state to come, Said responded:

> I am not asking people to give up anything. But Jewish sovereignty as an end in itself seems to me not worth the pain and the waste and the suffering it produced. If, on the other hand, one can think of Jewish sovereignty as a step toward a more generous idea of coexistence, of being-in-the-world, then yes, it's worth giving up.[78]

Said counters Jewish sovereignty with the more inclusive and expansive ideal of coexistence, of a being-in-the-world that does not disavow its *Mitsein*, that does not neglect the obligation to the religious-ethnic other, nor deny that other's right to dwell, to a have a *world* in its full Heideggerian sense of the term.[79] Narrow sovereignty should transmute into shared sovereignty, "something that is more open and more livable."[80]

But how do you bring about this new state? How do you change a settler colonial structure? How do you give up living together badly for living together well? How do you make Israel-Palestine hospitable to diasporic Jews and exilic Palestinians? Derrida puts the onus on those in power—the Israeli government—to transform the political landscape, to alter the atmosphere of genuine distrust and create the conditions for peaceful coexistence: coexistence can only occur "when what is necessary will have been done by those who have the power for it or who, quite simply, have the most power, state power, economic, military, national, or international power, to take the initiative for peace in a manner that is first of all wisely unilateral."[81] Unilateralism is of course nothing new for Israel. Its withdrawal from Gaza was "unilateral" but not

"wisely" so. Indeed, it was viciously unilateral, since Gazans were punished for acting democratically, for voting in Hamas, voting for the only party that flatly rejected the peace industry.

So, what would a wise unilateralism look like? It would be an act that would renounce, or at the very least qualify Jewish sovereignty. It could involve:

- recognizing Hamas as a legitimate political party, as potential interlocutor;
- lifting the illegal siege on Gaza;
- officially recognizing (at least partial) responsibility for the event of the Nakba and its long-lasting effects on the Palestinian people;
- welcoming a Truth and Reconciliation Commission (which would involve active Palestinian participation);
- allowing the right of return (tantamount to embracing a process of decolonization[82]);
- internationalizing Jerusalem;
- rescinding the demand for the Palestinians to recognize not only the "State of Israel" but the "Jewish State of Israel";
- granting civic equality to Palestinians;
- and reining in the ever-expanding military complex.

I think these would be some examples of wise unilateralism. In each case, Israel would be risking its identity for the potential betterment of its people and others involved. It would be acknowledging, or better yet, embracing autoimmunity's constitutive character: "Autoimmunity is not an absolute ill or evil. It enables an exposure to the other, to *what* and to *who* comes—which means that it must remain incalculable. Without autoimmunity, with absolute immunity, nothing would ever happen or arrive; we would no longer wait, await, or expect, no longer expect one another, or expect any event."[83]

Israel's autoimmunity is indeed not an absolute ill or evil. Without autoimmunity bi-nationalism would be impossible. It expresses what Derrida as a child pondered: "whether the founding of the modern state of Israel—with all the politics and policies that have followed and confirmed it—could be no more than an example among others of this originary violence from which no state can escape, or whether, because this modern state intended not to be a state like others, *it had to appear before another law and appeal to another justice*."[84] This is not Jewish exceptionalism as usual. Driven by a messianic impulse for justice—for another justice, a justice for the other—Israel may indeed turn out to be like no other state in becoming a modern state, we might say, that is otherwise than exclusionary nationalist: a bi-national state.

Bi-nationalism presupposes *a nation which is not one*, and rejects the nation as a self-same identity (the Zionist desire to liquidate multiplicity and heterogeneity, to "impose a monocultural identity on a multicultural country"[85]), foregrounding the idea of living together, endlessly negotiating differences and working to live together *well*. Indeed, for genuine rapprochement to take place, the government of Israel—undoubtedly through mounting international pressure, since it has shown little willingness to do away with its Zionist privilege—must come to abandon its disastrous fantasy of wholeness, immediately annul all of its discriminatory laws, and dismantle all institutions geared toward the systematic replacement of Palestinians with Jews.[86] Only then, to answer Massad's question, can Palestinians reconcile with a former enemy who is no longer oppressing them.

But to be clear, bi-nationalism is also no utopia as usual. It remains cognizant of the vulnerability or risk that an exposure to the "caffeinated" other always entails. Since there is no teleology at work in autoimmunity, perfectibility and pervertibility haunt one another.[87] Elizabeth Rottenberg aptly describes autoimmunity as an "enigmatic force … that is at work wherever the future (of life in general, of the living being, of democracy, of reason itself) is at stake."[88] An emancipatory politics must be able to harness the transformative potential of this "enigmatic force." And this is what is urgently needed today. As W. J. T. Mitchell puts it in the context of the global War on Terror: "'a mutation will have to take place' … in our entire way of thinking about justice, democracy, sovereignty, globalization, military power, the relations of nation-states, the politics of 'friendship' and enmity in order to address terrorism with any hope of an effective cure."[89] The same holds for the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, and bi-nationalism is arguably such a mutation.

Bi-nationalism demands from both parties a new way of imagining affiliation and receptivity, community and alterity outside the filial duty to the nation-state. This other, as the *arrivant*, is never fixed; he or she can be—or can become—a friend or a foe. And as Palestinians and Israelis know all too well, this could mean life or death. But still, declining the opportunity made possible by autoimmunity—the possibility of being-otherwise, beyond the Jew and the Greek—is ill advised. Deciding unequivocally about the ethnic-religious other, being certain of his or her nefarious intentions, has surely not yielded any semblance of peaceful existence in the region. Making the other wholly predictable, reducible to a paranoid horizon of expectations, forecloses a priori the possibilities of living together *well*. With respect to the conflict, an ethics of bi-nationalism, then, offers no guarantees. Only when the effects on the self

are not determined fully in advance can one truly experience the other as an event, as a neighbor who de-completes me, as a necessary and indispensable supplement to my self. The Palestinian question without autoimmunity is no question at all.

Epilogue: Becoming Palestinian

> *The occupation of Palestine is the biggest moral scandal of our times, one of the most dehumanizing ordeals of the century we have just entered, and the biggest act of cowardice of the last half-century.*
>
> Achille Mbembe[1]

From Maurice Blanchot's expression of unqualified solidarity with Israel ("whatever happens, I am with Israel") to Achille Mbembe's outrage and foregrounding of the Palestinian situation, this study has traversed a lot of conceptual ground. Its movement is the movement from the Jewish question to the Palestinian question. But it would be unfortunate if we considered this arc to be linear, a straightforward chronological shift from the abject Jew of Auschwitz to the abject Palestinian of Gaza. It has never been a question of displacing Jewish concerns, of crudely questioning the legitimacy of the Jewish other's victimhood. Against hierarchical thinking—against ranking differences according to which difference matters more now—*Continental Philosophy and the Palestinian Question* has sought to think of the Jew and the Palestinian contrapuntally. The questions surrounding both are irrevocably tied.

Thinking of each in isolation is likely to foster a distorted view of the problem. There is an urgent need to see the failure to hear the Palestinian as endemic in the general reception of the Palestinian question, which, as Edward Said put it in 1980, is "something not very well known and certainly not well appreciated even now, when there is so much talk *of the Palestinians and of the Palestinian problem*."[2] To respond to the Palestinian question requires an account of "its traumatic national encounter with Zionism."[3] This ongoing trauma began not in 1967, but in 1948, when the idea of Zionism came to vivid and violent political fruition with the creation of the State of Israel (a catastrophic realization of the 1917 Balfour Declaration). The Nakba marks the birth of the Palestinian question as it exists today. Focusing on 1967 and the aftermath of the Six-Day War in which Arab nations suffered a humiliating defeat frames the Palestinian question too narrowly, in a way that makes the two-state solution the only genuine option for peace. Putting an end to occupation, relinquishing territorial control back to the Palestinians, as the story goes, is the desirable outcome of the

peace process. If the two-state option once existed, it is now a defunct idea, yet one that unfortunately still enjoys the nominal support of the leaders in power and that is promoted more and less uncritically by much of Western mainstream media.

Countering this narrative requires restaging the Jewish question. To raise the Palestinian question is in effect to insist on the temporality of the question, on the difference between the Jewish question after Auschwitz and the Jewish question after the triumph of political Zionism. Edward Said thematized this difference in his reflections on Israel's 1982 Lebanese invasion, which was seen in Western media as Israel's war of choice (in contrast to its perceived earlier wars of necessity, of self-defense): "The Israeli invasion of Lebanon in 1982 seems to have broken, for the first time, the immunity from sustained criticism previously enjoyed by Israel and its American supporters."[4] Sadly this opening between the morally righteous self-image Israel had been projecting and its actual abusive behavior in Lebanon was quickly closed. The Sabra and Shatila massacre, though damaging to Israel's reputation, did not constitute a fatal blow; political Zionism persevered. The Oslo Accords in the mid-1990s normalized the occupation, ushering in an ideological slumber in the West. The Palestinian question could be shelved away. Even if Arafat did not deliver for his people, the "road map to peace" was securely in place.

But not all subscribed to the peace industry. Hamas did not comply. As Omar Barghouti rightly points out, "Gaza brought the issue of Palestine back to the fore."[5] The last Gaza war, also known as *Operation Protective Edge*, coming over three decades after the Israeli invasion of Lebanon, powerfully exposed anew the gap between Israel's idealized self-image and its criminal treatment of the Palestinians. The BDS movement has played a key role in keeping this gap open, forestalling its closure, a return to the status quo, and the eclipse of the Palestinian question.

As Barghouti notes, "The academic boycott of Israel remains controversial in some countries, especially in the West, but after Israel's massacre in Gaza it is no longer a taboo";[6] this breach unsettles the kind of binary thinking that prevents one from seeing that a victim can also victimize, opening up the possibility of seeing differently, seeing in terms of both/and. Such a fear of blaming the timeless victim ironically results in blaming the actual victims of the occupation, the Palestinians, for their own subjection. In Continental philosophy, the taboo surrounding the image of the Jew after Auschwitz immunized the State of Israel from any genuine critique—any objection to Zionism or Israel was quickly labeled anti-Semitic and easily dispensed with. Israel's Gaza wars—along with

its aggressive illegal settlements on Palestinian land and racial policies of transfer—made this gesture of dismissal much less self-evident, but by no means ineffective. Indeed, the accusation of a "new anti-Semitism" emerging from the Left attests to the ideological adjustments (recoupling objections to political Zionism with anti-Semitism) being made by Israel and its international supporters. But still, while criticizing Israel might be dangerous—especially for untenured or adjunct faculty—it is no longer unthinkable.

In the last two decades, Continental philosophers have begun to take up the Palestinian question more seriously, highlighting the ethico-political problem the latter confront in daily life: in Israel and the Occupied Territories, Palestinians are born outsiders, faceless others, unavailable for an ethical encounter. How can their face be reclaimed? How can Palestinian lives matter (again)? Continental philosophers—who are in many ways catching up with the insights of Edward Said—have taken different paths toward that end. Thinking the Palestinian meant thinking alterity, the other. Levinas proved here an inescapable point of reference. As the philosopher of the other, Levinas disappointed when it came to his brief remarks on the Palestinians. The Sabra and Shatila massacre exposed his blind spot—his tendency to ontologize the victim as exclusively Jewish—and the need for an ethics capable of a "radical politics."[7] We found a more useful resource in the late Levinas's notions of the Saying and the Said (alongside the ethico-hermeneutic imperative to unsay and resay), as they shift the focus away from the pre-discursive, dyadic model of ethics, which is prone to essentializing the victim and overlooking structural or state violence, and reorient our gaze toward the *interpretation* of a given other.

In the case of the Palestinian other, interpreting follows the path of deconstruction of Zionism and Orientalism. Defining/seeing the Palestinian as a bloodthirsty terrorist, a *homo sacer*, an ungrievable and unliveable other, disposable at will by the IDF, has become a kind of historical a priori for Israel and many Western nations. Unsettling this historical a priori can take two broad, divergent forms: universality and difference, the way of the Greek (the Left Greek, the cosmopolitan Greek) and the way of the Jew (the non-European Moses, the anti-Zionist Diaspora Jew). What we discover, however, is that, in the parlance of Continental philosophy, the Palestinian is never quite this or that Greek, nor quite this or that Jew, but a hybrid or a mutation of the two (of the three, four, etc.). The figure of the Palestinian, traced in this study, declines the phantasms of the Jew and the Greek: the Jew and the Greek conceived either as figures of exemplary wholeness or monolithic entities. The Palestinian is a figure à-venir—a future to come—an uncanny figure of mixture and becoming.[8]

Indeed, becoming Palestinian—a Palestinian beyond the Jew and the Greek—entails a dual rejection of identity politics and abstract humanism, of rootedness and transcendence. This figure thinks with and against the Jew and the Greek, thinks the Jew with and against the Greek (and vice versa). The Palestinian undoubtedly suffers the pangs of belonging (is not quite Pauline enough), and is never fully immune from the lures of nationalism (never quite blissfully exilic), but still refuses its narcissistic and solipsistic traps. Contrapuntality interrupts sovereign meditations; it disrupts the comfort of origins and identitarianism (in all their phantasmatic forms), compelling Palestinians to entertain, cognitively and affectively, the demands or aspirations of others. The Arab Palestinian is inextricably a being-with the Israeli Jew: "If we are all to live—this is our imperative—we must capture the imagination not just of our people, but that of our oppressors."[9] Becoming Palestinian, we might say, means learning to live relationally, that is, bi-nationally.

Notes

Introduction

1 Maurice Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, trans. Zakir Paul (New York: Fordham University Press, 2010), 170.

2 For example, Denis Diderot's entry on "Jew" in the *Encyclopédie* reads as follows: "*On the exoteric philosophy of the Jews*. The *Jews* had two types of philosophy: an exoteric one whose dogmas were taught publically in books and schools, and an esoteric one, whose principles were revealed only to a small number of chosen people and carefully hidden from the multitude. […] Before discussing the principle dogmas of the exoteric philosophy, it is not unnecessary to warn the reader that one must not expect to find in the *Jews* truth in ideas, accuracy in reasoning, or precision in style: in a word, any of the necessary characteristics of a healthy philosophy. On the contrary, one finds in it a muddled mix of principles of reason and revelation, an affected and often impenetrable obscurity, principles that lead to fanaticism, and blind respect for the authority of learned Doctors and for antiquity: in a word, all the defects that signal an ignorant and superstitious nation. Here are the principle dogmas of this species [*espece*] of philosophy" (Denis Diderot, "Jew" in *Encyclopédie ou Dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers, par une Société de Gens de lettres*, eds. Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert [University of Chicago: ARTFL *Encylopédie* project (Spring 2011 Edition), ed. Robert Morrissey, http://encyclopedie.uchicago.edu/], 9:44, my translation).

3 Bruno Bauer, "The Capacity of Present-day Jews and Christians to Become Free" as quoted in Karl Marx, "On the Jewish Question," in *Karl Marx: Selected Writings*, ed. Lawrence H. Simon (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1994), 21.

4 Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 10, 8. "In the *political community* he regards himself as a *communal being*; but in *civil society* he is active as a *private individual*, treats other men as means, reduces himself to a means, and becomes the plaything of alien powers" (Marx, "On the Jewish Question," 9).

5 Hannah Arendt criticized this form of critical response, arguing that, "If one is attacked as a Jew, one must defend oneself as a Jew. Not as a German, not as an upholder of the Rights of Man, or whatever" (Arendt, *Essays in Understanding*

1930–1954: Formation, Exile and Totalitarianism, ed. Jerome Kohn [New York: Schocken Books, 1994], 12).

6 Jonathan Judaken, *Jean-Paul Sartre and the Jewish Question: Anti-antisemitism and the Politics of the French Intellectual* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2006), 17.

7 For examples of Continental philosophers who use the Jew as a privileged sign for alterity, see, in addition to the works discussed in subsequent chapters, Jean-François Lyotard, *Heidegger and "the Jews,"* trans. Andreas Michel and Mark Roberts (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990) and *The Differend: Phrases in Dispute*, trans. George Van Den Abbeele (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988); Julia Kristeva, *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection*, trans. Leon S. Roudiez (New York: Columbia University Press, 1982).

8 In "Sartre, European intellectuals and Zionism," Joseph A. Massad traces this intellectual bias in favor of the Jew from Sartre to Žižek (Massad, "Sartre, European intellectuals and Zionism," *The Electronic Intifada*, 31 January 2003. Available at https://electronicintifada.net/content/sartre-european-intellectuals-and-zionism/4384 (accessed February 21, 2016). In his concise analysis, Massad indicts Continental philosophy almost wholesale, downplaying the ways some of the same philosophers invested in this figure (like Derrida and Žižek) have also scrutinized the ideological deployment of the Jew in the realm of public discourse. The present book pursues a more nuanced and expansive approach to Continental philosophy. It looks at both what Continental philosophers have said about Jews (and Palestinians—if evoked at all) and what their conceptual apparatus renders possible. At times, the latter involves reading a philosopher like Levinas against himself.

9 Theodor Adorno will later qualify the (im)possibility of art after Auschwitz: "Perennial suffering has as much right to expression as a tortured man has to scream; hence it may have been wrong to say that after Auschwitz you could no longer write poems" (Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, trans. E. B. Ashton [London: Routledge, 1973], 362).

10 "The essential problem is: can we speak of an absolute commandment after Auschwitz? Can we speak of morality after the failure of morality?" (Emmanuel Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality: An Interview with Emmanuel Levinas," in *The Provocation of Levinas*, eds. Robert Bernasconi and David Wood [New York: Routledge, 1988], 176).

11 Jean-Paul Sartre, *Anti-Semite and Jew*, trans. George J. Becker (New York: Schocken Books, 1948), 136. Sarah Hammerschlag summarizes well what Jewishness means for Sartre, denoting "an intensification of the existentialist's choice. The Jew is rootless; he is a stranger; he is defined and determined by the gaze of the other. The existentialist hero embraces his circumstances and the

freedom and responsibility that exist therein. He does not flee; he chooses and engages. The Jew, as the stranger, as a 'type who has nothing, no homeland,' has a function like Kafka's hero" (Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew: Politics and Identity in Postwar French Thought* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010], 93).

12 It is surprising that Levinas does not feature more prominently in Élisabeth Roudinesco's *Revisiting the Jewish Question*, trans. Alan Brown (New York: Polity Press, 2013), given the impact of ethical philosophy on contemporary Continental thought.

13 Richard J. Bernstein attests to the significance of Auschwitz in the development of Levinas's ethics: "It is no exaggeration to assert that Levinas's confrontation with the 'unspeakable' evil of the twentieth century—where Auschwitz is the very paradigm of this evil—has not only elicited his fundamental ethical response, but has led him directly to his distinctive understanding of ethics" (Bernstein, "Levinas: Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy," in *Radical Evil: A Philosophical Interrogation* [Cambridge: Polity Press, 2002], 167). See also Robert Eaglestone, *The Holocaust and the Postmodern* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004); Jacob Meskin, "The Jewish Transformation of Modern Thought: Lévinas and Philosophy after the Holocaust," *Cross Currents: The Journal of the Association for Religion and Intellectual Life* 47 (4) (1997): 505–17; Thomas Trezise, "The Survivor as Other," in *Witnessing Witnessing: On the Reception of Holocaust Survivor Testimony* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 159–222.

14 Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity: An Essay on Exteriority*, trans. Alphonso Lingis (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 44.

15 Blanchot's over-identification with the Israeli Jews and under-identification with the Palestinians undermine his notion of a "*rapport sans rapport*," a relationless relation, "a relation without relation or without relation other than the incommensurable" (Blanchot, *The Unavowable Community*, trans. Pierre Joris [Barrytown, NY: Station Hill Press, 1988], 25). Blanchot establishes a *relation* with the Israelis (suspending as it were his suspicion of modes of identification—in this case an affective identification) and a *non-relation* with the Palestinians (unwilling to empathize with the other's other—to imagine colonization from the standpoint of its victims). Levinas and Derrida also make use of this formulation. We will see in Chapters 1 and 5 respectively how/if it affects their discussion of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict.

16 The opposition Jew/Arab is itself questionable, since it juxtaposes a primarily religious difference (Jew) with an exclusively ethnic one (Arab). Imagining the Arab as the other of the Jew reveals the deep connection of the nation-state of Israel to the religion of Judaism. The Jews' enemy/other on this view is Israel's enemy, the Arab states (although in recent years, in the context of the "War on Terror," Israel's enemies include non-Arab states like Iran, under the broader,

religious category of the Islamic other). For a lucid account of the discursive construction of the enemy in this context, see Gil Anidjar's *The Jew, the Arab: A History of the Enemy* (Stanford: University of Stanford Press, 2003).

17 See Anne Norton, *On the Muslim Question?* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2013).

18 Raoul Mortley, *French Philosophers in Conversation* (London: Routledge, 1991), 18. Unfortunately, this was not an isolated comment: "I always say—but under my breath—that the Bible and the Greeks present the only serious issues in human life; everything else is dancing. I think these texts are open to the whole world. There is no racism intended" (Levinas, "Intention, Event, and the Other," 149).

19 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 46.

20 Jacques Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 153.

21 Levinas, "Meaning and Sense," in *Emmanuel Levinas: Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adrian T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley, and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 53.

22 Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," 80.

23 Derrida, "Violence and Metaphysics," 112. For his critique of Foucault, see Derrida, "Cogito and the History of Madness," in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 31–63.

24 See Anya Topolski, "Listening to the Language of the Other," in *Radical Passivity: Rethinking Ethical Agency in Levinas*, ed. Benda Hofmeyr (London: Springer, 2009), 180–208.

25 For Derrida, the Greek takes on a multiplicity of meanings and interests: "It is not only the non-Greek that attracted me in/to (*chez*) the Greek (it's a question of knowing in short what *chez* means), not only the other of the Greek (the Egyptian, the Barbarian, or whoever is determined by the Greek as his other, and so is excluded-included, posed as opposable), but the wholly other of the Greek, of his language and his *logos*, this figure of a wholly other that is unfigurable by him. This wholly other haunts every one of the essays I have devoted to 'Greek' things and it often irrupts within them: under different names, for it perhaps has no proper name" (Derrida, "'We Other Greeks,'" trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas, in *Derrida and Antiquity*, ed. Miriam Leonard [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010], 25). Even the original French title, "'Nous autres Grecs,'" points to a less than straightforward relation to the Greeks. As the translators of the piece point out, the title "can be heard in at least three ways: (1) as a common, idiomatic way to say simply, 'we Greeks, we who are Greek'; (2) as a way of affirming one's belonging to the category of Greeks, 'we Greeks, we too are Greeks'; (3) as a way of claiming a difference within the category of Greeks, 'we Greeks of another kind, we other Greeks'" (17 n.1).

26 Derrida, "Deconstruction and the Other," in *Debates in Continental Philosophy: Conversations with Contemporary Thinkers*, ed. Richard Kearney (New York: Fordham University Press, 2004), 140, emphasis added. When on occasion he does take up the "we," Derrida describes this communal identity as a "tortured 'we'" (Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally: The Last Interview*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas [Hoboken, NJ: Melville House, 2007], 40).

27 Derrida and Maurizio Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, eds. Giacomo Donis and David Webb (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2001), 27.

28 "In the early years of the Zionist movement, many of its European supporters—and others—believed that Palestine was empty and sparsely cultivated. This view was widely propagated by some of the movement's leading thinkers and writers … It was summed up in the widely-propagated Zionist slogan, 'A land without a people for a people without a land'" (Rashid Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity: The Construction of Modern National Consciousness* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1997], 101).

29 In a similar vein, Jacqueline Rose stresses that there were Zionists who upheld a more nuanced view of Zionism, conceiving of genuine co-existence with the Palestinians, and it is their voices that she seeks to resurrect: "I have … wanted to revive the early Jewish voices—Martin Buber, Hans Kohn, Hannah Arendt, and Ahad Ha'am, some of whom called themselves Zionists—who sounded the critique, uttered the warnings that have become all the more prescient today" (Rose, *The Last Resistance* [London: Verso, 2007], 198). Rose yearns for an inclusive Zionism; she wants "to enter the house of Zionism without blocking the exits" (Rose, *The Question of Zion* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2005], 14).

30 Jacqueline Rose, "Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida in conversation with Jacqueline Rose—Session Transcript," *Jewish Book Week*, 1 March 2004. Available at http://jewishbookweek.com/sites/default/files/H%C3%A9l%C3%A8ne%20Cixous%2C%20Jacques%20Derrida%20Jacqueline%20Rose%2001.03.04.pdf (accessed June 14, 2015). In his last interview, Derrida also talks about Zionisms: "[F]or there have been more than one, since the very beginning, and Israel does not represent to my eyes Judaism as a whole any more than it represents the world diaspora, or even world Zionism or an originary Zionism, which was multiple and contradictory" (Derrida, *Learning to Live*, 39).

31 Gianni Vattimo and Michael Marder, eds., *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), xiii.

32 Edward W. Said, "My Right of Return," in *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*, ed. Gauri Viswanathan (New York: Vintage, 2001), 458.

33 Vattimo and Marder, eds., *Deconstructing Zionism*, xii.

34 Judith Butler, *Parting Ways: Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2012), 3.

35 Vattimo and Marder, eds., *Deconstructing Zionism*, xiii.

36 On December 11, 1948, the UN General Assembly declared, in Resolution 194, that it "resolves that the refugees wishing to return to their homes and live at peace with their neighbors should be permitted to do so at the earliest practicable date, and that compensation should be paid for the property of those choosing not to return and for loss of or damage to property which under principles to international law, or in equity, should be made good by the governments or authorities responsible."

37 Said, *The Question of Palestine* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1979), 83.

38 Zionism as such can never be simply deconstruct*ed* (indeed, the title of Vattimo and Marder's volume is not *Zionism Deconstructed*), or its ideology set aside. Its appeal remains strong if not blinding. And as long as injustice for the Palestinians continues, Zionism will be there to justify the status quo, to deflect blame onto the other—whence the need for deconstruct*ing* it.

39 See Edward Said, *Beginnings: Intention and Method* (New York: Basic Books, 1975).

40 Walter D. Mignolo, "Decolonizing the Nation-State: Zionism in the Colonial Horizon of Modernity," in *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 70.

41 See Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000).

42 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues*, ed. Sarah Harasym (New York: Routledge, 1990), 66.

43 See Ian Almond, *The New Orientalists: Postmodern Representations of Islam from Foucault to Baudrillard* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2007).

44 Slavoj Žižek, *In Defense of Lost Causes* (New York: Verso, 2008), 11.

45 Criticism of the documentary has come generally, and predictably, from the Right. For example, Roz Rothstein and Roberta Seid maintain that "Moreh uses his interviews with six former directors of Israel's top security services to send *a simplistic and deeply partisan political message*: If Israel withdraws from the West Bank, terrorism will subside and peace will break out" (Roz Rothstein and Roberta Seid, "The Dishonesty of 'The Gatekeepers,'" *The Jerusalem Post* February 13 2013, emphasis added). Available at http://www.jpost.com/Opinion/Op-Ed-Contributors/The-dishonesty-of-The-Gatekeepers (accessed June 28, 2015).

46 "The Making of *The Gatekeepers*: an interview with Dror Moreh," *Fathom* (Spring 2013). Available at http://fathomjournal.org/the-making-of-the-gatekeepers-an-interview-with-dror-moreh/ (accessed June 15, 2015).

47 The film takes a pragmatic approach to politics, defining "victory" in the conflict as any improvement on the current political reality. It also implicitly favors a two-state solution, portraying, somewhat nostalgically, the Oslo Accords as an

opportunity for peace tragically cut short by the Israelis' "own flesh and blood." The Oslo Accords have, however, received their fair share of criticism from the Left over the last decade and a half. For many, the Oslo Accords were problematic from the very beginning, since they demanded unreasonable concessions from the Palestinians and minimal ones from the Israelis. Edward Said, already in late 1993, was outlining the Oslo Accords' flawed logic: "The fact is that Israel has conceded nothing … except, blandly, the existence of 'the PLO as the representative of the Palestinian people.' […] By contrast Arafat's recognition of Israel's right to exist carries with it a whole series of renunciations: of the PLO Charter; of violence and terrorism; of all relevant UN resolutions, except 242 and 338, which do not have one word in them about the Palestinians, their rights or aspirations" (Said, "The Morning After," *London Review of Books*, October 21, 1993. Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v15/n20/edward-said/the-morning-after [accessed June 20, 2015]). For more insights into the Oslo Accords and the peace process more generally, see Rashid Khalidi, *Brokers of Deceit: How the US Has Undermined Peace in the Middle East* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2013); Said, *The End of the Peace Process: Oslo and After* (London: Pantheon, 2000); Joseph A. Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question: Essays on Zionism and the Palestinians* (New York: Routledge, 2006), 77–178; and Saree Makdisi, *Palestine Inside Out: An Everyday Occupation* (New York: Norton, 2008), 81–7.

48 Critics have underscored the unsettling comparison of IDF soldiers and Nazis. See, for example, Avi Shilon, "A Nazi in Every Corner," *Haaretz*, January 15, 2013. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/a-nazi-in-every-corner-1.494172 (accessed June 28, 2015).

49 Said arguably extends this interpretive sensibility to Zionism as well, seeking to understand its passion and appeal, that is, "what Zionism meant for Jews" (Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 66), without however being any less critical of its ideology; indeed, only by understanding its "affective dimension" (Rose, *The Last Resistance*, 197) can the postcolonial critic more effectively trouble Zionism's racist dimensions.

50 Derrida, "Autoimmunity: Real and Symbolic Suicides: A Dialogue with Jacques Derrida," in *Philosophy in a Time of Terror: Dialogues with Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida*, ed. Giovanna Borradori, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003), 106. See also Faisal Devji, *Landscapes of the Jihad: Militancy, Morality, Modernity* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2005) and *The Terrorist in Search of Humanity: Militant Islam and Global Politics* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009); Talal Asad, *On Suicide Bombing* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007); Susan Buck-Morss, *Thinking Past Terror: Islamism and Critical Theory on the Left* (New York: Verso, 2003).

51 Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 107. Sartre had already complicated the anticolonial violence of Palestinians, arguing that "terrorism is the weapon of the weak"; he did not "reproach the Palestinians for doing what [he] approved of when it was the Algerian FLN that did it, nor for fighting with the means available to them" (Sartre, "Israel and the Arab World," in *We Have Only this Life to Live: Selected Essays, 1939–1975*, eds. Ronald Aronson and Adrian van den Hoven [New York: New York Review of Books, 2013], 445). The parallel between the Palestinians and the FLN breaks down, however, when Sartre also maintains Israelis' right "for counterattacking, because one can't ask them to let themselves be killed systematically without reacting" ("Israel and the Arab World," 446). Sartre may have had sympathies for the Palestinians' anticolonial struggle, but he also could *not* conceive of Israel as a fully neocolonial power in need of defeat. Indeed, Sartre had described early Zionist resistance in historic Palestine as anticolonial, viewing Zionists as fighting against the British presence (see Farouk Mardam-Bay, "French Intellectuals and the Palestinian Question," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 43 (3) [2014]: 28).

52 The "original sin" is not exclusively an Israeli issue. As Jasbir Puar notes, settler colonialism characterizes the US experience as well (see Puar, "Rethinking Homonationalism," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2) [2013]: 336–9). Indeed, all nations engage in forms of what Walter Benjamin describes as state-founding violence. What makes Israel's case singular today is that this violence is ongoing and contested, and thus its memory is still very much alive. As Žižek observes, Israel "hasn't yet obliterated the 'founding violence' of its 'illegitimate' origins, repressed them into a timeless past. In this sense, what the state of Israel confronts us with is merely the obliterated past of *every* state power" (Žižek, *Violence: Six Sideways Reflections* [New York: Picador, 2008], 117). See Walter Benjamin, "Critique of Violence," in *Selected Writings, 1913–1926*, eds. Marcus Bullock and Michael Jennings (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1996), 236–52.

53 See Ilan Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine* (Oxford: Oneworld, 2006).

54 Philip Weiss, "'Israel is wrong by any moral standard'—Robinson says, as US media pile up Israel/Palestine," *Mondoweiss*, July 25, 2014. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2014/07/israel-standard-robinson/#sthash.s1MS92U6.dpuf (accessed March 26, 2016).

55 See Pappé's brief but informative historical narrative of the conflict, "The Geneva Bubble," *London Review of Books*, January 8, 2004. Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v26/n01/ilan-pappe/the-geneva-bubble (accessed June 21, 2015).

56 See Makdisi, *Palestine Inside Out*.

57 Makdisi carefully catalogues the pervasive viciousness of Israel's apartheid logic: "The Israeli system is not about exploitation of Palestinian labour; labour from the

occupied territories is now totally irrelevant to the Israeli economy, having been made up for by recent immigrants from the former Soviet Union and the supply of cheap workers from southeast Asia enabled by global circuits of exchange. It is, as it has always been, about the removal of one population and its replacement by another, a process that began but did not end in 1948, and that continues to this day every time a Palestinian home is demolished in Jerusalem, every time a Palestinian family is expelled from the ghost town that is central Hebron, every time a Palestinian Jerusalemite is stripped of her residency papers and expelled from the city of her birth, every time a Palestinian family is shattered and broken because of an Israeli law that was instituted in 2003 that prevents a Palestinian in Israel or Jerusalem from marrying and living with a spouse from the occupied territories, even though of course a Jewish Israeli can marry a Jewish colonist from the West Bank and they can live together wherever they please (when a similar law was proposed at the peak of apartheid in South Africa in 1980, it was summarily dismissed by that country's high court as an unacceptable violation of black people's right to family; Israel's high court upheld that country's new law in 2006)" (Makdisi, "A Racism Outside of Language: Israel's Apartheid," *Pambazuka News*, March 11, 2010. Available at http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/features/62928 [accessed January 19, 2016]).

58 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," in *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 8.

59 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 59. Said also characterizes this form of criticism as humanistic: "In my understanding of its relevance today, humanism is not a way of consolidating and affirming what 'we' have always known and felt, but rather a means of questioning, upsetting, and reformulating so much of what is presented to us as commodified, packaged, uncontroversial, and uncritically codified certainties" (Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* [New York: Columbia University Press, 2004], 28).

60 Étienne Balibar, "Universalité de la cause palestinienne," *Le Monde diplomatique* (May 2004), 27, my translation.

61 Quoted in Amneh D. Badran, *Zionist Israel and Apartheid South Africa: Civil Society and Peace Building in Ethnic-National States* (New York: Routledge, 2010), 69.

62 Said, *Freud and the Non-European* (New York: Verso, 2004), 14.

63 Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, 53–4. Jacqueline Rose expresses doubt about the malleability of identity envisioned by Said, claiming "that the fixity of identity—for Freud, for any of us—is something from which it is very hard to escape—harder than Said, for wholly admirable motives, wants it to be" (Rose, "Response to Edward Said," in *Freud and the Non-European*, 74). This is a valid point. I would only say that Said acknowledges this insight since he makes the

locus of resistance a heteronomous—rather than autonomous—self, a precarious and vulnerable self, lacking the self-assurance and agency of the traditional philosophical subject.

64 "Palestinians who lived in pre-1948 Palestine can neither return (in the case of the refugees) nor have access to land as Jews can. Quite differently from the spirit of Freud's deliberately provocative reminders that Judaism's founder was a non-Jew, and that Judaism begins in the realm of Egyptian, non-Jewish monotheism, Israeli legislation countervenes, represses, and even cancels Freud's carefully maintained opening out of Jewish identity toward its non-Jewish background. The complex layers of the past so to speak have been eliminated by official Israel. So as I read him in the setting of Israel's ideologically conscious policies, Freud by contrast had left considerable room to accommodate Judaism's non-Jewish antecedents and contemporaries. In excavating the archeology of Jewish identity, that is, Freud insisted that it did not begin with itself, but rather with other identities (Egyptian and Arabian) which his demonstration in *Moses and Monotheism* goes a great distance to discover and thus restore to scrutiny. This other non-Jewish, non-European history has now been erased, no longer to be found insofar as an official Jewish identity is concerned" (Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, 44).

65 Makdisi, "Said, Palestine, and the Humanism of Liberation," *Critical Inquiry* 31 (2) (2005): 447.

66 Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, 54. Declining the possibility of Stoic calm is tantamount to jettisoning a whole Greco-Roman culture of self-care, where the emphasis is on *tranquillitas*, close in meaning to what the Greeks called *ataraxia*, a state of mental tranquility resulting from the extirpation of the self's most intense emotions, enabling the ancient philosopher to fortify the self, to fashion a sovereign self, by limiting the affectability of the contingent world and thus reducing the self's vulnerability to fortune. Said's Freud discloses this Stoic ideal of an immune self as a dream, or better yet, a nightmare.

67 Amos Harel and Gili Cohen, "Top IDF Attorney: I Will Never Call IDF the Most Moral Army in the World," *Haaretz*, April 9, 2015. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/1.651148 (accessed March 23, 2016).

68 See, for example, Elhanan Yakira, *Post-Zionism, Post-Holocaust: Three Essays on Denial, Forgetting, and the Delegitimation of Israel* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010); Alvin H. Rosenfeld, *Resurgent Antisemitism: Global Perspectives* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013); Alan Dershowitz, *The Case Against Israel's Enemies: Exposing Jimmy Carter and Others Who Stand in the Way of Peace* (Hoboken: John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

Chapter 1

1 Emmanuel Levinas, *Difficult Freedom: Essays on Judaism*, trans. Seán Hand (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990), 11.

2 Gilles Deleuze, "The Importance of Being Arafat," in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade [New York: Semiotext(e), 2006], 241–2.

3 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 78.

4 Levinas, "The Trace of the Other," in *Deconstruction in Context*, ed. Mark Taylor (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1986), 348. Vassilis Lambropoulos rightly points out how for Levinas Odysseus's economy of the Same is really emblematic of the whole tradition of Western thought: "Levinas believes that Odysseus' adventure is circular; his career, which is but a return home, represents the central concern of Greek and most Western thought, from Parmenides to Heidegger: the search for the self, truth, and being as the *algos* of *nostos*. Philosophy has long aspired to the totality of homeliness, the ideal of at homeness (*Heimatlichkeit*) in one's entire existence, and has found its model in the Greek objective (self) representation" (Lambropoulos, *The Rise of Eurocentrism: Anatomy of Interpretation* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993], 215).

5 Ibid., 349.

6 Quoted in Simon Critchley, "Leaving the Climate of Heidegger's Thinking," in *Levinas in Jerusalem: Phenomenology, Ethics, Politics, Aesthetics*, ed. Joëlle Hansel (Berlin: Springer, 2009), 51.

7 Robert Bernasconi, "'Only the Persecuted …' Language of the Oppressor, Language of the Oppressed," in *Ethics as First Philosophy: The Significance of Emmanuel Levinas for Philosophy*, ed. Adrian Peperzak (New York: Routledge, 2013), 83.

8 Levinas urges us to resist theodicy, the desire to make sense of the suffering, to find meaning or reason for it. As Richard Bernstein notes, "theodicy, in its theological or secular forms, is nothing but the temptation to find some sort of 'justification,' some way to 'reconcile' ourselves to useless unbearable suffering" (Richard Bernstein, "Evil and the Temptation of Theodicy," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 255). Levinas is emphatic about its denunciation: "the least one can say about suffering is that … it is useless: 'for nothing'" (Levinas, "Useless Suffering," in *Entre Nous: On Thinking-of-the Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav [New York: Columbia University Press, 1998], 93).

9 Levinas, "Ethics of the Infinite," in *Dialogues with Contemporary Continental Thinkers*, ed. Richard Kearney (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 54–5.

10 Robert Eaglestone, "Postcolonial Thought and Levinas's Double Vision," in *Radicalizing Levinas*, eds. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco (New York: SUNY Albany Press, 2010), 65.

11 "I often say, although it is a dangerous thing to say publicly, that humanity consists of the Bible and the Greeks. All the rest can be translated: all the rest—all the exotic—is dance" (Raoul Mortley, *French Philosophers in Conversation*, 18).

12 François Laruelle, *Intellectuals and Power: The Insurrection of the Victim*, trans. Anthony Paul Smith (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2015), 9.

13 The Cartesian *cogito* exemplifies this philosophical tradition, in which the world, the self, and others are all potential objects of willful mastery: "'I think,'" writes Levinas, "comes down to 'I can'—to an appropriation of what is, to an exploitation of reality" (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 46).

14 Levinas, *Is it Righteous to Be: Interviews with Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Jill Robbins (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 153.

15 Levinas, *Time and the Other*, trans. Richard A. Cohen (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1987), 42.

16 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 244.

17 Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 26.

18 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 111–12.

19 Levinas, *Humanism of the Other*, trans. Nidra Poller (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 68.

20 "We live from 'good soup,' air, light, spectacles, work, ideas, sleep, etc. … These are not objects of representations. We live from them" (Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 110).

21 Ibid., 111.

22 Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 10.

23 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 194.

24 Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality," 175. Levinas offers an expansive interpretation of "Thou shalt not kill." For instance, he writes: "This does not mean simply that you are not to go around firing a gun all the time. It refers, rather, to the fact that, in the course of your life, in different ways, you kill someone. For example, when we sit down at the table in the morning and drink coffee, we kill an Ethiopian who doesn't have any coffee" (Levinas, "The Paradox of Morality," 173).

25 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 43.

26 Ibid., 50.

27 Butler, *Precarious Life*, 134.

28 In the days following news of the massacre, more than 300,000 Israelis protested against their government's complicity at Sabra and Shatila. See Michael Lerner, *Embracing Israel/Palestine: A Strategy to Heal and Transform the Middle East* (Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2012), 159.

29 Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 294.

30 Žižek, *Organs without Bodies: On Deleuze and Consequences* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 106. In his essay, "Neighbors and Other Monsters," Žižek develops this line of critique, taking issue with what he sees as the Levinasian fascination with the other, which blinds one to the suffering of concrete others: "[T]he true ethical step is the one beyond the face of the other, the one of suspending the hold of the face, the one of choosing against the face, for the third" (Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters: A Plea for Ethical Violence," in *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, eds. Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005], 183). True ethics, then, necessitates a move away from the dyadic moment of the face-to-face encounter (the ethical proper) to an incorporation of the other's others (the political proper). Žižek's critique, however, seems to ignore Levinas's own struggle with accounting for the other's others, for negotiating between ethics and politics. The massacre at Sabra and Shatila serves as a limit case for Levinas's thinking of the third, of who counts and who does not count as other.

31 Levinas, "Transcendence and Height" (1962), 27.

32 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:17–18).

33 Levinas, *Is it Righteous to Be*, 165–6, emphasis added. Levinas insists on the priority of the other in matters of justice: "[J]ustice should flow from, issue from, the preeminence of the other" (Levinas, *Alterity and Transcendence* [New York: Columbia University Press, 1999], 176).

34 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 157.

35 Ibid. While Levinas conceptualizes justice in terms of equality between the demands of all others, there is a primacy attributed to those who are most near: "[J]ustice remains justice only, in a society where there is no distinction between those close and those far off, but in which there also remains the impossibility of passing by the closest", 159.

36 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 213.

37 Derrida, *Adieu: To Emmanuel Levinas*, trans. Anne Pascale-Brault and Michael Naas (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999), 31.

38 Levinas, *Is it Righteous to Be*, 82.

39 Martin Jay, "Hostage Philosophy: Levinas's Ethical Thought," *Tikkun* 5, 6 (1990): 87.

40 "Levinas never talks of the other as a collective term uniting groups of people on the basis of shared class or other affiliations. He is adamant that this otherness

is always singular rather than collective otherness. […] [Levinas's] aversion to community certainly sets him at odds with questions of postcolonial otherness, which are historically and politically tied to constructions of the other as a *collective* form of cultural or racial difference (Simone Drichel, "Face to Face with the Other Other: Levinas versus the Postcolonial," *Levinas Studies* 7 [2012]: 23–4).

41 Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 292.

42 David Campbell, "Deterritorialization of Responsibility: Levinas, Derrida, and Ethics after the End of Philosophy," in *Moral Spaces: Rethinking Ethics and World Politics*, eds. David Campbell and Michael J. Shapiro (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 39.

43 Howard Caygill, *Levinas and the Political* (London: Routledge, 2002), 1.

44 Ibid., 192.

45 But this is precisely what Oona Eisenstadt and Claire Elise Katz suggest in their elucidation of Levinas's position. Their intervention aims to correct a generalized misreading of Levinas's view of the Palestinians as faceless. Addressing the question of the Palestinian face, Eisenstadt and Katz argue that the Jewish/Israeli ethical subject is limited by her exposure to actual others: "It is … true that she cannot come face to face with everyone. Is she not more likely to form an ethical bond with those with whom she lives? And are these not more likely to be members of her own ethnicity, or in some other way like her?" (Eisenstadt and Katz, "The Faceless Palestinian: A History of an Error," *Telos* 174 [2016]: 30). Is there no provision in Levinasian ethics to complicate this given reality? How can Katz's/Levinas's account not reinforce an economy of the Same? Is it the case that I can only be affected by someone who shares my *Lebenswelt*? Moreover, do not Palestinians dwell on the same land? Are they really beyond phenomenological encounter?

46 Eisenstadt and Katz argue that what Levinas knew at the time of the interview was limited: "The circumstances of the massacres were … not understood in their entirety. We know now that the camps were not harboring the assassin; nor do we have any evidence that a new PLO leadership was about to emerge from Sabra and Shatila. We know also that the Israeli defense minister, Ariel Sharon, allowed the Phalangist militia to enter the camps, had his troops guard the exits, and refused to withdraw when reports of atrocities began to surface, for which acts an Israeli commission found the Israeli government indirectly responsible and Sharon personally responsible. Men, women, and children were murdered indiscriminately and brutally, and the Israeli government as a whole must share the blame, if not shoulder it solely. However, this was not clear on September 28 when the interview was conducted" (Eisenstadt and Katz, "The Faceless Palestinian," 11). This is a perversily charitable reading of Levinas's comments. Israel's invasion of Lebanon was known. The thousands of Israeli

protestors who came out in the days following the news drew the inference that Israel's governement bore some responsibility for its alliance with the ruthless Phalangists. Moreover, Malka's question regarding the Palestinian as "above all" the other of the Israeli arguably points beyond the Sabra and Shatila massacre to the Nakba—that is, to the refugee camps as the fruits of Israel's ethnic cleansing. Responsibility here is both a historical and an ethical condition. We are always already ethically responsible for others (Levinas as "the philosopher of the 'other'"), but the fraught history of Israel's existence bears *additional* responsibility toward the Palestinians.

47 Bernasconi, "Strangers and Slaves in the Land of Egypt: Levinas and the Politics of Otherness," in *Difficult Justice: Commentaries on Levinas and Politics*, eds. Asher Horowitz and Gad Horowitz (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2006), 247.

48 See John Drabinski, *Levinas and the Postcolonial: Race, Nation, Other* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011).

49 Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, 80.

50 Bernasconi does reproach Levinas for a missed opportunity: "Levinas sacrifices the possibility that his ethics can open up a radical politics" (Bernasconi, "Strangers and Slaves in the Land of Egypt," 248).

51 Levinas himself puts the matter in terms of a potential contradiction between these two distinct realms: "[T]here's a direct contradiction between ethics and politics, if both these demands are taken to the extreme" (Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 292). For Derek Attridge, "It's not so much a *tension* that exists between [Levinasian] ethics … and politics or justice as an *incommensurability*" (Zahi Zalloua, "Derek Attridge on the Ethical Debates in Literary Studies," *SubStance* 38 (3) [2009]: 19).

52 Neil Lazarus, "Introducing Postcolonial Studies," in *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 10.

53 Caygill, *Levinas and the Political*, 192.

54 Michael L. Morgan offers an even more dubious explanation for Levinas's evasiveness over the Sabra and Shatila massacre: "[Levinas] is not a politician or a political commentator. He makes no precise judgment or recommendation" (Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011], 233).

55 Levinas, "Useless Suffering," in *Entre Nous: Thinking of the Other*, trans. Michael B. Smith and Barbara Harshav (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998), 97.

56 Levinas, "Useless Suffering," 241 n.7.

57 Levinas, *Is it Righteous to Be*, 81.

58 This lack of hesitation is also noticeable in Levinas's attitude toward Judaism: "One … cannot help noticing that Levinas rarely hesitates in his assumption

that Judaism is the highest type of religion" (Soni Sikka, "The Delightful Other: Portraits of the Feminine in Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, and Levinas," in *Feminist Interpretations of Emmanuel Levinas*, ed. Tina Chanter [University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2001], 113–14).

59 Martin Buber, "Address by Prof. Martin Buber (*Ha-Ichud*) at the first session of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry," in *The Two-State Solution: The UN Partition Resolution of Mandatory Palestine*, ed. Ruth Gavison (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 95. Buber was also deeply concerned about the refugee problem created by the creation of Israel, critically reminding Ben Gurion that Jews suffered their own history of statelessness: "Were we not refugees in the diaspora?" (Buber, "On the Moral Character of the State of Israel: A Debate with David Ben-Gurion," in Buber, *A Land of Two Peoples: Martin Buber on Jews and Arabs*, ed. P. Mendes-Flohr [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983], 244).

60 Prominent Zionists, including founding figure Theodor Herzl, also considered places other than Palestine for a homeland, a fact more or less effaced from Zionist memory. See Adam Rovner, *In the Shadow of Zion: Promised Lands before Israel* (New York: New York University Press, 2014).

61 Opposition to the State of Israel, as in the case of the Six-Day War, can at best turn a "Muslim friend" into an "unhated enemy" (Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 264). They may not be hated, but they are enemies all the same.

62 "The abstract positions outlined here in terms of the triad of 'I', 'other' and 'third' gain historical force if we name the 'other' and the 'third' the 'State of Israel' and the 'Palestinians'" (Caygill, *Levinas and the Political*, 132).

63 Ibid., 188.

64 Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 131.

65 Levinas, *Beyond the Verse: Talmudic Readings and Lectures*, trans. Gary D. Mole (London: Athlone Press, 1994), xvi.

66 David Shipler, "In Israel, Anguish over the Moral Questions," *New York Times*, September 23, 1982. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/1982/09/24/world/news-analysis-in-israel-anguish-over-the-moral-questions.html?pagewanted=all (accessed August 24, 2016). Finkielkraut rightly objected to this ethical posture of moral invulnerability, whereas Levinas qualified his objection by agreeing to some extent with the Israeli government that the Holocaust altered the lived reality of Judaism and perspective of Jews, especially those living in Israel (Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 291).

67 Alain Badiou, "Uses of the Word 'Jew,'" in *Polemics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2006), 160.

68 Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 11, 26.

69 Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, 235.

70 Hilary Putnam puts it more emphatically: "Levinas is universalizing Judaism …

in essence, *all human beings are Jews*" (Putnam, "Levinas and Judaism," in *The Cambridge Companion to Levinas*, eds. Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002], 34, emphasis added).

71 Sarah Hammerschlag observes the "inevitable conflict and hypocrisy that result from Levinas's attempts to hold together the real historical people of Israel with the ideal and universalizable idea of Israel" (*The Figural Jew*, 161). Likewise, Simon Critchley notes, "The name 'Israel' is suspended, possibly fatally suspended, between ideality and reality, between holy history and political history" (Critchley, "Five Problems in Levinas's View of Politics," in *Radicalizing Levinas*, eds. Peter Atterton and Matthew Calarco [New York: SUNY Albany Press, 2010], 43).

72 Badiou, "Uses of the Word 'Jew,'" 158.

73 Ibid., 159.

74 For Joseph A. Massad, such philo-Semitism not only informs Western media coverage but also conditions much of the Left's discourse on the Israel/Palestinian conflict. Many so-called progressive intellectuals remain "blind to the ultimate achievement of Israel: the transformation of the Jew into the anti-Semite, and the Palestinian into the Jew" (Massad, "Sartre, European intellectuals and Zionism").

75 As Cathy Caruth observes, Freud had already "compar[ed] the history of the Jews with the structure of a trauma" (Cathy Caruth, "Trauma and Experience: Introduction," in *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*, ed. Cathy Caruth [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995], 7).

76 Cécile Winter, "The Master-Signifier of the New Aryans," in *Polemics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2006), 223.

77 Peter Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial: Writing Between the Singular and the Specific* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), 2.

78 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 40.

79 Ibid.

80 Levinas, "Peace and Proxmity," in *Basic Philosophical Writings*, eds. Adriaan T. Peperzak, Simon Critchley and Robert Bernasconi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996), 166.

81 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 4–5.

82 Ibid., 3.

83 Ibid., 7.

84 Marc H. Ellis, "Notes on the Prophetic Instability of Zionism," in *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 99–100.

85 Badiou, "Uses of the Word 'Jew,'" 162. Ellis argues for the need to counter the blatant instrumentalization of the Holocaust narrative: "Holocaust theologians envision the State of Israel as transcending politics. They structure their Holocaust narrative in such a fashion that a practical and ethical critique of the State

of Israel's right to exist or a critique of Israel's policies toward Palestinians is off-limits. According to Holocaust theologians, only anti-Semites—or self-hating Jews—go down that route" (105). Badiou and others flatly reject blackmail of the type that would argue that you are either for the State of Israel (and its Zionist ideology) or you are against Israel and the plight of its Jewish people (and thus, implicitly or explicitly, an anti-Semite).

86 See, for example, Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Left in Dark Times: A Stand Against the New Barbarism*, trans. Benjamin Mose (New York: Random House, 2008); Alain Finkielkraut, "In the Name of the Other: Reflections on the Coming Anti-Semitism," *Azure* 18 (2004): 21–33.

87 Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 296. In light of Sabra and Shatila, there is, for Levinas, an unavoidable but measured disappointment in the State of Israel: "Israel has not become worse than the surrounding world, whatever the anti-Semites say, but it has ceased to be better. The worst thing is that this was precisely one of its ambitions" (*Difficult Freedom*, 5). Of course, from the perspective of Israel's victims, Levinas's critique falls quite short. Israel's messianic promise (the dream of Zionism) was not only betrayed by Sharon but nullified almost instantaneously by the events leading and surrounding Israel's catastrophic creation: "*the Zionist dream was from the start a Palestinian nightmare*" (Said, *The Politics of Dispossession: The Struggle for Palestinian Self-Determination 1969–1994* [New York: Vintage, 1994], 101).

88 Morgan, *The Cambridge Introduction to Emmanuel Levinas*, 228.

89 Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 297. This comment comes quite late in the interview with Malka.

90 Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 176–7.

91 Levinas, "Zionisms," in *The Levinas Reader*, ed. Seán Hand (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), 278.

92 Compare with Deleuze: "The Palestinians—tossed aside, forgotten—have been called on to recognize the right of Israel to exist, while the Israelis have continued to deny the fact of the existence of a Palestine people" (Deleuze, "Stones," in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade [New York: Semiotext(e), 2006], 338).

93 Levinas, "Zionisms," 282.

94 For the use and abuse of the Shoah by the Israeli government, see Norman Finkelstein, *The Holocaust Industry: Reflections on the Exploitation of Jewish Suffering* (New York: Verso Press, 2000).

95 Rose, *The Question of Zion*, 142–3.

96 Achille Mbembe, "On Palestine," viii.

97 Commenting on the "complex irony" of the Palestinian situation, Said writes: "how the classic victims of years of anti-Semitic persecution and the Holocaust

have in their new nation become the victimizers of another people, who have become, therefore, the victims of the victims" (Said, *The Question of Palestine*, xxi).

98 Rose, *The Last Resistance*, 55. Similarly, Isaac Deutscher considers the current rhetorical deployment of Auschwitz, fueled by an aggressive Zionism, detrimental to Israeli Jews as well: "We should not allow even invocations of Auschwitz to blackmail us into supporting the wrong cause. I am speaking as a Marxist of Jewish origin, whose next-of-kin perished in Auschwitz and whose relatives live in Israel. To justify or condone Israel's wars against the Arabs is to render Israel a very bad service indeed and to harm its own long-term interest. Israel's security, let me repeat, was not enhanced by the wars of 1956 and 1967; it was undermined and compromised. The 'friends of Israel' have in fact abetted Israel in a ruinous course" (Deutscher, "On the Israeli–Arab war," in *The Clash of Fundamentalisms: Crusades, Jihads and Modernity*, ed. Tariq Ali [London: Verso, 2003], 410).

99 Martha Nussbaum, *Political Emotions: Why Love Matters for Justice* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2013), 143.

100 Edward Said and David Barsamian, *Culture and Resistance: Conversations with Edward W. Said* (Boston: South End Press, 2003), 45.

101 For a critical account of the American media's biases and preferential treatment of Israel, see Marda Dunsky, *Pens and Swords: How the American Mainstream Media Report the Israeli-Palestinian Conflict* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2008).

102 Butler, *Precarious Life*, 103.

103 As Deleuze reminds us, terrorism toward the non-Jew was constitutive of Zionist nationalism under the British Mandate: "Zionist terrorism was not only directed against the British, but against the Arab villages that had to be erased. The Irgun [a Zionist paramilitary organization lead by Menachem Begin] was very active in this regard (Deir Yassine)" (Deleuze, "The Importance of Being Arafat," in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 241).

104 Levinas, *Otherwise than Being*, 14.

105 Ibid., 42.

106 Ibid., 7.

107 Ibid., 44, 181.

108 Ibid., 93, 48.

109 I am alluding here to Levinas's explicit desire to move beyond Heidegger's ontology, or as he puts it, "the profound need to leave the climate of that philosophy" (Levinas, *Existence and Existents*, trans. Alphonso Lingis [The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1978], 19).

110 Like *Waltz with Bashir*, Samuel Maoz's 2009 film *Lebanon* draws on the director's experiences as a soldier in Israel's invasion of Lebanon in 1982.

111 Ari Folman, dir. *Waltz with Bashir*, *Sony Pictures Classics*, 2008, DVD commentary.

112 Jonathan Freedland, "Lest We Forget," *The Guardian*, October 25, 2008. Available at http://www.theguardian.com/film/2008/oct/25/waltz-with-bashir-ari-folman (acessed July 17, 2015).

113 Naira Antoun registers her outrage at the interpretive neglect of the non-Israeli: "[T]o say that Palestinians are absent in *Waltz with Bashir*, to say that it is a film that deals not with Palestinians but with Israelis who served in Lebanon, only barely begins to describe the violence that this film commits against Palestinians" (Naira Antoun, "Film Review: Waltz with Bashir," *Electronic Intifada*, February 19, 2009. Available at http://electronicintifada.net/v2/article10322.shtml [accessed July 10, 2015]).

114 Udi Aloni, "This Time It's Not Funny," in *What Does a Jew Want? On Binationalism and Other Spectres* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 135.

115 Dominick LaCapra, *Writing History, Writing Trauma* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 79.

116 Raz Yosef, "War Fantasies: Memory, Trauma and Ethics in Ari Folman's *Waltz with Bashir*," *Journal of Modern Jewish Studies* 9 (3) (2010): 323.

117 Ibid., 323–4.

118 Folman, *Waltz with Bashir*, DVD commentary.

119 Levinas, "Ethics and Politics," 293.

120 "For the first time in the movie, we not only see real footage, but also the real victims. Not the ones who need a shrink and a drink to get over their experience, but those who remain bereaved for all time, homeless, limbless and crippled. No drink and no shrink can help them. And that is the first (and last) moment of truth and pain in 'Waltz with Bashir'" (Gideon Levy, "'Antiwar' film *Waltz with Bashir* is Nothing but Charade," *Haaretz*, February 19, 2009). Available at http://www.haaretz.com/gideon-levy-antiwar-film-waltz-with-bashir-is-nothing-but-charade-1.270528 (accessed July 10, 2015). Gil Z. Hochberg also perceptively asks: "Does [Folman] (finally) see? Does he in fact remember his position as a witness who failed to witness in the past, or does he continue to fabricate his own memories, reminding us that if he failed to witness then he surely is failing to witness now?" (Gil Z. Hochberg, *Visual Occupations: Violence and Visibility in a Conflict Zone* [Durham: Duke University Press, 2015], 147)

121 Aloni, "This Time It's Not Funny," 135. See Aloni's 2006 film *Forgiveness*, which foregrounds the types of ethical gestures to the Palestinian other that were absent in *Waltz with Bashir*.

122 See Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, trans. Mark Dooley and Michael Hughes (London: Routledge, 2001), 32.

123 "The source of this massacre went back essentially to the presence of the

Palestinian refugees in Lebanon since early 1948, who had, since the Six-Day War of June 1967, in which Israel conquered the rest of Palestine, the Syrian Golan Heights, and the Egyptian Sinai Desert, begun to become militarily and politically organized in Lebanon" (Tim Llewellyn, "Reporting Sabra and Shatila," in *The Ethics of Representation in Literature, Art, and Journalism: Transnational Responses to the Siege in Beirut*, eds. Caroline Rooney and Rita Sakr [New York: Routledge, 2013], 164).

124 Simon Critchley, *The Ethics of Deconstruction: Levinas and Derrida* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 18.

125 Žižek, *Living in the End of Times* (New York: Verso, 2010), 58.

126 This is what Gideon Levy cleverly dubs "'we shot and we cried' syndrome": "Oh, how we wept, yet our hands did not spill this blood. Add to this a pinch of Holocaust memories, without which there is no proper Israeli self-preoccupation. And a dash of victimization—another absolutely essential ingredient in public discourse here—and voila! You have the deceptive portrait of Israel 2008, in words and pictures" (Levy, "'Antiwar' film *Waltz with Bashir* is Nothing but Charade").

127 Ibid.

128 In Folman's own words: "This film really shows Israel as a very tolerant country and I learned in the past 6 months that there is a total misconception in regards of how tolerant and open-minded Israel is. And in many occasions it is much more open-minded than a lot of places that are considered tolerant in Europe, for example, and in Israel you can really say whatever you think and you can say it very loud; because everyone speaks very loud and there is no problem with it" (Folman, *Waltz with Bashir*, DVD commentary).

129 Levy, "'Antiwar' film *Waltz with Bashir* is Nothing but Charade."

130 Simon Faulkner makes a similar observation: "The iteration of images of Palestinian suffering has the potential to naturalize his condition, encouraging a perception of Palestinians as those who *exist to suffer*" (Simon Faulkner, "On Israel/Palestine and the Politics of Visibility," in *Immigrant Protest: Politics, Aesthetics, and Everyday Protest*, eds. Katarzyna Marciniak and Imogen Tyler [New York: State University of New York Press, 2014], 158).

131 Jacques Rancière, "Art of the Possible: Fulvia Carnevale and John Kelsey in Conversation with Jacques Rancière," *Artforum* 45, 7 (2007): 263. Rancière turns to Palestinian filmmaker Elia Suleiman for the ways he "makes a comedy about the daily repression and humiliation" (Rancière, "Art of the Possible," 263). Suleiman's 2002 comedy *Divine Intervention* consists of a series of disconnected short vignettes about Palestinian lives under occupation. The opening scene sets the mood: a stabbed Santa Clause is being chased by a group of rock-throwing Palestinian kids. The "light and violent" scene tells us something about the traumatic effects of the occupation. According to Suleiman, it leads to "the

breakdown of communication," to the undoing of community and its shared space: each neighbor is at the other's throat (Steve Erickson, "A Breakdown of Communication: Elia Suleiman Talks About *Divine Intervention*," *Indiewire*, January 15, 2003. Available at http://www.indiewire.com/article/a_breakdown_of_communication_elia_suleiman_talks_about_divine_intervention (accessed July 16, 2015). *It is a world turned upside down!* Suleiman, as the character E.S., can nonchalantly toss an apricot pit at an Israeli military tank and it explodes in bits and pieces of flying metal. As if by magic the fragility of the Palestinian body was momentarily transferred to the hard metal of the Israeli tank. Putting aside the irreality of the situation (or is it an instance of divine intervention?), E. S.'s form of resistance is comically doubtful: it is resistance without intentionality, making him, in turn, something of an accidental terrorist.

132 I want to complicate Rancière's totalizing account of what the documentary can and cannot do. I don't believe that the documentary genre is determined a priori by a representational economy that can only imagine the Palestinians as passive victims. The 2011 film *Five Broken Cameras*, which was co-directed by Palestinian Emad Burnat and Israeli Guy Davidi, serves as an example of a recent documentary that resists the iconic sentimental framing of Palestinian suffering.

133 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 50–1.

Chapter 2

1 Giorgio Agamben, "What Is a Camp?" in *Means Without End: Notes on Politics*, trans. Vincenzo Binetti and Cesare Casarino (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 38, emphasis removed.

2 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 8.

3 Honaida Ghanim, "Thanatopolitics: the Case of the Colonial Occupation in Palestine," in *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 67.

4 Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (New York: Zone Books, 1999), 81–2. Agamben is also well aware of the problematic designation of the *Muselmann* as inhumane, of its proximity to Nazi hermeneutics: "Simply to deny the *Muselmann*'s humanity would be to accept the verdict of the SS and to repeat their gesture" (Agamben, *Remnants of Auschwitz*, 63).

5 Adi Ophir, Michael Givoni, and Sari Hanafi, "Introduction," in *The Power of Inclusive Exclusion: Anatomy of Israeli Rule in the Occupied Palestinian Territories*, eds. Adi Ophir, Michael Givoni, and Sari Hanafi (New York: Zone Books, 2009), 18.

6 See Achille Mbembe, "Necropolitics," *Public culture* 15 (2003): 11–40.

7 Ronit Lentin, "Introduction: Thinking Palestine," in *Thinking Palestine*, ed. Ronit Lentin (New York: Zed Books, 2008), 2.

8 Quoted in Ian Thomson, *Primo Levi. A Life* (London: Hutchinson, 2002), 443.

9 Quoted in Max Blumenthal, *The 51 Day War: Ruin and Resistance in Gaza* (New York: Nation Books, 2015), 48.

10 Ayelet Shaked, the ultra-nationalist of the Jewish Home party and justice minister in Netanyahu's new Israeli coalition government quotes on her Facebook page favorably an unpublished text from the late Uri Elitzur, a speechwriter and advisor to the Prime Minister: "They are all enemy combatants, and their blood shall be on all their heads. Now this also includes the mothers of the martyrs, who send them to hell with flowers and kisses. They should follow their sons, nothing would be more just. They should go, as should the physical homes in which they raised the snakes. Otherwise, more little snakes will be raised there" (Ali Abunimah, "Israeli Lawmaker's Call for Genocide of Palestinians Gets Thousands of Facebook Likes," *Electronic Intifada*, July 7, 2014. Available at https://electronicintifada.net/blogs/ali-abunimah/israeli-lawmakers-call-genocide-palestinians-gets-thousands-facebook-likes [accessed August 3, 2015]). For the ultra-nationalists of Israel, the message is clear: the only good Palestinian is a dead Palestinian.

11 Agamben, *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*, trans. Daniel Heller-Roazen (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998), 181.

12 Ibid., 122.

13 Similarly, Mbembe calls the colonial management of life and death "necropolitics": "the generalized instrumentalization of human existence and the material destruction of human bodies and populations" (Mbembe, "Necropolitics," 14, emphasis removed).

14 Ghanim, "Thanatopolitics," 67.

15 Israeli Supreme Court, *Jaber Al-Bassiouni Ahmed and others v. Prime Minister and Minister of Defence* (30 January 2008). Available at http://elyon1.court.gov.il/Files_ENG/07/320/091/n25/07091320.n25.htm (accessed August 3, 2015).

16 Josh Levs, "Is Gaza 'occupied' territory?" *CNN*, 6 January 2009. Available at http://www.cnn.com/2009/WORLD/meast/01/06/israel.gaza.occupation.question/ [accessed July 25, 2015]).

17 Noura Erakat, "Israel Will Invade Gaza Again—the Only Question Is How Soon," *The Nation*, July 8, 2015. Available at http://www.thenation.com/article/israel-will-invade-gaza-again-the-only-question-is-how-soon/ (accessed August 4, 2015).

18 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 8.

19 Danna Harman, "British PM Cameron: Gaza Must Not Remain a Prison Camp," *Haaretz*, July 27, 2010. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/news/world/

british-pm-cameron-gaza-must-not-remain-a-prison-camp-1.304393. Assessed August 17, 2015.

20 Yehouda Shenhav, "The Imperial History of 'State of Exception,'" *Theory and Criticism* 29 (2006): 206–7. Quoted in Lentin, "Introduction," 7. See also Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 36.

21 Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. George Schwab (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005), 5.

22 Agamben credits Walter Benjamin with this insight: "The tradition of the oppressed teaches us that the 'state of emergency' in which we live is not the exception but the rule" (Walter Benjamin, "On the Concept of History," in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings (Volume 4: 1938–1940)*, eds. Howard Eiland and Michael W. Jennings [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003], 392). See Agamben, *State of Exception*, trans. Kevin Attell (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007), 57–9.

23 Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 27.

24 Ibid., 28.

25 Ibid., 109.

26 Quoted in Blumenthal, *The 51 Day War*, 197.

27 Max Blumenthal, "Waiting for the Next Israeli Assault in Gaza," *In These Times*, July 16, 2015. Available at http://inthesetimes.com/article/18208/israel-gaza-max-blumenthal. Assessed July 28, 2015.

28 Étienne Balibar, "Difference, Otherness, Exclusion," *Parallax* 11, 1 (2005): 32–3.

29 Sari Hanafi, "Spacio-cide and Bio-politics: The Israeli Colonial Project from 1947 to the Wall," in *Against the Wall*, ed. Michael Sorkin (New York: The New Press, 2005), 165.

30 There is currently also an important economic disincentive to halting Israel's thanatopolitics. Israel's highly successful and influential military industrial complex is fuelling a perpetual war model. The Gaza Strip presents itself as an ideal showcase for marketing Israel's latest weapons to a global audience. Yotam Feldman's 2013 documentary film, *The Lab*, makes a compelling case for economic profit driving hawkish Israeli policies. "Israel's weapons industry has tripled its profits to more than [US] $7 billion a year over the past decade, making a country about the size of New Jersey into the fourth largest weapons exporter in the world," writes Blumenthal ("Waiting for the Next Israeli Assault in Gaza"). See also Jeff Halper, *War Against the People: Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification* (London: Pluto Press, 2015).

31 Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier (New York: Alfred Knopf, 2010), 12–13.

32 Ilan Pappé, "The *Mukhabarat* State of Israel: A State of Oppression is not a State of Exception," in *Thinking Palestine*, 149.

33 Ibid., 157.

34 Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013), 25–6. See also Eyal Weizman, *The Least of All Possible Evils: Humanitarian Violence from Arendt to Gaza* (New York: Verso, 2011).

35 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 9.

36 Žižek, *Violence*, 1–2.

37 Ibid., 2.

38 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 8.

39 Žižek, *Violence*, 3–4.

40 Žižek's focus on interpretation calls for rewriting Marx's eleventh thesis on Feuerbach ("The philosophers have only *interpreted* the world in various ways; the point is, to *change* it"): "I am therefore tempted to reverse Marx's Thesis 11: the first task today is precisely *not* to succumb to the temptation to act, to intervene directly and change things" (Žižek, *Revolution at the Gates: Selected Writings of Lenin from 1917* [New York: Verso, 2002], 170).

41 Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir, "Abandoning Gaza," in *Agamben and Colonialism*, eds. Marcelo Svirsky and Simone Bignall [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2012], 186.

42 "A January 2008 Israeli military study called 'Food Consumption in the Gaza Strip—The Red Lines' estimated the required daily calorie intake in Gaza at 2,279 per person 'in order to maintain the basic fabric of life'" (Blumenthal, *The 51 Day War*, 6).

43 Azoulay and Adi Ophir, "Abandoning Gaza," 191.

44 Against the view of Hamas as a religious extremist party, unwilling to compromise with the Israeli government, Max Blumenthal underscores that Hamas's demands are first and foremost humanitarian in character: "They called for the right to construct a seaport in Gaza, rebuild the airport Israel destroyed, and freely import and export goods, as well as for Gaza's stateless residents to obtain travel permits. In exchange, Hamas offered Israel a 10-year truce" ("Waiting for the Next Israeli Assault in Gaza").

45 Judith Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street," *European Institute for Progressive Cultural Politics* (*eipcp*) September 2011. Available at http://www.eipcp.net/transversal/1011/butler/en. Assessed July 25, 2015.

46 Vikki Bell, "New Scenes of Vulnerability, Agency and Plurality: An Interview with Judith Butler," *Theory, Culture & Society* 27 (1) (2010): 469.

47 Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street."

48 "[I]f we seek to take account of exclusion itself as a political problem, as part of politics itself, then it will not do to say that once excluded, those beings lack appearance or 'reality' in political terms, that they have no social or political

standing, or are cast out and reduced to mere being (forms of givenness precluded from the sphere of action). Nothing so metaphysically extravagant has to happen if we agree that one reason the sphere of the political cannot be defined by the classic conception of the polis is that we are then deprived of having and using a language for those forms of agency and resistance that focus on the politics of exclusion itself or, indeed, against those regimes of power that maintain the stateless and disenfranchised in conditions of destitution. Few matters could be more politically consequential" (Butler, "Bodies in Alliance and the Politics of the Street"). See also Moya Lloyd, "The Ethics and Politics of Vulnerable Bodies," in *Butler and Ethics*, ed. Moya Lloyd (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2015), 178–9.

49 Quoted in Étienne Balibar, "A Complex Urgent Universal Political Cause," Address before the conference of Faculty for Israeli–Palestinian Peace (FFIPP), Université Libre de Bruxelles, July 3 and 4, 2004. Available at http://users.resist.ca/~elkilombo/documents/%20BalibarBrusseBD480.pdf (accessed September 4, 2015).

50 In the aftermath of *Operation Protective Edge*, one-fifth of Gaza looks like "an apocalyptic moonscape" (Blumenthal, "Waiting for the Next Israeli Assault in Gaza").

51 2008 South Carolina Democratic Debate. Transcript available at http://www.nytimes.com/2007/04/27/us/politics/27debate_transcript.html?pagewanted=all&_r=0 (accessed August 15, 2015).

52 Butler, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable* (New York: Verso, 2009), 36.

53 Butler, *Precarious Life*, 98.

54 Agamben, *Homo Sacer*, 115.

55 Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1978), 95.

56 Žižek, "Are We in a War? Do We Have an Enemy?" *London Review of Books*, May 23, 2002. Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v24/n10/slavoj-zizek/are-we-in-a-war-do-we-have-an-enemy (accessed August 14, 2015). Derek Gregory also notes, "Israel's offensive operations were designed to turn the Palestinian people not only into enemies but into aliens, and in placing them outside the modern, figuratively and physically, they were constructed as … *homines sacri*" (Derek Gregory, "Palestine and the 'War on Terror,'" *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 2 (1) [2004]: 187).

57 As Nicola Perguni and Neve Gordon assert, "human shielding became a central trope in Israel's semiotic warfare, as it strived to provide moral justification for killing hundreds of civilians" (Nicola Perguni and Neve Gordon, *The Human Right to Dominate* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015], 84).

58 Quoted in Steven Salaita, *Uncivil Rites: Palestine and the Limits of Academic Freedom* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 163.

59 Quoted in Jerome Slater, "What Went Wrong? The Collapse of the Israeli–Palestinian Peace Process," *Political Science Quarterly* 116 (2) (2001): 180.

60 Quoted in Jimmy Johnson, "What would you do?" *Mondoweiss*, July 17, 2014. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2014/07/what-would-you-do/ (accessed on February 21, 2016).

61 Butler, *Precarious Life*, 34. Again: "Without grievability, there is no life, or, rather, there is something living that is other than life. Instead, 'there is a life that will never have been lived,' sustained by no regard, no testimony and ungrieved when lost. The apprehension of grievability precedes and makes possible the apprehension of the living being as living, exposed to non-life from the start" (Butler, *Frames of War*, 15).

62 Gabi Siboni, "Disproportionate Force: Israel's Concept of Response in Light of the Second Lebanon War," *INSS Insight* No. 74, October 2, 2008. Available at http://www.inss.org.il/index.aspx?id=4538&articleid=1964 [accessed August 3, 2015]).

63 Again: "The fact that the [Israeli] political and military leadership did not change its course of action, despite considerable information regarding the massive degree of death and destruction in Gaza, raises questions about potential violations of international humanitarian law by these officials, which may amount to war crimes" ("Report of the independent commission of inquiry established pursuant to Human Rights Council resolution S-21/1," June 24, 2015. Available at http://www.ohchr.org/EN/HRBodies/HRC/CoIGazaConflict/Pages/ReportCoIGaza.aspx#report [accessed August 6, 2015]).

64 Barak Ravid, Avi Issacharoff, and Jack Khoury, "Israel, Hamas Reach Gilad Shalit Prisoner Exchange Deal, Officials Say," *Haaretz* October 11, 2011. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/israel-hamas-reach-gilad-shalit-prisoner-exchange-deal-officials-say-1.389404 (accessed March 23, 2016).

65 Butler, *Frames of War*, 25–6.

66 Butler, *Precarious Life*, 32.

67 See Abeer Baker and Anat Matar (eds.), *Threat*: *Palestinian Political Prisoners in Israel* (London: Pluto Press, 2011).

68 Žižek, *The Parallax View* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), 371.

69 Agamben argues that the legally "unclassifiable and unnamable" prisoners of Guantánamo Bay have effectively become the paradigmatic subjects of "bare life" (*State of Exception*, 3–4).

70 Butler, "What is the value of Palestinian lives?" The 2014 Edward Said Memorial Lecture with Dr. Judith Butler. The Palestinian Center in Washington, D.C. Monday, October 13, 2014. Available at http://www.thejerusalemfund.org/ht/display/ContentDetails/i/49000/pid/897 (accessed August 10, 2015).

71 Levinas assumes this narrative when he describes the Israelis as "surrounded on all sides and by vast stretches of land containing the great Arab people of which they form a part. They call themselves Palestinians" (Levinas, "Zionisms," 278).

72 For example, Democrat Representative Eliot Engel from New York stated, "The

terrorist organization that runs Gaza called Hamas, bought and paid for by Iran, thinking that it can use terrorism as a way of somehow getting its state, must understand that in order to gain acceptance of nations in the free world, that it needs to renounce terror, that it needs to recognize Israel's right to exist, and that it needs to abide by all previous resolutions that were signed by the Palestinian Authority. It doesn't do it because it's a terrorist state. It doesn't do it because its vow is to destroy the Jewish State of Israel. It doesn't do it because, like Hezbollah and like Osama bin Laden and like al Qaeda [*sic*], it thinks it can use terrorism to establish its aims and goals, but it cannot." Republican Representative Dana Rohrabacher from California offered a similar one-dimensional assessment of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: "The hate-filled radicals who launched missiles into Israel—Hamas triggermen, not Israeli pilots—are the ones who are really responsible for the horrible mayhem we are witnessing in Gaza. The radical Islamists ruthlessly and without any remorse did what they knew would bring retaliation and result in the slaughter of their own people. The hatred of Israel in the hearts of these Hamas radicals clearly outweighs their commitment to the safety and well-being of their own people. That's a hard fact. And that after shooting rockets into Israel, they hide among and behind non-combatants—women, and children—makes their actions even more despicable." These comments, and those of many other government officials, can be found on AIPAC's web-document titled "American Leaders Speak Out in Support of Israel's Right to Self Defense." Available at http://www.aipac.org/~/media/Publications/Policy%20and%20Politics/Source%20Materials/Congressional%20Action/2008/CongressIsraelGazaSelfDefense.pdf (accessed August 15, 2015). While it might be convenient for such U.S. leaders to draw a "moral" distinction between the guilty Hamas and the innocent Palestinian population (thus acknowledging that not all Palestinians are a priori evil), the distinction itself should be seen as profoundly ideological, distorting the all-pervasive logic that interprets and transforms any violent form of resistance (even in self-defense) to Israeli military into an act of terrorism. Before Hamas, it was of course the more secular Palestinian Liberation Organization that was subjected to the same logic.

73 Ilan Pappé, "The Inevitable War on Terror: De-terrorising the Palestinians," in *States of War since 9/11: Terrorism, Sovereignty and The War on Terror*, ed. Alex Houen (New York: Routledge, 2014), 86.

74 According to Puar, Western nations deploy their sensitivity to queerness as a means "to castigate the other as homophobic *and* perverse, and construct the imperialist center as 'tolerant' but sexually, racially, and gendered normal" (Jasbir Puar, "Queer Times, Queer Assemblages," *Social Text* 84–5 (23) [2005], 122). See also Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham:

Duke University Press, 2007); Butler, *Frames of War*, 128; Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*, 48–9.

75 Ironically, Netanyahu is less progressive at home when it comes LGBT issues, avoiding the subject matter altogether. See Barak Ravid, "Proud at AIPAC, but When It Comes to LGBT Rights, the PM Doesn't Even Talk the Talk," *Haaretz*, December 15, 2013. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/blogs/diplomania/.premium-1.563623 (accessed August 6, 2015); Aeyal Gross, "Pinkwashing Debate Gay Rights in Israel Are Being Appropriated for Propaganda Value," *Haaretz*, June 10, 2015. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/.premium-1.660349 (accessed August 6, 2015).

76 "PM Netanyahu Welcomes Austrian Chancellor Werner Faymann (June 23, 2010)." Available at http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/ForeignPolicy/Iran/Pages/Iran_Statements_Israeli_leaders-June_2010.aspx. Assessed August 6, 2015.

77 PM Netanyahu, speech at the 2014 Institute for Counter-Terrorism's 14th International Conference on Counter-Terrorism, available at http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/PressRoom/2014/Pages/PM-Netanyahu-addresses-International-Conference-on-Counter-Terrorism-11-Sep-2014.aspx (accessed August 3, 2015).

78 Žižek, *Iraq: The Borrowed Kettle* (New York: Verso, 2005), 45.

79 Pappé, "The Inevitable War on Terror," 96.

80 Ibid., 86.

81 Quoted in Tariq Ali, "Remembering Edward Said," *New Left Review* 24 (2003): 64. Again: "In the main, [Hamas's] ideas are protests against Israeli occupation, their leaders neither especially visible nor impressive, their writings rehashes of old nationalist tracts, now couched in an 'Islamic' idiom" (Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 405).

82 There is a tragic irony inflecting Hamas, since they are the ones actually fighting the destabilizing presence of Islamic State at home, while being characterized as a fanatical Islamist organization for resisting their siege: "Though Hamas has stringently maintained the ceasefire it inked when hostilities ended last August, Israel has repeatedly attacked Gaza's fishermen as well as farmers working in areas near the Israeli border wall. As despair spreads, the previously minute ranks of Salafist extremists are expanding and pledging allegiance to the Islamic State (IS), the brutal theocratic crew that has established a 'caliphate' in parts of Syria and Iraq and whose followers in Gaza have declared war on Hamas. Gaza's IS-allied factions have adopted a simple formula for undermining Hamas that begins with the launching of a crude rocket or mortar usually into an unpopulated area of southern Israel. That these do little or no damage hardly matters, since IS followers know that Israel will respond with airstrikes targeting Hamas-controlled facilities. Through these provocations, IS in Gaza has established an alliance of

convenience with the Israeli military, with each relying on the other to tighten the vise on Hamas" (Blumenthal, "Waiting for the Next Israeli Assault in Gaza").

83 Said, "Dignity, Solidarity and the Penal Colony," in *The Politics of Anti-Semitism*, eds. Alexander Cockburn and Jeffrey St. Clair (Oakland: AK Press, 2003), 152.

84 Homi Bhabha, "Untimely Ends," *Artforum* 42, 6 (2004): 19.

85 Nahum Goldmann, *The Jewish Paradox: A Personal Memoir*, trans. Steve Cox (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1978), 99.

86 Quoted in Jonathan Mendilow, *Ideology, Party Change, and Electoral Campaigns in Israel, 1965–2001* (New York: SUNY Press, 2003), 209.

87 One can, of course, always read Barak's response as a display of militaristic masculinity: *he* would never submit to a foreign authority, even if in this hypothetical case the foreign force is Israel.

88 Ethan Bronner, "Further Accounts of Gaza Killings Released," *The New York Times*, March 20, 2009. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/2009/03/20/world/middleeast/21gaza.html?_r=0 (accessed August 14, 2015). See also Breaking the Silence, *Our Harsh Logic: Israeli Soldiers' Testimonies from the Occupied Territories, 2000–2010* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2012).

89 Noam Chomsky stresses the ideological convenience in seeing Hamas merely as a terror organization and proxy for Iran, lacking any aspiration for a just solution to the conflict with Israel: "Hamas is regularly described as 'Iranian-backed Hamas, which is dedicated to the destruction of Israel.' One will be hard put to find something like 'democratically elected Hamas, which has long been calling for a two-state settlement in accord with the international consensus'—blocked for over 30 years by the U.S. and Israel. All true, but not a useful contribution to the Party Line, hence dispensable" (Noam Chomsky, *Gaza in Crisis: Reflections on Israel's War Against the Palestinians* [New York: Simon and Schuster, 2011], 93).

90 Following *Operation Protective Edge*, however, none of the leading Israeli politicians from the Israeli left displayed any such willingness to break the frame of the conflict. Quite the contrary, Zionist Union leader Isaac Herzog matched if not surpassed Netanyahu's uncompromising rhetoric, accusing the Prime Minister of being "weak against Hamas." Netanyahu's problem is that he did not "hit them on the head and on time" (Gil Hoffman, "Herzog attacks Netanyahu from the Right, Says He 'strengthened Hamas,'" *The Jerusalem Post* February 8, 2015. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2015/02/leader-attacks-netanyahu#sthash.NWpNwTrB.dpuf (accessed August 14, 2015).

91 Similarly, Richard Falk, drawing from the example of the IRA and its transformation as a "political other," urges Israel, the United States, and the European Union to treat "the Palestinian other, including Hamas, as a human subject and political actor with rights, status, and feelings" (Richard Falk, "How to Live Together Well: Interrogating the Israel/Palestine Conflict," in *Living Together:*

Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace, ed. Elisabeth Weber [New York: Fordham University Press, 2013], 287).

92 "Judith Butler on Hamas, Hezbollah & the Israel Lobby (2006)." Available at http://www.jpost.com/Israel-Elections/Herzog-attacks-Netanyahu-from-the-Right-says-he-strengthened-Hamas-390412 (accessed August 6, 2015).

93 "Those political organizations define themselves as anti-imperialist, and anti-imperialism is one characteristic of the global left, so on that basis one could describe them as part of the global left" (Butler, "Judith Butler responds to attack: 'I affirm a Judaism that is not associated with state violence,'" *Mondoweiss*, August 27, 2012. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2012/08/judith-butler-responds-to-attack-i-affirm-a-judaism-that-is-not-associated-with-state-violence#sthash.w9XGRDfs.dpuf. Assessed August 6, 2015.

94 Commenting on detractors' labeling her an anti-Semite, a self-hating Jew, and so forth, Butler argued, "When one set of Jews labels another set of Jews 'anti-Semitic,' they are trying to monopolize the right to speak in the name of the Jews. So the allegation of anti-Semitism is actually a cover for an intra-Jewish quarrel" (Butler, "I affirm a Judaism that is not associated with state violence").

95 Butler, "What is the value of Palestinian lives?" Mari Ruti asks whether Butler's emphasis on the ungrievability of the Palestinian does not in fact perpetuate a certain othering of the Palestinian as *incapable* of being mourned: "[I]n painting a portrait of the non-Western 'other' as intrinsically ungrievable, Butler is inadvertently participating in the very dynamic of othering the other that she is trying to escape; on a certain level, her discourse implies that the non-Western subject is always an other—is never a subject—when in fact this other, within his or her own society, *is* a subject (someone with a name and face, personal history, family, hobbies, and perhaps even slogans by which he or she lives)" (Mari Ruti, *Between Levinas and Lacan: Self, Other, Ethics* [New York: Bloomsbury, 2015], 46). While this is generally a valid concern (when Western philosophers and critics theorize about the colonized other, they should be careful not to unwittingly duplicate the logic that they seek to contest), I do not believe that Butler is susceptible to this line of critique, since she is clearly foregrounding the Western frames or structures of perception and affect, and their relation to the representations of Palestinians. Butler does not conflate or collapse an Israeli/Western discourse about the Palestinians and the Palestinians themselves (who the Palestinians are and what they can do). Or rather, the hegemonic field of discourse does not preclude Palestinian non-conformity and agency. As we saw, this is in part the reason she distances her position from that of Agamben. Palestinian collective mourning is itself a manifestation of freedom, of resistance to Israel's reduction of Palestinians to bare life. Ariella Azoulay and Adi Ophir take up the Palestinians' obstinate desire to mourn their dead as a rebuke to

Israel's thanatopolics, "turn[ing] abandoned life into sanctified life" (Azoulay and Ophir, "Abandoning Gaza," 185).

96 Sara Rushing, "Preparing for Politics: Judith Butler's Ethical Dispositions," *Contemporary Political Theory* 9 (3) (2010): 296.

97 Butler, *Frames of War*, 179.

98 Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters: A Plea for Ethical Violence," in *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, eds. Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 140–1.

99 Quoted in "Introduction," in *The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology*, eds. Slavoj Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2006), 4.

100 Žižek reads the neighbor in terms of Lacan's three registers: "First, there is the imaginary other—other people 'like me,' my fellow human beings with whom I am engaged in the mirrorlike relationships of competition, mutual recognition, and so forth. Then, there is the symbolic 'big Other'—the 'substance' of our social existence, the impersonal set of rules that coordinate our coexistence. Finally, there is the Other qua Real, the impossible Thing, the 'inhuman partner,' the Other with whom no symmetrical dialogue, mediated by the symbolic Order, is possible. And it is crucial to perceive how these three dimensions are hooked up. The neighbor (*Nebenmensch*) as the Thing means that, beneath the neighbor as my semblant, my mirror image, there always lurks the unfathomable abyss of radical Otherness, of a monstrous Thing that cannot be 'gentrified'" (Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters," 143).

101 Ibid., 162.

102 Derrida, "Some Statements and Truisms about Neologisms, Newisms, Postisms, Parasitisms, and other small Seismisms," in *The States of "Theory": History, Art, and Critical Discourse*, ed. David Carroll (New York: Columbia University Press, 1989), 80.

103 "You shall not hate your brother in your heart, but you shall reason with your neighbor, lest you bear sin because of him. You shall not take vengeance or bear any grudge against the sons of your own people, but you shall love your neighbor as yourself: I am the LORD" (Lev. 19:17-18).

104 Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters," 140.

105 Ibid.,143–4.

106 Levinas, "The *I* and the Totality," in *Entre Nous*, 28.

107 Žižek, "Neighbors and Other Monsters," 161.

108 Ibid., 162

109 Ibid.

110 Immanuel Kant, "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?" in *Perpetual Peace and Other Essays*, trans. Ted Humphrey (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), 45.

111 Defense minister Moshe Ya'alon admonished the nature of their motivation: "Their refusal is politically, not morally, motivated. Soldiers should go to their commanders when they have a problem. Our officers and soldiers are doing sacred work which saves many lives and they deserve our gratitude. I will not allow a political abuse of this" (Peter Beaumont, "Israeli Refuseniks will be Treated as Criminals, Says Defence Minister," *Guardian*, Monday September 15, 2014. Available at http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/sep/15/israeli-refuseniks-are-criminals-defence-minister [accessed August 10, 2015]). A morally motivated objection presumably conforms to Kant's dictum (criticize military policy all you want, but obey your commanders and do your duty as a member of the occupying force). But a politically motivated objection challenges the assumptions and principles governing what constitutes legitimate and illegitimate critique of the State of Israel. It calls into doubt Israel's foundational claim that "the IDF is the most moral army in the world," which was reiterated by Netanyahu after *Operation Protective Edge* and the claims of the *refuseniks* (Beaumont, "Israeli Refuseniks will be Treated as Criminals").

112 Forty-three reservists in Unit 8200 (an elite IDF-intel unit) sent a letter to Netanyahu and senior defense figures, informing them of their refusal to participate in the "political persecution" of the Palestinians. What they were asked to do went well beyond legitimate concerns for national self-defense. They were not managing the enemy, but "driving parts of Palestinian society against itself" (Jonathan Cook, "Israeli Refuseniks Expose Occupation's Dark Underbelly," *Mondoweiss*, September 24, 2014. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2014/09/refuseniks-occupations-underbelly [accessed August 15, 2015]).

113 Žižek, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real* (New York: Verso, 2002), 116.

114 In *Less than Nothing*, Žižek points out that there are two ways of negating the statement that "material reality is all there is." Drawing on Kant's distinction between "negative judgment" and "infinite judgment" (which he reads in the backdrop of Lacan's "formulae of sexuation"), we could say that "material reality is not all there is" and "material reality is non-all." The former is a negative judgment in that it negates the predicate (implying some transcendent spiritual reality), whereas the latter is an infinite judgment that expresses the *non-all* of reality without suggesting any exception. Going beyond the simple slogan "material reality is all there is," we get an alternative understanding of materialism: there is nothing which is not material reality *and* material reality is non-all (Žižek, *Less Than Nothing: Hegel and the Shadow of Dialectical Materialism* [New York: Verso, 2012], 742).

115 Žižek, *The Puppet and the Dwarf* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 69. Butler is critical of Žižek's brand of Lacanian theory. She is suspicious of his appeal to a Real that is outside the Symbolic: "Žižek begins his critique of what he calls

'poststructuralism' through the invocation of a certain kind of matter, a 'rock' or a 'kernel' that not only resists symbolization and discourse, but is precisely what poststructuralism, in his account, itself resists and endeavors to dissolve" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter: On the Discursive Limits of "Sex"* [New York: Routledge, 1993], 148–9). Yet, Žižek's formulation of the Real as what points to the failure or incompleteness of the Symbolic suggests the possibility of some rapprochement between the two. Seeing the Palestinian as (real) neighbor or grievable *homo sacer* are both attempts to expose the limits of Zionist discourse and its discursive constructions of the Palestinian other.

116 This spirit of resistance persists in the streets of the Occupied Territories, in those rare but pregnant moments of solidarity: "Some months ago, a small miracle happened in the occupied West Bank: Palestinian women demonstrating against the Wall were joined by a group of Jewish lesbian women from Israel. The initial mutual mistrust was dispelled in the first confrontation with the Israeli soldiers guarding the Wall, and a sublime solidarity developed, with a traditionally dressed Palestinian woman embracing a Jewish lesbian with spiky purple hair—a living symbol of what our struggle should be" (Žižek, *The Year of Dreaming Dangerously* [New York: Verso, 2012], 46). "Sublime solidarity" trumps nationalism. Like the *refuseniks*, this group of Jewish lesbian women unplug from their cultural given and meet the Palestinian women as real neighbors.

117 Butler argues that "what is refused or repudiated in the formation of the subject continues to determine the subject" (Butler, *Bodies that Matter*, 190).

118 Žižek, "The Real of Sexual Difference," in *Interrogating the Real*, eds. Rex Butler and Scott Stephens (New York: Continuum, 2005), 308.

Chapter 3

1 Jacques Derrida, "A Testimony Given …," in *Questioning Judaism: Interviews*, ed. Elisabeth Weber, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004), 41.

2 Gilles Deleuze and Elias Sanbar, "The Indians of Palestine," in *Two Regimes of Madness*, 199.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid., 198: "Zionism's rationale changed after the Holocaust. Zionism mutated, positing a pseudo-'eternal principle' that Jews everywhere were from time immemorial the 'Other' in whatever society they lived."

7 “The humanism of the suffering servant—the History of Israel—invites us to create a new anthropology, a new historiography, and perhaps, by bringing about the end of Western ‘triumphalism,’ a new history” (Levinas, *Difficult Freedom*, 171).
8 Alexander Gelley, “Introduction,” in *Unruly Examples: On the Rhetoric of Exemplarity* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995), 2.
9 Michael Marder, “The Zionist Synecdoche,” in *Deconstructing Zionism: A Critique of Political Metaphysics* (New York: Bloomsbury, 2013), 158.
10 Aristotle, *Aristotle on Rhetoric: A Theory of Civic Discourse*, trans. George A. Kennedy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 1357b.
11 Deleuze and Sanbar, “The Indians of Palestine,” 196.
12 Arun Saldanha, “Introduction: Bastard and Mixed-Blood are the True Names of Race,” in *Deleuze and Race*, eds. Arun Saldanha and Jason Michael Adams (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2013), 26.
13 Gelley, “Introduction,” 1.
14 Said, *Beginnings*, xvii.
15 Deleuze and Sanbar, “The Indians of Palestine,” 200.
16 Ibid., 199.
17 Étienne Balibar, “A Complex Urgent Universal Political Cause.”
18 Roudinesco, *Revisiting the Jewish Question*, 185.
19 Gargi Bhattacharyya, “Globalizing Racism and Myths of the Other in the ‘War on Terror,’” in *Thinking Palestine*, 46. Bhattacharyya, however, rightfully cautions against the short-term benefits of abstracting the Palestinian cause, of racializing it “as shorthand for inter-ethnic conflict.” Folding into the “clash of civilization” narrative, this “seemingly intractable difference has taken on a new significance—with outcomes that are bad for Palestinians and for antiracism in many other places” (Bhattacharyya, “Globalizing Racism,” 48).
20 Badiou, *Saint Paul: The Foundation of Universalism*, trans. Ray Brassier (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003), 106.
21 Alain Badiou, “Uses of the Word ‘Jew,’” in *Polemics*, trans. Steve Corcoran (New York: Verso, 2006), 230. Like Badiou, Jewish sociologist Zygmunt Bauman has also objected to the ways Israel is “taking advantage of the Holocaust to legitimize unconscionable acts,” such as the illegal construction of the West Bank Wall, which he, in turn, compares to the Warsaw Ghetto Walls (Roman Frister, “Polish-Jewish Sociologist Compares West Bank Separation Fence to Warsaw Ghetto Walls,” *Haaretz*, September 1, 2011. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/polish-jewish-sociologist-compares-west-bank-separation-fence-to-warsaw-ghetto-walls-1.381828 [accessed February 18, 2016]).
22 Badiou, “Uses of the Word ‘Jew,’” 159.
23 See Jean Daniel, *La Prison juive* (Paris: Odile Jacob, 2003).

24 Badiou, *Infinite Thought: Truth and the Return to Philosophy*, trans. Oliver Feltham and Justin Clemens (New York: Continuum, 2005), 51.
25 Žižek, *Violence*, 148.
26 Likewise Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri point out that postmodernist and postcolonial theorists would do better to recognize that they are playing into the hands of Empire or global capitalism, and thus perpetuating the status quo, which gladly celebrates difference: "This new enemy not only is resistant to the old weapons but actually thrives on them, and thus joins its would-be antagonists in applying them to the fullest. Long live difference! Down with essentialist binaries!" (Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000], 138). For a critical assessment of Hardt and Negri's evaluation of difference, see Zahi Zalloua, "The Future of an Ethics of Difference after Hardt and Negri's *Empire*," *symplokē* 16 (1–2) (2008): 127–52.
27 Žižek, *Violence*, 150–1.
28 Ibid., 152.
29 Said, "The Gap Grows Wider," *Al-Ahram Weekly*, March 2000 (No. 471).
30 Seyla Benhabib, "Ethics without Normativity and Politics without Historicity," *Constellations* 20, 1 (2013): 151.
31 Žižek also opposes the alignment of Hamas and Hezbollah with the global Left but for significantly different reasons. Unlike Benhabib, Žižek insists that we see Israel as engaged in state violence, as a neocolonial presence, but the answer to Israeli domination is not religious, or any other form of identitarianism (the path of Hamas and Hezbollah), but a secular mode of critique that foregrounds justice and equality *for all*: "The big question for me—and here I am an unashamed Eurocentrist—is the political solution in Palestine, namely the necessity of a single, secular state. Is the goal of Hezbollah or Hamas a single, secular state, or not? I totally support the Palestinian cause, and even Palestinian 'terror,' provided it is publicly oriented toward a single, secular state. The option proposed by Hamas and Hezbollah is not a single secular state, but the destruction of Israel, driving the Jews 'into the sea.' I don't buy the anti-imperialist solidarity with these forces" (Žižek, "Divine violence and liberated territories. SOFT TARGETS talks with Slavoj Žižek," *Soft Targets*, 14 March 2007). Available at http://www.softtargetsjournal.com/web/zizek.php (accessed November 20, 2015).
32 Benhabib, "Ethics without Normativity," 158.
33 Alain Badiou and Analía Hounie, "The Question of Democracy," *Lacanian Ink*, 28 (2006): 59.
34 Pascal Bruckner, *The Tyranny of Guilt: An Essay on Western Masochism*, trans. Steven Rendall (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), 70. Badiou and Eric Hazan question the evidence and framing of this anti-Semitism in France. They do not see it as a new trend but as a distortion of the complexity of the

Israeli–Palestinian conflict, as a simplification of the Jewish position: "The hostility of these [Black and Arab] young people towards Jews is fundamentally bound up with what is happening in Palestine. They know that, over there, Jewish Israelis are oppressing the Palestinians, whom they consider, for obvious historical reasons, as their brothers. And the people here who are visibly Jews are above all those organizations that claim to be 'representative' of the 'Jewish community,' meaning that they speak in place of others and cut off their speech, especially that of Jews who disagree with them. The support of these organizations for everything done by the state of Israel is practically absolute. There are also, sometimes, Jews in their locality who present themselves as unconditional supporters of Israel. The young people we are referring to then make an amalgam between the Israeli state's anti-Palestinian repression and this distorted image of French Jews, which can lead them to believe all the Jews in the world, here and elsewhere, are their enemies" (Alain Badiou, Eric Hazan, and Ivan Segré, *Reflections on Anti-Semitism*, trans. David Fernbach [New York: Verso, 2013], 13).

35 "Interview: Simon Schama and Alain Finkielkraut Discuss a Perceived Resurgence of Anti-Semitism in the US and Europe," *NPR. All Things Considered*, May 13, 2004. Available at http://www.npr.org/programs/atc/transcripts/2003/may/030513.finkielkraut.html (accessed September 21, 2015).

36 See Bernard-Henri Lévy, *Left in Dark Times: A Stand Against the New Barbarism* (New York: Random House, 2008).

37 Omar Barghouti, *BDS: Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions: The Global Struggle for Palestinian Rights* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2011), 52–3. Said had registered his own doubts about the conflation between Zionism and racism, considering the latter term too abstract to fully account for the phenomenon of Zionism: "*Racism* is too vague a term: Zionism is Zionism" (Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 112; see also Rose, *The Last Resistance,* 194). Said is referring here to the aforementioned 1975 United Nations Resolution 3379, "Zionism is Racism."

38 "When it is levelled at Israel … the charge of apartheid generates not counter-argument backed by counter-evidence, but rather walls of sheer stony denial, if not inarticulate eruptions of blind rage, as though either denial or sheer fury could permanently forestall argument" (Saree Makdisi, "A Racism Outside of Language: Israel's Apartheid," *Pambazuka News*, March 11, 2010. Available at http://www.pambazuka.net/en/category.php/features/62928 (accessed January 19, 2016).

39 Lawrence Kritzman also points to this interpretive trend among contemporary French intellectuals: "As in some parts of the Arab world, instead of seeing the founding of the state of Israel as a response to the Holocaust and European anti-Semitism, Zionism was now represented as a form of colonialism, itself considered racist in nature, and therefore justifiably open to attack" ("The Jews

Who are Not One: Politics and Intellectual Life in France," *Contemporary French and Francophone Studies* 17 (2) [2003]: 145)

40 See Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, Or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay is About You," in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 123–52.

41 See Éric Marty, *Radical French Thought and the Return of the "Jewish Question,"* trans. Alan Astro (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2015); Bruno Chaouat, "Antisemitism Redux: On Literary and Theoretical Perversions," in *Resurgent Antisemitism in Global Perspectives*, ed. Alvin H. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013), 118–39.

42 Pierre-André Taguieff argues for a deep bond between Islam and Marxism: a hatred for capitalism. Their shared affective investment in the project of anti-capitalism/imperialism blinds the Left to Islam's genocidal desires, generating a phantasmatic perception of Israel's enemy as an "intrinsically good Palestinian—the innocent victim *par excellence*," engaged in a "'just liberation struggle'" (Pierre-André Taguieff, *Rising from the Muck: The New Anti-Semitism in Europe* [Chicago: Ivan R. Dee, 2004], 67). For Badiou and Segré, this so-called new anti-Semitism is really a form of anti-Communism: "For the people we are talking about [including Taguieff], whatever they say, what matters to them is not the name 'Jew' but rather the 'fate of the West.' This is the reason they identify 'Jew' with the state of Israel, and so eagerly support this state's war against the Palestinians and other Arabs. This also explains why the American far right, traditionally anti-Semitic, has organized, under Bush and his successors, an unlikely alliance between Christian ultra-conservatives and formerly 'progressive' Jews who have converted to the new world order" (Badiou, Hazan, and Segré, *Reflections on Anti-Semitism*, 30).

43 Pascal Bruckner proposes a similar narrative that pits the West/Israel against the East/Israel's Arab neighbors: "It is wrong to declare that the West is guilty simply because it exists, as if it were an insult to creation, a cosmic catastrophe, a monstrosity to be wiped off the face of the earth. The question of Israel is fundamental in this regard. Through non-recognition of the Jewish state, the entire Western World is held to be illegitimate" (Pascal Bruckner, *The Tears of the White Man*: *Compassion as Contempt*, trans. William R. Beer [New York: Free Press, 1986], 127).

44 Kritzman quotes Levinas favorably on the significance of being Jewish: "The Jew is the very entrance of the religious event in the world, better still, [the Jew] is the impossibility of a world without religion" (quoted in Kritzman, "The Jews Who are Not One," 150).

45 Kritzman, "The Jews Who are Not One," 150.

46 Ibid., 148.
47 Ibid.
48 See the website of Adalah (The Legal Center for Arab Minority Rights in Israel). Adalah has "collect[ed] more than 50 Israeli laws enacted since 1948 that directly or indirectly discriminate against Palestinian citizens of Israel in all areas of life, including their rights to political participation, access to land, education, state budget resources, and criminal procedures." Available at http://www.adalah.org/en/content/view/7771 (accessed September 11, 2015). Also, as Saree Makdisi notes, "Unlike Jewish citizens, who are recognised as having a national identity, Israeli law methodically strips Palestinian citizens of their national identity and reduces them to mere ethnicity, which is why the state invented the term 'Israeli Arabs' to refer to them. (That term is never used to refer to the Arab Jews who make up a considerable proportion of Israel's Jewish population—the real Israeli Arabs—because of course in their case Israel wants to erase their Arab identity and absorb them as Jews, whereas in the case of Palestinian citizens the reverse holds true: they can't be absorbed as Jews, so their indigestible Arabness is emphasised)" (Saree Makdisi, "A Racism Outside of Language").
49 Cf. Robert Stam and Ella Shohat, *Race in Translation: Culture Wars around the Postcolonial Atlantic* (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 168.
50 Alain Finkielkraut, *The Defeat of the Mind*, trans. Judith Friedlander (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 62.
51 Ibid., 65.
52 Ibid., 57.
53 Stam and Shohat, *Race in Translation*, 166.
54 Dror Mishani and Aurelia Smotricz, "What Sort of Frenchmen Are They? Interview with Alain Finkielkraut," *Haaretz*, November 15, 2005. Reprinted in Amikam Nachmani, *Europe and Its Muslim Minorities: Aspects of Conflict, Attempts at Accord* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2009), 165
55 Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, trans. Kevin O'Neill and David Suchoff (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1994), 17.
56 Ibid.
57 Ibid., 35.
58 Ibid., 34.
59 Ibid., 9.
60 Ibid., 38.
61 Finkielkraut does not rule out all forms of identification; it is only the Jews of the Shoah who are exempt from such appropriative identification. In response to the 2015 *Charlie Hebdo* murders, for example, Finkielkraut defended the slogan "Je suis Charlie" as a manifestation of the Republican ideals of secularism and the freedom of self-expression, and took issue with the Leftist intellectual Emmanuel

Todd who had interpreted the slogan as really meaning "I am a racist," that is, as a hidden or unconscious expression of Islamophobia (Finkielkraut, *La seule exactitude* [Paris: Stock, 2015], 272–3).

62 Finkielkraut, "Remembrance and Resentment," Seventh International Conference on Holocaust Education: Shoah Education and Remembrance in Hindsight and in Foresight: Text and Context, June 12–13, 2010. Available at www1.yadvashem.org/yv/he/about/events/pdf/finkielkraut.pdf (accessed on October 31, 2015).

63 Ibid.

64 Stam and Shohat, *Race in Translation*, 167. The question of "Jewish narrative envy" informs the controversy surrounding Toni Morrison's dedication of her 1987 novel *Beloved* to the *Sixty Million and more*, that is, to the millions of slaves who died in the Middle Passage (the "and more" might be said to allude to the present, to the aftermath and legacy of slavery). Yet, as Emily Miller Budick observes, this dedication is rarely read on its own terms: "In the American context this dedication cannot, especially to a Jewish readership, but recall the 'six million' of the Holocaust" (Emily Miller Budick, *Blacks and Jews in Literary Conversation* [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998], 161). Or in Stanley Crouch's more negative, and less imaginative, words: "For *Beloved*, above all else, is a blackface holocaust novel" (Stanley Crouch, "Aunt Medea," in *Notes of a Hanging Judge: Essays and Reviews, 1979–1989* [New York: Oxford University Press, 1990], 205). For Morrison, it is never a matter of diminishing the ethical relevance of the Shoah, of perversely deciding that African slaves were more abject than European Jews (crudely interpreting "sixty million" as "six million times ten"). Rather, she is seeking to understand the Middle Passage as an event, to draw attention to this *historical trauma* as "something that has *no precedent in the history of the world*, in terms of length of time and the nature and specificity of its devastation. If Hitler had won the war and established his thousand year Reich, at some point he would have stopped killing people, the ones he didn't want around, because he would have needed some to do the labor for nothing. And the first 200 years of that Reich would have been exactly what that period was in this country for Black people. It would have been just like that. Not for five years, but for 200 years or more" ("'Talk with Toni Morrison': Interview with Elsie B. Washington," in *Conversations with Toni Morrison*, ed. Danille Taylor-Guthrie [Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 1994], 235, emphasis added).

65 Finkielkraut, "Remembrance and Resentment."

66 Ibid.

67 Finkielkraut, "In the Name of the Other: Reflections on the Coming Anti-Semitism," *Azure* 18 (Autumn 2004): 24.

68 Alain Badiou and Alain Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, trans. Susan Spitzer (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014), 39.

69 Finkielkraut, "In the Name of the Other," 24.

70 Ibid., 29, 28.

71 Finkielkraut gives this concern for the Palestinian cause a further, albeit reductive, psychological gloss: "To today's humanists, this definition [Zionism "as that which converts the 'capital of victimhood' into the 'capital of power and violence'"] is gratifying. For if the extermination of the Jews is perpetuated through the Jewish oppression of Palestinians, then the inveterate blamers turn out to be blameworthy themselves. And if those toward whom we behaved shamefully are now behaving shamefully themselves, then there is no more need to feel ashamed" (Finkielkraut, "The Religion of Humanity and the Sin of the Jews," *Azure* 21 [Summer 2005]: 24). Finkielkraut's words, in their neglect to assess the question of Jewish oppression of Palestinians, call to mind Sartre's claim: "If the Jew did not exist, the anti-Semite would invent him" (Sartre, *Anti-Semitism and Jew*, 13). *If the Palestinian did not exist, today's humanist would invent him*. In other words, the humanist of the Left needs the Palestinian to lessen his guilt about Europe's silence over the Shoah.

72 Finkielkraut, "In the Name of the Other," 29.

73 Alain Finkielkraut and Peter Sloterdijk, *Les battements du monde* (Paris: Pauvert, 2003), 38.

74 Jean-Claude Milner, *Les penchants criminels de l'Europe démocratique* (Paris, Editions Verdier, 2003).

75 Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, 163.

76 "For Finkielkraut, the contribution of the Jewish people to the debate over diversity is the notion that there is something that transcends all particularisms, and that very transcendence is what he calls humanity" (Nathalie Rachlin, "Alain Finkielkraut and the Politics of Cultural Identity," *SubStance* 76/77 [1995]: 82).

77 Blanchot, *Political Writings, 1953–1993*, 163.

78 Finkielkraut, *The Defeat of the Mind*, 123.

79 Finkielkraut, *The Imaginary Jew*, 39.

80 Alain Badiou, *Conditions*, trans. Steven Corcoran (New York: Continuum, 2008).

81 Badiou, *Ethics: An Essay on the Understanding of Evil*, trans. Peter Hallward (New York: Verso, 2001), 18–29.

82 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 55–6.

83 Ibid., 56.

84 Badiou, *Ethics*, 27.

85 Ibid., 25, 27. Badiou's comment that there is only an "infinite multiplicity of differences" reflects his ontological view that being *is* mathematics. Badiou credits Cantorian set theory for waking him from his "Sartrean slumber" (quoted in Hallward, *Badiou: A Subject to Truth* [Minneapolis: University of Minneapolis Press, 2003], 60), where he could only envisage being as an opaque

and stagnate "in-itself." Set theory enables Badiou to conceptualize being as an "inconsistent multiplicity" (Badiou, *Being and Event*, trans. Oliver Feltham [New York: Continuum, 2006], 25). Being-as-being is unstructured, without-oneness. What imposes structure on the world is a process which Badiou dubs "counting-as-one": "the one, which is not, solely exists as operation … there is no one, only the count-as-one" (Badiou, *Being and Event*, 24). If the One in fact existed as something unified (prior to any operational function), the possibility of an event would be a priori foreclosed.

86 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 98.

87 Badiou, *Ethics*, 70.

88 Ibid., 67. Žižek notes the performative character of Badiouian truth: "Up to a point, one can also say that Knowledge is constative, while Truth is performative" (Žižek, *The Ticklish Subject: The Absent Centre of Political Ontology* [New York: Verso, 1999], 167 n.9).

89 Badiou, *Ethics*, 39.

90 Ruti, *Between Levinas and Lacan*, 96.

91 Badiou, *Ethics*, 42. According to Badiou, there are the four generic truth procedures or conditions for an event: mathematics, art, politics, and love: "A subject is nothing other than an active fidelity to the event of truth. This means that a subject is a militant of truth. I philosophically founded the notion of 'militant' at a time when the consensus was that any engagement of this type was archaic. Not only did I found this notion, but I considerably enlarged it. The militant of a truth is not only the political militant working for the emancipation of humanity in its entirety. He or she is also the artist-creator, the scientist who opens up a new theoretical field, or the lover whose world is enchanted" (Badiou, *Being and Event*, xiii).

92 Deleuze and Sanbar, "The Indians of Palestine," 200.

93 Hannah Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1973), 296.

94 Lex Takkenberg, *The Status of Palestinian Refugees in International Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), 195.

95 Susan Brannon, "The Occupation," *Electronic Intifada*, 6 June 2002. Available at https://electronicintifada.net/content/occupation/3868 (accessed March 27, 2016).

96 Deleuze, "Stones," in *Two Regimes of Madness: Texts and Interviews 1975–1995*, ed. David Lapoujade (New York: Semiotext(e), 2006), 338–9.

97 While now it is less common to deny the existence of Palestinians (the prevailing, albeit defunct, rhetoric of a two-state solution bears witness to this new reality), a Zionist fantasy of a pure Israel (a Zionist one-state solution) persists. For instance, it is still visible in Israel's insistence on an undivided Jerusalem, and especially in

its political practices. By rewarding Palestinian non-violence with the construction of additional illegal settlements, the Israeli government not only weakens the Palestinian Authority (and thus strengthens Hamas), it also alters the physical landscape on the ground, making "a two-state solution *de facto* impossible" (Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 7).

98 Hallward, *Badiou*, 122.

99 Rancière, *The Emancipated Spectator*, trans. Gregory Elliott (New York: Verso, 2009), 103.

100 Rancière, *The Politics of Aesthetics: Distribution of the Sensible*, trans. Gabriel Rockhill (New York: Continuum, 2004).

101 Rancière, *Disagreement: Politics and Philosophy*, trans. Julie Rose (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 35.

102 Ibid., 28.

103 Ibid., 29.

104 Todd May, "Subjectification in the First Palestinian Intifada," in *Contemporary Political Movements and the Thought of Jacques Rancière: Equality in Action* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 63.

105 Badiou, *Ethics*, 41.

106 Ibid., 10.

107 Ibid., 11.

108 Ibid., 11–12.

109 Ibid., 12.

110 For example, Badiou, in his exchange with Jean-Claude Milner, does not shy away from being "on the side of the speaking bodies that are being killed, humiliated, and locked up," listing the ways Israelis victimized, and continue to victimize, their Arab neighbor: "The Palestinians are the ones who have had to flee, abandon their lands, witness the destruction of their homes, be shut up in ghettos and camps, spend hours to go from one village to another and get across walls" (Alain Badiou and Jean-Claude Milner, *Controversies: Politics and Philosophy in Our Time*, trans. Susan Spitzer [Cambridge: Polity Press, 2014], 153).

111 Mari Ruti, *The Singularity of Being: Lacan and the Immortal Within* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 208.

112 Badiou, *Being and Event*, xiii.

113 Rancière, *Disagreement*, 1–60.

114 Levinas, "Zionisms," 278. Jason Caro rightly underscores the disturbing settler logic at work here: "Ignoring the fearsome resonance here with settler notions of *terra nullius*, i.e. the early modern claim that a desired land was supposedly empty of inhabitants, this analysis … amalgamates the Palestinian people with a wider people and area while simultaneously refusing to recognize them as Palestinians"

(Jason Caro, "Levinas and the Palestinians," *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 35, 6 [2009]: 679).

115 Deleuze points out how the concept of *Terra Nullius* takes the form of spectacle in the West: "The Americans have made a multi-billion dollar Western out of the whole affair. We are to believe that the State of Israel has been established in an empty land which has been awaiting the return of the ancient Hebrews for centuries. The ghosts of a few Arabs that are around, keeping watch over the sleepy stones, came from somewhere else. The Palestinians—tossed aside, forgotten—have been called on to recognize the right of Israel to exist while the Israelis have continued to deny the fact of the existence of a Palestinian people" (Deleuze, "Stones," 338).

116 Deleuze and Sanbar, "The Indians of Palestine," 197.

117 Ibid.

118 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 9.

119 Rancière, *The Philosopher and His Poor*, ed. Andrew Parker (Durham: Duke University Press, 2004), 223.

120 As May suggests, the second Intifada set back some of the advances made by the first uprising, reifying—rather than expanding and deepening—each people's perception of the other: "For many Israelis, Palestinians did not, and still do not, appear in their world except in times of violence and then only as a personal threat. For many Palestinians, Israelis appeared in their world constantly, but as an overwhelming and irresistible force" (May, "Subjectification," 66).

121 This image was of course further "Islamicized" during the Gaza wars.

122 Badiou, *Saint Paul*, 109.

123 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 61.

124 Ibid.

125 Ibid., 62.

126 "As to Hamas and its actions in the Occupied Territories," Said writes, "I know that the organization is one of the only ones expressing resistance and that the kidnapping of the soldier of an occupying army is morally less unacceptable than abducting or killing civilians riding a bus. Yet for any secular intellectual to make a devil's pact with a religious movement is, I think, to substitute convenience for principle. It is simply the other side of the pact we made during the past several decades with dictatorship and nationalism, for example, supporting Saddam Hussein when he went to war with 'the Persians'" (Said, *Peace and its Discontents: Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process* [New York: Vintage, 1996], 110). In *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza*, Sara Roy rightly updates Hamas's profile, pointing out how, to become a more effective presence in Gaza, the Islamic organization "de-ideologized Islam" and had to "broaden its definition of Islam and 'Muslimness' in order to claim and maintain as large a number of adherents

as possible" (Sara Roy, *Hamas and Civil Society in Gaza: Engaging the Islamist Social Sector* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2011], 181). This maturing of Hamas, Roy argues, is evidenced most clearly in the party's real investment in Gaza's social sector.

127 In his interview with Deleuze, Sanbar highlights the PLO's proposed solution to the conflict: "A democratic state in Palestine, a state where the walls that exist between inhabitants, whoever they are, would be demolished" (Deleuze and Sanbar, "The Indians of Palestine," 199).

128 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 52. In many ways, Hamas's identitarian politics constitutes a betrayal of the first Intifada, which was a solidarity movement that foregrounded equality for all. "Hamas, which sees itself as countering Israeli policy [racist inegalitarianism toward the Palestinians], actually mirrors it (Todd May, "Subjectification," 69).

129 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 81. Žižek makes a similar point, returning repeatedly to Walter Benjamin's thesis that "every rise of Fascism bears witness to a failed revolution." For Žižek, the popularity of radical Islam is "the result of the left's failure, but simultaneously a proof that there was a revolutionary potential, dissatisfaction, which the left was not able to mobilize" (Žižek, *The Year of Living Dangerously*, 73).

130 Badiou, *Polemics*, 164, emphasis added. Badiou is drawing here from Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

131 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 62.

132 Ibid., 48.

133 "For Badiou, differences are fundamentally competitive and agonistic until they come under the power of grace that comes through an encounter with an evental truth. At that point, differences become vehicles for carrying the universal and univocal proclamation of the True. […] The True transforms differences from being the basis of competition and struggle to being *adiaphora*, matters of indifference" (Neil Elliott, "Ideological Closure in the Christ-Event: A Marxist Response to Alain Badiou's Paul," in *Paul, Philosophy, and the Theopolitical Vision: Critical Engagements with Agamben, Badiou, Žižek, and Others*, ed. Douglas Harink [Eugene: Cascade Books, 2010], 131–2).

134 Badiou, *Polemics*, 162.

135 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 6.

136 Ibid.

137 This is how Richard Landes and Benjamin Weinthal labeled Judith Butler after her publication of *Parting Ways* and her comments on Hamas and Hezbollah (Richard Landes and Benjamin Weinthal, "The Post-self-destructivism of Judith Butler," *The Wall Street Journal*, September 9, 2012). Available at http://www.wsj.com/articles/

SB10000872396390443921504577641351255227554 (accessed November 20, 2015).

138 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 6.
139 Ibid.
140 Badiou, *Infinite Thought*, 51.
141 Badiou and Finkielkraut, *Confrontation*, 57.
142 Ibid., 64.
143 Badiou, *Ethics*, 115.

Chapter 4

1 Derrida, "A Testimony Given …," 41.
2 Edward Said, "Interview with Ari Shavit: 'My Right of Return.'"
3 I am drawing a parallel here with Fredric Jameson's slogan of "anti-anti-Utopianism" (*Archaeologies of the Future: The Desire Called Utopia and Other Science Fictions* [New York: Verso, 2005], xvi).
4 Judith Butler, "No, It's Not Anti-Semitic," *London Review of Books*, August 21, 2003. Available at http://www.lrb.co.uk/v25/n16/judith-butler/no-its-not-anti-semitic (accessed February 11, 2016).
5 The call for election not only takes the form of suspicion toward the state of Israel but of radical skepticism toward his or her election, sustaining, in the words of Jacques Derrida, "the terrible and indecisive experience of … election" (Derrida, "Abraham, the Other," in *Judeities: Questions for Jacques Derrida*, trans. Gil Anidjar, eds. Bettina Bergo, Joseph Cohen, and Raphael Zagury-Orly [New York: Fordham University Press, 2007], 31).
6 Jürgen Habermas and Jacques Derrida, "February 15, or What Binds Europeans Together: A Plea for a Common Foreign Policy, Beginning in the Core of Europe," *Constellations* 10, 3 (2003): 294.
7 Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 130.
8 Derrida, *Adieu*, 101.
9 Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 120.
10 Derrida, *Politics of Friendship*, trans. George Collins (New York: Verso, 1997), 22.
11 Derrida, *Rogues*, 25.
12 Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 134.
13 Derrida, "The Villanova Roundtable: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida," in *Deconstruction in a Nutshell: A Conversation with Jacques Derrida*, ed. John D. Caputo (New York: Fordham University Press, 1997), 13.
14 Derrida, *Paper Machine*, trans. Rachel Bowlby (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2005), 119.

15 Alain Finkielkraut, "The Religion of Humanity," 26.

16 Jacques Kornberg, *Theodor Herzl*: *From Assimilation to Zionism* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993), 18.

17 Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Graham Burchell (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). See Eugene Holland, "Representation and Misrepresentation in Postcolonial Literature and Theory," *Research in African Literatures* 34, 1 (2003): 159–73.

18 Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 382.

19 Ibid. Paul Patton clarifies what Deleuze and Guattari mean by a deterritorialized relation to dwelling: "To say that nomadic existence is essentially deterritorialised and deterritorialising is not to say that real nomads have no attachment to territory, but rather that their relationship to their territory is different to that of sedentary peoples. They do have territories, which they are reluctant to quit unless driven away by force as they often were under the pressure of colonial occupation, but these territories are not homelands which belong to them so much as the ground or support of their existence" (Paul Patton, *Deleuze and the Political* [New York: Routledge, 2000], 117).

20 Rosi Braidotti, *Nomadic Subjects: Embodiment and Sexual Difference in Contemporary Feminist Theory*, 2nd edn (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 24.

21 Stuart Hall, *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left* (London: Verso, 1988), 10.

22 As Andrew Smith observes, this is especially true in the literary studies wing of the field: "Postcolonial literary studies treat migration generally in terms of its epiphanies: new sight, new knowledge, a new understanding of the relativity of things. All of which, of course, must be true in many respects" (Andrew Smith, "Migrancy, Hybridity, and Postcolonial Literary Studies," in *Postcolonial Literary Studies*, ed. Neil Lazarus [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004], 257).

23 Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 11.

24 Christopher L. Miller cautions as well against the philosopher's nomad and its ambivalent representational status (Christopher L. Miller, *Nationalists and Nomads: Essays on Francophone African Literature and Culture* [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998]). See also Holland, "Representation and Misrepresentation" and Miller's response to Holland's objections, "'We Shouldn't Judge Deleuze and Guattari': A Response to Eugene Holland," *Research in African Literatures* 34 (3) (2003): 129–41.

25 Homi Bhabha, "Statement for the *Critical Inquiry* Board Symposium," *Critical Inquiry* 30 (2) (2003): 347.

26 Julie Wuthnow warns that the Deleuzian-inspired approaches to the nomad work to disempower real subaltern bodies, since they "perpetuate a universalized and unmarked western norm, marginalize 'local knowledges,' prioritize theoretical validation over political exigencies and disallow representations of 'experience'—all with very problematic consequences for the enablement of robust versions of indigenous politics" (Julie Wuthnow, "Deleuze in the Postcolonial: On Nomads and Indigenous Politics," *Feminist Theory* 3 (2) [2002]: 193–4).

27 This is why Glissant resisted conflating the rhizome and the nomad: "Deleuze and Guattari draw … a parallel between rhizomatics and nomadology. But nomadism 'escapes' the effort of the peoples, who tormentedly seek roots … . The rhizome is not nomadic, it takes root, even in air … ; but not being a root [*souche*] predisposes it to 'accept' the other's inconceivableness: the new, neighboring bud that is always possible" (Glissant, *Le discours antillais* [Paris: Gallimard, 1997], 339; my translation).

28 Said, *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000), 173.

29 Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 173.

30 Said, "*Orientalism*, Arab Intellectuals, Marxism, and Myth in Palestinian History," in *Power, Politics, and Culture: Interviews with Edward W. Said*, ed. Gauri Viswanathan (New York: Vintage, 2001), 441–2.

31 Ibid., 441.

32 Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 114.

33 Bryan Cheyette, *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013), 28.

34 I am drawing here on Sara Ahmed's insights on the generative potential of discomfort: "Queer feelings may embrace a sense of discomfort, a lack of ease with the available scripts for living and loving, along with an excitement in the face of the uncertainty of where the discomfort may take us" (Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotions* [New York: Routledge, 2004], 155).

35 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *An Aesthetic Education in the Era of Globalization* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2012), 3.

36 R. Radhakrishnan, "Flights of the Human as Flights from the Human," *symplokē* 23 (1–2) (2015): 191.

37 Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," in *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), 235.

38 For others, Jewish diaspora already gestures toward the relational, fragmented, and excessive character of the self, uncontainable under the master signifiers of State, Nation, Chosen People, and the like. Butler, for example, pits the diaspora—understood as "a mode of living in which alterity is constitutive of who one is"—against the self-assurance of Zionism (Butler, *Parting Ways*, 120). See also

Daniel Boyarin and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity," *Critical Inquiry* 19 (4) (1993): 693–725.

39 Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 174.

40 See Patrick Williams, "'Naturally, I Reject the Term 'Diaspora': Said and Palestinian Dispossession," in *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*, eds. Michelle Keown, David Murphy and James Proctor (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 83–103.

41 Homi Bhabha, "Untimely Ends," 20, 19.

42 Bhabha, "Untimely Ends," 19. Joseph Massad rebukes Bhabha's uncharitable account by showing how Bhabha himself passes over a crucial distinction between "settler-colonizing nationalism" and "anti-colonial nationalism" (Joseph Massad, "The Intellectual Life of Edward Said," *Journal of Palestinian Studies* 33 (3) [2004]: 16).

43 Said, "My Right of Return," 449, emphasis added.

44 It would be wrong, however, to see Said as foreclosing any possibility of forgiveness. Like for Derrida and Améry, genuine forgiveness "is not, it *should not be*, normal, normative, normalising. It *should* remain exceptional and extraordinary, in the face of the impossible: as if it interrupted the ordinary course of historical temporality" (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 32). From the standpoint of the Palestinians, to forgive the Israelis—for the Nakba, for the current occupation—is impossible. Palestinian forgiveness *would be* to forgive the unforgivable (Derrida, *On Cosmopolitanism and Forgiveness*, 32).

45 Jean Améry, *At the Mind's Limits: Contemplations by a Survivor on Auschwitz and Its Realities*, trans. Sidney Rosenfeld and Stella P. Rosenfeld (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1980), 72. Cf. Žižek, *Violence*, 189–90.

46 Said, "My Right of Return," 449.

47 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 54.

48 Ibid., 3.

49 Ibid., 60.

50 Quoted in Peter Hallward, "Deleuze and the 'World without Others,'" *Philosophy Today* 41, 4 (1997): 531. See Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester, with Charles Stivale (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 301–21.

51 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 58.

52 Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 186.

53 Ibid., 562.

54 Said, *Freud and the Non-European*, 23–4.

55 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 336.

56 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, 37.

57 Ibid.

58 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 50.

59 Said, *Out of Place*, 295. I concur with David Huddart that Said's references to his self-puncturing moments of doubt "could hardly be clearer in holding off any postcolonial singularized identity, or any idealization of the postcolonial nomad or exile" (David Huddart, "Edward Said between Singular and Specific," in *Postcolonial Literatures and Deleuze: Colonial Pasts, Differential Futures*, eds. Birgit Kaiser and Lorna Burns [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012], 92).

60 "There is no symmetry in this conflict. One would have to say that. I deeply believe that. There is a guilty side and there are victims. The Palestinians are the victims" (Said, "My Right of Return," 447).

61 See Said, "Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies and Community," in his *Reflections on Exile*, 118–47.

62 Said, "My Right of Return," 447–8.

63 Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 77.

64 Quoted in Said, *Reflections on Exile*, 184.

65 Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, 320.

66 Like Said, Derrida also draws on the incongruity of his own hybridity or hyphened identity as a "Franco-Maghrebian" embodied in the hyphen: "The silence of that hyphen does not pacify or appease anything, not a single torment, not a single torture. It will never silence their memory. It could even worsen the terror, the lesions, and the wounds. A hyphen is never enough to conceal protests, cries of anger or suffering, the noise of weapons, airplanes, and bombs" (Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans. Patrick Menash [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998], 11). This ambivalence of the hyphen makes Derrida an (un)exemplary Jew, "the last and the least of the Jews [*le dernier des Juifs*]" (Derrida, "Abraham, the Other," 13). See also Derrida, "Circumfession," in Jacques Derrida and Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), 190; and Hammerschlag, *The Figural Jew*, 201–60.

67 Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 312.

68 Ibid.

69 Hallward, *Absolutely Postcolonial*, 58.

70 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 312.

71 For example, in his book on Haiti, Hallward explains his commitment to its oppressed people in purely universalistic terms: "This is not a book motivated by any personal association with Haiti, its government or its people, and nor has it emerged from a long familiarity with its history or culture. A philosopher and literary critic by training, I have visited Haiti only twice, and make no claim to the sort of insider or anthropological knowledge that authorizes much published work on the country. … Instead this is purely and simply a political book. In what follows I will assume that politics doesn't concern things that make people different but things that they hold in common. I will assume that true political

action is animated by collective principles that concern everyone by definition—principles of freedom, equality, solidarity, justice … I will assume that the collective action required to apply such a principle requires the self-emancipation of the oppressed" (Hallward, *Damming the Flood: Haiti, Aristide, and the Politics of Containment* [New York: Verso, 2007], xxxiv). There is no affective register; the appeal is exclusively made on the cognitive level.

72 As with any concept, the danger of its reification is never fully evacuated. "Affiliation," Said cautioned, "can easily become a system of thought no less orthodox and dominant than culture itself" (Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* [Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1983], 20).

73 Said, "Criticism and the Art of Politics," in *Power, Politics and Culture*, 129.

74 Said, *Reflections in Exile*, 567.

75 Michel Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*: *Lectures at the Collège de France, 1975–1976*, trans. David Macey (New York: Picador, 2003), 53.

76 Butler, "There are some muffins there if you want … : A Conversation on Queerness, Precariousness, Binationalism, and BDS," in *What Does a Jew Want?: On Binationalism and Other Specters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 217.

77 The "Black Lives Matter" movement was sparked in 2013 after the acquittal of George Zimmerman for the shooting to death of an unarmed Black teenager, Trayvon Martin.

78 It is available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsdpg-9cmSw#t=14 (accessed February 11, 2016).

79 "Statement of Black Palestinian Solidarity." Available at http://www.blackpalestiniansolidarity.com/about.html (accessed February 11, 2016).

80 For many Israelis, calling the West Bank Occupied Territories is itself "factually" wrong, for it suggests that Palestinian claims to the land are legitimate. Some prefer the biblical designation of Judea and Samaria, which effectively efface that claim, and which has the added benefit of opening a theological framework that justifies Israel's existence beyond the whims of the United Nations. Indeed, as Said ponders, "most Israelis are likely to say that the state was established by the war of independence, or some such euphemism, and that in 1967 more territory was 'liberated'" (Said, "[Toward a Dialogue with Edward Said]: Response," *Critical Inquiry* 15 (3) [1989], 640).

81 Žižek, *Violence*, 152.

82 Žižek, "Class Struggle or Postmodernism? Yes, Please!" in *Contingency, Hegemony, Universality: Contemporary Dialogues on the Left*, eds. Judith Butler, Ernesto Laclau, and Slavoj Žižek (New York: Verso, 2000), 90.

83 Quoted in Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Richard Philcox (New York: Grove Press, 2008), 112.

84 James Penney, "Passing into the Universal: Fanon, Sartre, and the Colonial Dialectic," *Paragraph* 27, 3 (2004), 54.
85 Sartre "Black Orpheus," in *What is Literature? And Other Essays*, trans. John McCombie (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1988), 296.
86 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 163.
87 Ibid., 114.
88 Ibid., 118.
89 Ibid., 113.
90 Ibid., 111.
91 Ibid., 116. As James Penney puts it, "Fanon held firmly to the view that racially based identity claims on the part of non-European subjects in colonized situations carried an irreducible, cathartic importance" (Penney, "Passing into the Universal," 56).
92 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 205–6.
93 George Yancy and Judith Butler, "What's Wrong With 'All Lives Matter'?" *New York Times*, January 12, 2015. Available at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/01/12/whats-wrong-with-all-lives-matter/ (accessed February 11, 2016). See also Butler, *Senses of the Subject* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2015), 171–97.
94 David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race: Reflections on Racial Neoliberalism* [Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009], 117).
95 Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 173.
96 "Racial palestinianization is … a conceit about contemporary conditions in terms of a projected past conceived in terms of the politics of the present. The Palestinian is a Philistine, with philistine values, interests, and desires, a primitive in the sense of never having evolved beyond ancient whims, drives, capriciousness, viciousness, and the irresponsible impulses to which they give rise. The Palestinian is driven by nothing but unprovoked hate and anger, incapable of a higher order of values, of deeper causation, of responsibility as a product of free choice" (David Theo Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*, 120).
97 Ibid., 139.
98 Benhabib, "Ethics without Normativity," 151. Benhabib is objecting to Bulter's call for progressive movements like BDS to focus their attention on "the undoing of Israeli colonial power and military force" (Butler, *Parting Ways*, 217; quoted in Benhabib, "Ethics without Normativity," 158).
99 Nadia Abu El-Haj, "Racial Palestinianization and the Janus-Faced Nature of the Israeli State," *Patterns of Prejudice* 44 (1) (2010): 32.
100 A 2015 *Haaretz* editorial unequivocally denounced the normalized racist discourse of the current Knesset under the watch of Netanyahu: "The current Knesset appears to be the most racist in the history of the legislature. It is also the

most boorish and mediocre. Scandal follows scandal, MKs vie with each other to see who will lead the assembly to its nadir. Wednesday's pick was the new deputy interior minister, MK Yaron Mazuz (Likud) who told his Arab colleagues 'we're doing you a favor that you're sitting here,' and called on them to return their identity cards. The most ludicrous moment was when he told them: 'You're in a democratic country, respect it'" (Haaretz editorial, "The Most Racist Knesset in Israel's History," *Haaretz*, 26 June 2015. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/opinion/1.663102 (accessed February 8, 2016). This type of verbal abuse makes visible the assumption that Israeli Palestinians do not really belong in Israel. Their presence in politics, and in the polity, is only tolerated on condition that they accept the Zionist order of things.

101 The Israeli Knesset passed what has been dubbed the "Nakba Law" on March 22, 2011, which instructs the government to deny state funding to any organization, institution, or municipality that commemorates the birth of Israel as a day of mourning.

102 Ilan Pappé thoroughly documents the Zionists' systematic plan to eradicate Palestinians from Jewish land. The Plan D (Dalet in Hebrew) "was both the inevitable product of the Zionist ideological impulse to have an exclusively Jewish presence in Palestine, and a response to developments on the ground once the British cabinet had decided to end the mandate. Clashes with local Palestinian militias provided the perfect context and pretext for implementing the ideological vision of an ethnically cleansed Palestine. The Zionist policy was first based on retaliation against Palestinian attacks in February 1947, and it transformed into an initiative to ethnically cleanse the country as a whole in March 1948. Once the decision was taken, it took six months to complete the mission. When it was over, more than half of Palestine's native population, close to 800,000 people, had been uprooted, 531 villages had been destroyed, and eleven urban neighbourhoods emptied of their inhabitants. The plan decided upon on March 10, 1948, and above all its systematic implementation in the following months, was a clear-cut case of an ethnic cleansing operation, regarded under international law today as a crime against humanity" (Pappé, *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*, xii). See also Walid Khalidi, "Plan Dalet: Master Plan for the Conquest of Palestine," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 18 (1) (1988): 4–33.

103 Palestinian Israeli Amal Helow proposes what might be described as a de-centralizing pedagogy of the other, which would function as an antidote to Israel's anachronistic and insular practices: "Israeli Jews need to recognize that only when our narrative is taught to Jewish children just as the Jewish narrative is taught in Arab schools, will Israel be on its way to becoming a true democracy. Displaying Palestinian symbols does not negate Jewish symbols; quite the opposite: it sends a strong and true message of mutual respect. A state

based on religious affiliation is archaic in today's world. When a state affords democratic rights to only some of its citizens it is not democratic" (Amal Helow, "Challenging Israel to Become Democratic," January 29, 2007. Available at http://www.bitterlemons.org/previous/bl290107ed4.html#pal2 (accessed February 20, 2016).

104 Arthur James Balfour, author of the 1917 Balfour Declaration, articulated in clear terms the Western powers' support for the long-standing claim of the Jewish people for statehood in Palestine at the expense of the contemporary indigenous Palestinian population: "Zionism, be it right or wrong, good or bad, is rooted in age-long traditions, in present needs, in future hopes, of far greater import than the desires and prejudices of the 700,000 Arabs who now inhabit that ancient land" (quoted in Khalidi, *Palestinian Identity*, 252 n.9).

105 Said, *Orientalism*, 307.

106 Abigail B. Bakan, "Race, Class, and Colonialism: Reconsidering the 'Jewish Question,'" in *Theorizing Anti-Racism: Linkages in Marxism and Critical Race Theories*, eds. Abigail Bakan and Enakshi Dua (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2014), 259.

107 Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 86.

108 Butler, *Parting Ways*, 21.

109 "Inside Israel, the 'difference' that counts is that between Jew and non-Jew. So far as land in Israel is concerned, for instance, much of it (nearly 90 percent) is held in trust for the Jewish people, whereas non-Jews cannot juridically derive equal benefits from it simply because they are not Jews" (Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 88).

110 The Israeli government persistently tries to erase the traces of Palestinian presence within its "borders" by reducing Palestinian bodies exclusively to their ethnic designation as Arabs, producing, in turn, the alienated subjectivity of the "Israeli Arab" who is at once robbed of his or her relation to Palestine and seen/designated as an outsider—an undesirable other, a second class citizen—within his or her historical home. Interestingly, as Saree Makdisi observes, "this verbal sleight of hand is very hard to dislodge. I have had several fruitless arguments with the editorial board of the Los Angeles Times about the paper's use of the term 'Israeli Arabs' to refer to Israel's Palestinian citizens. Well, not arguments, exactly—I argue, I present evidence to show the artificial and misleading constructedness of the term and the extent to which Palestinians inside Israel totally refuse it and call themselves Palestinians, but the paper's editors shrug their shoulders and say that I may have a point, but …" (Saree Makdisi, "A Racism Outside of Language").

111 I am adapting Lacan's formulation "subject supposed to know," which denotes the function of the analyst rather than the analyst as such. With this formulation, Lacan underscores the perception of the analysand, his or her view of the analyst

as a figure of absolute certainty, possessing knowledge of the patient's secret meaning or unconscious desire: "He is supposed to know that from which no one can escape, as soon as he formulates it—quite simply, signification" (Jacques Lacan, *The Seminar. Book XI. The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis*, trans. Alan Sheridan [London: Hogarth Press and Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1977], 233). Žižek has also made productive use of Lacan's formula; see Žižek, "The Subject Supposed to Loot and Rape Reality and Fantasy in New Orleans," *In These Times*, October 20, 2005. Available at http://inthesetimes.com/article/2361 (accessed February 10, 2016).

112 "If in a Jewish state normality is defined by Jewishness, abnormality is the normal condition of the non-Jew" (Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 90).

113 "Islamo-fascism … emerged as a new articulated expression of race war, one whose genealogy was shaped by durable symbolic and material links between Israel, Palestine, and U.S. imperial culture. Islam, according to this logic, is figured as pathology and distilled into an over-determined figure essentially incompatible with the exemplary life of liberal democracy expressed in the United States and Israel" (Keith P. Feldman, *A Shadow Over Palestine: The Imperial Life of Race in America* [Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2015], 223).

114 Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 87.

115 In a theological framework—where Jews are the chosen people—relationality with the Palestinians becomes at best tenuous, at worst intolerable. As Walid Khalidi notes, "Partnership [with the Palestinians] was never a possibility because what was at issue was an exclusive primordial, unchallengeable, indeed divine right" (Walid Khalidi, "The Hebrew *Reconquista* of Palestine: From the 1947 United Nations Partition Resolution to the First Zionist Congress of 1897," *Journal of Palestine Studies* 39 [2009]: 30–1).

116 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 228–9.

117 Goldberg, *The Threat of Race*, 109.

118 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 277. See Amy Allen, *The End of Progress: Decolonizing the Normative Foundations of Critical Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2016), 1.

119 Angela Davis, *Freedom Is a Constant Struggle*, 87.

120 Ibid.

121 George Yancy and Seyla Benhabib, "Whom Does Philosophy Speak For?" *New York Times*, October 29, 2015. Available at http://opinionator.blogs.nytimes.com/2015/10/29/who-does-philosophy-speak-for/ (accessed February 8, 2016).

122 In the absence of constitutionally protected rights—especially the right to have rights—Israel has consistently and systematically produced the Palestinian as radical other (in the un-Levinasian sense of *homo sacer*): "For if a Jewish state is created by and for the Jewish people, then it must be the case that non-Jews are

posited as radically *other*, fundamentally and constitutively different" (Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 88).

123 "The laws of the State of Israel perpetuate injustice" (Said, "My Right of Return," 447).

124 Yancy and Benhabib, "Whom Does Philosophy Speak For?"

125 Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 214. International solidarity, like efforts from the Black-Palestinian Solidarity movement and LGBTQ activism, effectively counters the lure of identitarian politics. Their politics of difference does not pursue the path of narrow interest. Their perspective is transnational, their critique expansive: "We aim to sharpen our practice of joint struggle against capitalism, colonialism, imperialism, and the various racisms embedded in and around our societies" ("2015 Black Solidarity Statement with Palestine." Available at http://www.blackforpalestine.com/read-the-statement.html [accessed February 12, 2016]).

Chapter 5

1 Hélène Cixous, *Stigmata: Escaping Texts* (London: Routledge, 1989), 123.

2 Joseph A. Massad, *The Persistence of the Palestinian Question*, 164.

3 Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Bonding in Difference: Interview with Alfred Arteaga," in *The Spivak Reader: Selected Works of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak*, eds. Donna Landry and Gerald M. MacLean (New York: Routledge, 1996), 28.

4 Palestinian Center for Policy and Survey Research, "Palestinian Public Opinion Poll No. 58: 14 December 2015." Available at http://www.pcpsr.org/sites/default/files/poll%2058%20full%20English.pdf (accessed January 8, 2016). I agree with Richard Falk that "if an agreement is to work, it must reflect the will of the Palestinian people, not their current unrepresentative leaders, and it must not remain locked in a two-state mantra that has become irrelevant" (Richard Falk, "On 'Lost Causes' and the Future of Palestine," *The Nation* January 5 [2015]: 24). See also Padraig O'Malley, *The Two-State Delusion: Israel and Palestine—A Tale of Two Narratives* (New York: Viking, 2015).

5 Lauren Berlant, *Cruel Optimism* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2011).

6 Ibid., 1.

7 "Israel's Benjamin Netanyahu Tells NBC He Wants a 'Peaceful Two-State Solution,'" *NBC News*, March 19, 2015. Available at http://www.nbcnews.com/news/world/netanyahu-nbc-u-s-has-no-greater-ally-israel-n326391 (accessed February 23, 2016).

8 "Netanyahu gives first post-election interview," March 25, 2015. Available at http://www.msnbc.com/shift/watch/netanyahu-gives-first-post-election-interview-417985091969 (accessed January 14, 2016).

9 O'Malley, *The Two-State Delusion*, 63–81.
10 Berlant, *Cruel Optimism*, 18.
11 Ibid., 2.
12 Ibid., 102.
13 David Barsamian, *The Pen and the Sword: Interviews with Edward Said* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2010), 145.
14 Haidar Eid, "Interview with Dr. Haidar Eid: 'The Palestinian Struggle Is Not About Independence—It Is About Liberation,'" *Mondoweiss*, December 2, 2013. Available at http://mondoweiss.net/2013/12/palestinian-independence-liberation (accessed November 11, 2015).
15 "The idea of a bi-national state that we hear about these days from both the extreme left and the lunatic right is, I believe, a sad joke. After one hundred years of blood, tears and disasters, it is impossible to expect Israelis and Palestinians to jump suddenly into a double bed and begin a honeymoon. […] No, we and the Palestinians will not be able to become 'one happy family' tomorrow. We need a fair divorce. After a time, perhaps cooperation will come, a common market, a federation. But in the initial stage, the country must be a two-family home, because we are not going anywhere. We have no place to go. Nor are the Palestinians going anywhere. They too have nowhere else" (Amos Oz, "Amos Oz Has a Recipe for Saving Israel," *Haaretz*, March 13, 2015. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.646562 [accessed January 18, 2016]).
16 Eid, "'The Palestinian Struggle Is Not About Independence.'"
17 Haidar Eid, "Gaza and BDS!" in *Against Apartheid: The Case For Boycotting Israeli Universities*, eds. Ashley Dawson and Bill V. Mullen (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 35.
18 Ali Abunimah, "Only a Single-State Solution Will Bring Peace," *New York Times*, April 24, 2014. Available at http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/24/can-hamas-fatah-unity-lead-to-mideast-peace/only-a-single-state-solution-will-bring-peace (accessed January 18, 2016). See also Abunimah's imaginative book-length case for bi-nationalism, *One Country: A Bold Proposal to End the Israeli–Palestinian Impasse* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2006); Jamil Hilal's edited volume, *Where Now for Palestine? The Demise of the Two-State Solution* (New York: Zed Books, 2007).
19 Ali Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2014), xi.
20 Said, "My Right of Return," 452.
21 Eid, "'The Palestinian Struggle Is Not About Independence.'"
22 Ibid.
23 Said, "My Right of Return," 452.
24 "There is no such thing as partial independence or limited autonomy. You are

either politically independent or you are not. If not, the facts indicate neither sovereignty nor real freedom, and certainly not equality with an Israeli Jewish state that destroyed Palestine in 1948 and is not anxious to give it another chance in 1993" (Said, *Peace and its Discontents*: *Essays on Palestine in the Middle East Peace Process* [New York: Vintage Books, 1996], 31).

25 Said, "The Gap Grows Wider," *Al-Ahram Weekly* 471, March 2–8, 2000.

26 Jacques Lacan writes: "The only thing of which one can be guilty is of having given ground relative to one's desire" (Lacan, *The Seminar of Jacques Lacan, Book VII: The Ethics of Psychoanalysis, 1959–1960*, ed. Jacques-Alain Miller, trans. Dennis Porter [New York: Norton, 1992], 319). Alenka Zupančič translates Lacan's formula, "do not give up on your desire" (Alenka Zupančič, *Ethics of the Real: Kant, Lacan* [New York: Verso, 2000], 238).

27 *The Island* was inspired by a true story based on the actual performance of *Antigone* at the notorious Robben Island prison where Nelson Mandela was held for twenty-seven years.

28 Amena Bakr, "Hamas leader says Gaza only 'milestone to reaching our objective,'" *Reuters*, August 28, 2014. Available at http://www.reuters.com/article/us-mideast-gaza-meshaal-idUSKBN0GS24120140828 (accessed March 23, 2016).

29 Butler, *Parting Ways*, 30.

30 Rashid Khalidi details further the scale of (non)livability for the Palestinians under a Zionist one-state solution: "there is only one state between the Jordan River and the Mediterranean, in which there are two or three levels of citizenship or non-citizenship within the borders of that one state that exerts total control" (Chemi Shalev, "Leading Palestinian Intellectual: We Already Have a One-state Solution," *Haaretz*, December 5, 2011. Available at http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/leading-palestinian-intellectual-we-already-have-a-one-state-solution-1.399629 [accessed February 23, 2016]).

31 Žižek, "Anti-Semitism and Its Transformations," 9.

32 Ibid., 10.

33 Žižek, *Violence*, 127.

34 Ibid., 126.

35 Žižek, "What does a Jew Want? on the Film *Local Angel*," in *What Does a Jew Want?: On Binationalism and Other Specters* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2011), 178.

36 Žižek, *Violence*, 127, 126.

37 In his discussion of Udi Aloni's documentary, *Local Angel*, Žižek proposes a parallactic reading of the Israeli–Palestinian conflict: "*Local Angel* is clear where it stands, but, at the same time, there is a kind of parallax split: obviously you can see how Udi himself is torn between an attitude of radically liberal Zionism …, that is, 'all the rights for the Palestinians, but not a secular state, that's too risky,'

and an attitude that would be willing to risk a secular state." Here Žižek hesitates to simply endorse bi-nationalism. Rather, he credits *Local Angel* for thematizing the complexity of the problem, and for refusing to offer a false synthesis to the problem ("'let's have a secular state, but a little later on'"). Žižek advocates a genuine postponement of bi-nationalism until the scars of ethnic strife begin to heal: "It's deeper. I think that sometimes, when there truly are tensions between ethnic groups, the first step toward reconciliation is, paradoxically, to establish a space of minimal distance. Sometimes if you force this push toward universality too much it can backfire" (Žižek, "What does a Jew Want?" 174–5). While Žižek wants to separate his position from that of the disingenuous liberal Zionist, the distinction, in practice, appears somewhat irrelevant. Any postponement of bi-nationalism reinforces the status quo; maintaining "minimal distance" actually means continued domination of Palestinians. The interpretive value of the parallax, I think, lies in its disclosure of the affective pull of the nation-state, and in expressing what is for many radical liberal Zionists (like Udi Aloni's mother) a double bind: upholding the idea of Israel as a Jewish state *and* fighting for Palestinian rights. This is living with contradictions, or what we might call the cruel optimism of radical liberal Zionism.

38 Jacqueline Rose, "Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida in conversation with Jacqueline Rose."

39 Derrida, *For What Tomorrow: A Dialogue*, trans. Jeff Fort (Stanford: Stanford University Press 2004), 119.

40 Joseph A. Massad, *Islam in Liberalism* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2015), 335.

41 Sherene Seikaly, "Return to the Present," in *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace*, Elisabeth Weber (New York: Fordham University Press, 2012), 238. Massad has also raised objections about Derrida's de-politicization of the Palestinian question (with none of the sensitivity that the Jewish question receives), his seeing the Israeli–Palestinian conflict exclusively in terms of a religious war, as "the war for the 'appropriation of Jerusalem'" (Derrida, *Specters of Marx: The State of the Debt, the Work of Mourning, and the New International*, trans. Peggy Kamuf [London: Routledge, 1994], 58), and willfully ignoring the history, politics, and economics of the situation. What Derrida's interpretive framework elides for Massad is the settler colonial context: the Palestinians are engaged first and foremost in "anticolonial struggle over land" (*Islam in Liberalism*, 335). Moreover, Massad argues that Derrida is equally complicit in the Zionist colonial project when he systematically refers to places in historic Palestine by their Latinized Hebrew names—"Jerusalem" rather than its Arabic name "Al-Quds," for example (*Islam in Liberalism*, 334). Similarly, Christopher Wise objects that in Derrida's text "the Jerusalem figure is

universalized rather than identified as a strictly Zionist obsession" (Christopher Wise, *Derrida, Africa, and the Middle East* [New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009], 59). While I am sympathetic to Massad's and Wise's concerns about Derrida's politics of proper naming (its naturalizing of the Israeli status quo), I also believe that Derrida's reflections on relationality—on the ways one can live together—effectively trouble Israel's Zionist narrative and help to counter these shortcomings or blind spots.

42 "[Sovereignty is] the concentration, into a single point of indivisible singularity (God, the monarch, the people, the state or the nation-state), of absolute force and the absolute exception" (Derrida, *Rogues*, 153–4).

43 Derrida, "Avowing," 29.

44 Geoffrey Bennington, *Jacques Derrida*, 327.

45 Derrida was once asked about his reluctance to say "we Jews" (more generally, Derrida is typically allergic to the idea of the common, to the idea of belonging to some phantasmatic "we": "'I am not one of the family' means do not consider me 'one of you,' 'don't count me in,' I want to keep my freedom, always: this, for me, is the condition not only for being singular and other, but also for entering into relation with the singularity and alterity of others" [Derrida and Ferraris, *A Taste for the Secret*, 27]): he retorted by affirming that we can indeed say "we Jews," in "certain situations," and qualified it further by reformulating it as a "tormented 'we'" (Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally: An Interview with Jean Birnbaum*, trans. Pascale-Anne Brault and Michael Naas [Hoboken: Melville House Publishing, 2007], 39).

46 Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 21. Preserving Zionist belonging—defending the State of Israel as the only way to protect Jews from future Holocausts—also means "preserving Israel from having to face the no less truth that the Jewish rhythm has supplanted a more inclusive one, the Palestinian, which has and would allow Christian, Muslim, and Jew to live in counterpoint with each other" (Ibid., 22).

47 This is reminiscent of Derrida's own formulation: "*sovereign without sovereignty*" ("Autoimmunity," 191 n.14). This is a sovereign subject "under erasure" (*sous rature*), both cognizant and critical of sovereignty's metaphysical legacy and ideological underpinnings.

48 Derrida, "'Eating Well,' or the Calculation of the Subject: An Interview with Jacques Derrida," in *Who Comes After the Subject?*, eds. Eduardo Cadava, Peter Connor, and Jean-Luc Nancy (New York: Routledge, 1991), 115.

49 Derrida, "Remarks on Deconstruction and Pragmatism," trans. Simon Critchley, in *Deconstruction and Pragmatism*, ed. Chantal Mouffe (New York: Routledge, 1996), 85. "It is a relation in which the other remains absolutely transcendent.

I cannot reach the other. I cannot know the other from the inside and so on" (Derrida, "The Villanova Roundtable," 14).

50 Derrida, "Avowing—The Impossible: 'Returns,' Repentance, and Reconciliation," in *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace*, ed. Elisabeth Weber (New York: Fordham University Press, 2013), 11. There are at least two competing versions of peace offered: 1) Peace as the result of an asymmetrical compromise, where one of the parties enjoys the benefits while the other's demands are for the most part left unacknowledged, or worse institutionalized by the peace deal; 2) Peace as an actual change in one's antagonism with the other, resulting from a receptivity to the other's grievances. The first reflects the peace of the two-state solution (it is a victory for Zionism if you can frame the conflict as a strictly post-1967 problem, and can get Palestinians to agree to a state constituting only 22 percent of historic Palestine), while the second that of bi-nationalism (it is a "peace of equals," as Said put it ["Edward Said talks to Jacqueline Rose," in *Edward Said and the Work of the Critic: Speaking Truth to Power*, ed. Paul Bové [Durham: Duke University Press, 2000], 28]). If cruel optimism fuels the two-state solution on the Palestinian side, a narcissistic optimism informs the liberal Zionist side. As Žižek says, "Many peace-loving Israelis confess to their perplexity: they just want peace and a shared life with the Palestinians, they are ready to make concessions, but why do the Palestinians hate them so much, why the brutal suicide bombings that kill innocent wives and children? The thing to do here is, of course, to supplement this story with its counter-story, the story of what it means to be a Palestinian in the occupied territories, subjected to hundreds of regulations of the bureaucratic microphysics of power" (Slavoj Žižek and John Milbank, *Monstrosity of Christ: Paradox or Dialectic*, ed. Creston Davis [Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2009], 67). Myopic concerns and affective investment in the idea of Israel as a Jewish State foreclose any possibility of hearing the Palestinian plight.

51 Derrida, "Avowing," 28.

52 Ibid., 27.

53 Derrida, *Negotiations*, ed. Elizabeth Rottenberg (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001), 102.

54 "Palestinian-Arabs are only *welcomed*, in a state where Jews are the *masters of the land*, as a socio-politically inferior and legally unrecognized collective" (Shourideh C. Molavi, *Stateless Citizenship: The Palestinian-Arab Citizens of Israel* [Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013], 116).

55 Alain Badiou, Slavoj Žižek, and Udi Aloni, "Symposium: 'What if Antigone were a refugee?,'" Church of St. Paul the Apostle, New York, 16 October, 2010.

56 Similarly, Priya Kumar observes: "To live together well, we must be able to interrogate all statutory conventions, all totalizations, and the folding upon itself of any organism or any social body (family, ethnic group, nation) that has been

given to us by blood, birth, or belonging. In short, we must be able to think beyond the totality of any ensemble; moreover, we must ask, how do we relate to those who have been excluded from our (various) ensembles—those who have been designated as strangers, foreigners, and enemies?" ("Beyond Tolerance and Hospitality: Muslims as Strangers and Minor Subjects in Hindu Nationalist and Indian Nationalist Discourse," in *Living Together: Jacques Derrida's Communities of Violence and Peace*, ed. Elisabeth Weber [New York: Fordham University Press, 2013], 11).

57 Derrida, "Some Statements and Truisms," 80.

58 Abunimah, *The Battle for Justice in Palestine*, 78–9. See also Andy Clarno, "Neoliberal Apartheid," in *Apartheid Israel: The Politics of an Analogy*, eds. Jon Soske and Sean Jacobs (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 67–72.

59 Jacqueline Rose, "Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida in conversation with Jacqueline Rose."

60 "This wolf that sacrifices its very definition, its identity as a wolf, for the lamb, this wolf that doesn't eat the lamb, is it a wolf? Is it still a wolf? Isn't it a delupinized wolf, a non-wolf, an invalidated wolf? If it were a false wolf, there'd be no interest. No, we've made no mistake, this wolf is a real wolf: right up to the last second it could eat us" (Cixous, *Stigmata: Escaping Texts*, 123). This Zionist who shows love, unconditional hospitality to the Palestinian neighbor, is also still deeply attached to the land of Israel.

61 "Just hospitality [absolute or unconditional hospitality] breaks with hospitality by right [conditional hospitality]; not that it condemns or is opposed to it, and it can on the contrary set and maintain it in a perpetual progressive movement; but it is as strangely heterogeneous to it as justice is heterogeneous to the law to which it is yet so close, from which in truth it is indissociable" (Jacques Derrida and Anne Dufourmantelle, *Of Hospitality*, trans. Rachel Bowlby [Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2000], 25–7).

62 Rose, "Hélène Cixous and Jacques Derrida in conversation with Jacqueline Rose." Derrida also talks about "the suicidal politics of Israel and of a certain Zionism" (Derrida, *Learning to Live Finally*, 37).

63 Derrida, "Autoimmunity," 94.

64 Derrida, *The Death Penalty*, vol. 1, trans. Peggy Kamuf (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013), 5.

65 Derrida, *Rogues*, 109.

66 Ibid., 150–1.

67 Derrida, "Faith and Knowledge," 87.

68 Judith Butler, "There are some muffins there if you want," 217. See also Butler, "Versions of Binationalism in Said and Buber," in *Conflicting Humanities*, eds. Rosi Braidotti and Paul Gilroy (New York: Bloomsbury, 2016), 185–210.

69 Butler, "There are some muffins there if you want," 218.

70 Said, "My Right of Return," 457. More generally, Said comments on the hybrid and porous character of cultures: "The history of culture is the history of cultural borrowings. Cultures are not impermeable, just as Western science borrowed from Arabs, they had borrowed from India and Greece. Culture is never just a matter of ownership, but rather of appropriations, common experiences, and interdependencies of all kinds among different cultures" (Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 217).

71 Said, "Permission to Narrate," in *The Edward Said Reader*, eds. Moustafa Bayoumi and Andrew Rubin (New York: Vintage, 2000), 243–66.

72 Said, *After the Last Sky: Palestinian Lives, with Photographs by Jean Mohr* (London: Vintage, 1986), 140.

73 Feldman, *A Shadow Over Palestine*, 157. See also Bashir Bashir and Amos Goldberg, "Deliberating the Holocaust and the Nakba: Disruptive Empathy and Bi-nationalism in Israel/ Palestine," *Journal of Genocide Research* 16 (1) (2014): 77–99; and Jessica Benjamin, "Acknowledging the Other's Suffering: A Psychoanalytic Approach to Trauma in Israel/Palestine," *Tikkun* 30 (3) (2015).

74 Said, *The End of the Peace Process*, 207, 208, emphasis added.

75 Palestinians and Israelis would be, in the words of Judith Butler, practicing "transversal grief," that is, grieving beyond communitarian boundaries, ethically reconfiguring, as it were, "how metrics of grievability work" (Butler, "Paris the day after the November 13 attacks: 'Mourning becomes the law,'" *Europe Solidaire Sans Frontières*, 14 November 2015. Available at http://www.europe-solidaire.org/spip.php?article36394 [accessed February 12, 2016]). For a U.S. audience, performing "transversal grief" would entail relating to Palestinians as vulnerable, grievable bodies.

76 Similarly, Žižek observes: "The lesson is simply that every form of legitimization of a claim to land by some mythic past should be rejected. In order to resolve (or contain, at least), the Israeli–Palestinian conflict, we should not dwell in ancient past—we should, on the contrary, forget the past (which is in any case basically constantly reinvented to legitimize present claims)" (Žižek, "Whither Zionism?" *In These Times*, March 2, 2015. Available at http://inthesetimes.com/article/17702/slavoj_zizek_zionism (accessed January 23, 2016).

77 Said, "My Right of Return," 451.

78 Ibid., 452–3.

79 Jewish sovereignty ought to follow the same path as Afrikaner sovereignty: "The Afrikaners had a proto-Zionist ideology. They felt they were chosen by God" (Said, "My Right of Return," 451).

80 Ibid., 453.

81 Derrida, "Avowing," 23.

82 “Jewish colonisation means expulsion of the Palestinians, and Palestinian return means Jewish decolonisation. What the two sides [Palestinians and Israelis] disagree on is which part of the formula they want to enforce” (Joseph A. Massad, “Re-Turning Rights,” *Al Jazeera*, April 20, 2013. Available at http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/opinion/2013/04/2013416134034777609.html [accessed January 23, 2016]).

83 Derrida, *Rogues*, 152. Whereas Žižek, Eric L. Santner, and Kenneth Reinhard conceptualize the logic of autoimmunity in purely negative terms, as a condition to avoid or reduce (with their call to make “‘loving one’s neighbor’ more resistant to such immune disorders” [*The Neighbor: Three Inquiries in Political Theology, with a new Preface* (Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2013), ix]), Derrida argues that loving the neighbor is rendered possible precisely by an autoimmune structure.

84 Derrida, “Avowing,” 30.

85 Saree Makdisi, “A Racism Outside of Language.”

86 Ibid. *Pace* Benhabib, it is seriously doubtful that Israelis themselves can ever effect a meaningful change in their Zionist privilege: “Israelis themselves … need to think hard and fast about the mess they have created in aspiring to maintain a ‘Jewish state’ on the one hand and continuing to occupy the territories of the West Bank on the other” (Benhabib, “Ethics without Normativity,” 159). Azoulay offers a more compelling image of Israeli self-critique: “Time has come for the second and third generations of perpetrators—descendants of those who expelled Palestinians from their homeland—to claim *our* right, *our* fundamental and inalienable right: *the right not to be perpetrators*. Without this fundamental right one can never be a citizen governed equally with others” (Ariella Azoulay, “‘Where Am I Supposed to Go Now?’” in *Conflicting Humanities*, eds. Rosi Braidotti and Paul Gilroy [New York: Bloomsbury, 2016], 162).

87 Derrida, *Rogues*, 34.

88 Elizabeth Rottenberg, “The Legacy of Autoimmunity,” *Mosaic* 39 (3) (2006): 5.

89 W. J. T. Mitchell, *Cloning Terror: The War of Images, 9/11 to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011), 48.

Epilogue

1 Achille Mbembe, “On Palestine,” viii.

2 Said, *The Question of Palestine*, xi, emphasis added.

3 Ibid.

4 Said, *The Politics of Dispossession*, 84.

5 Omar Barghouti, “The Academic Boycott of Israel: Reaching a Tipping Point?,” in

Against Apartheid: The Case For Boycotting Israeli Universities, eds. Ashley Dawson and Bill V. Mullen (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2015), 57.

6 Ibid., 57.

7 Robert Bernasconi, “Strangers and Slaves in the Land of Egypt,” 248.

8 Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, 38.

9 Said, “The Only Alternative,” *Al-Ahram Weekly* 523, March 1–7, 2001. Available at http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/Archive/2001/523/op2.htm (accessed March 19, 2016).

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