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# Narrative and Belonging: The Politics of Ambiguity, The Jewish State, and the Thought of Edward Said and Hannah Arendt

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**NARRATIVE AND BELONGING:  
THE POLITICS OF AMBIGUITY, THE JEWISH  
STATE, AND THE THOUGHT OF SAID AND  
ARENDT**

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*Jacob Bessen*

*International Studies Honors Thesis  
Advisor – Ahmed Samatar  
Spring, 2017*

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## Acknowledgements

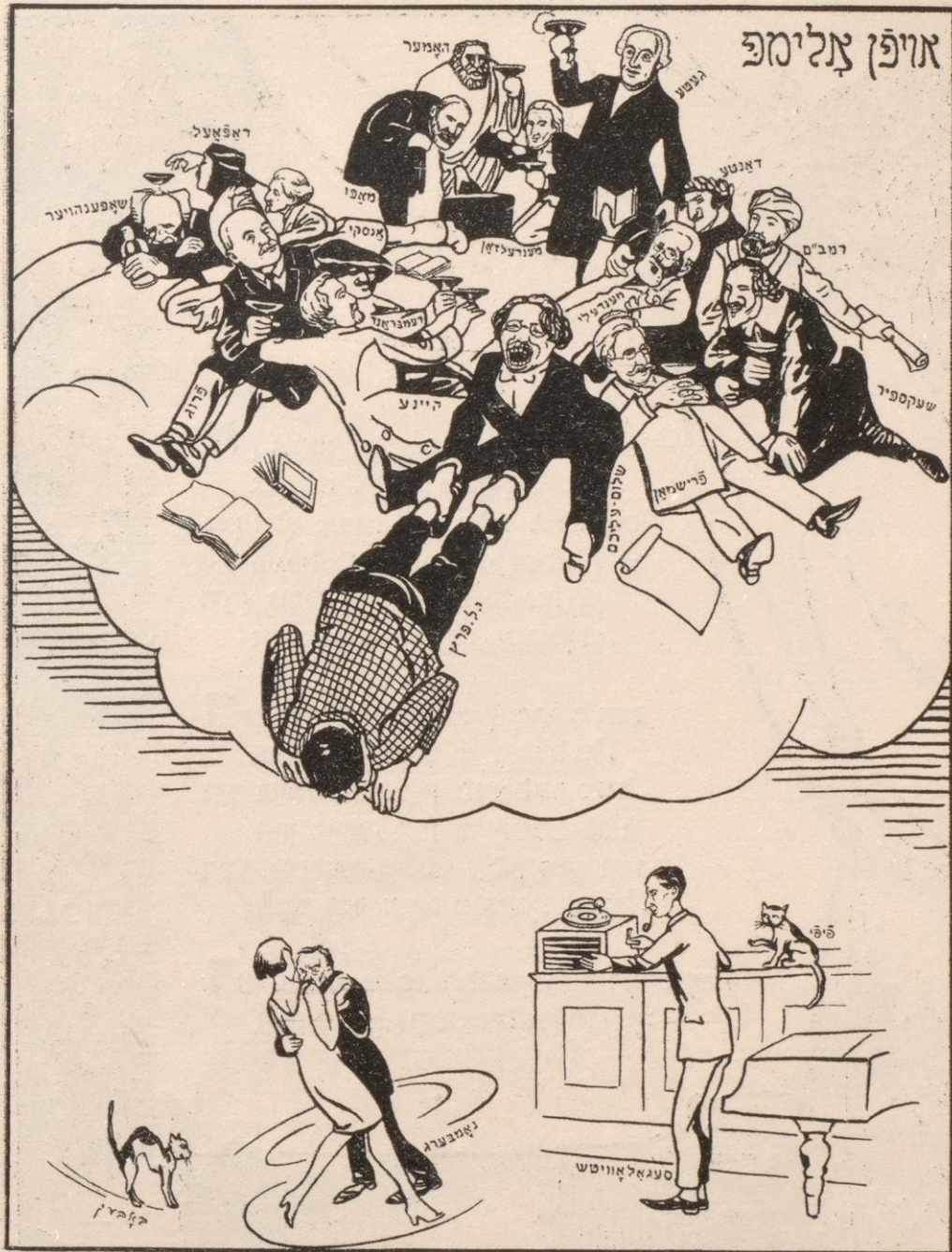
First and foremost, this thesis would have been impossible without the guidance of Macalester College's extraordinarily talented faculty. Within this group, my thesis advisor, Ahmed Samatar, holds a special place. At the beginning of this project, Professor Samatar offered a tacit mandate, which characterizes the work of both Edward Said and Hannah Arendt: passion, political action, and hope for a better alternative must all be rooted in rigorous thinking. This rigor is not simply a show of strength, but show of judicious agility and a test of historical stamina. I would be proud to carry this mandate with me as a mark of his mentorship. I am also deeply grateful to Khaldoun Samman, Susanna Drake, Erik Davis, James Laine, Zeynep Gürsel, Gregory Lipton, Barry Cytron, Della Zurich, and Aernout van Lynden for their guidance. All bridge the gap between a love for wisdom and a commitment to their own worlds that offers endless inspiration.

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As with any acknowledgement, my family holds a place above all else. However, this piece holds a special relationship with my Nana and Poppop, in a complimentary manner that characterized their partnership well. It has the deep historical sensitivity and

demand for justice I associate so closely with my Poppop and the critical voice and suspicion for authority characteristic of my Nana.

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י.ל. פראג (אַראָפּקגעבן פֿונעם אַלויסאָפּ) - וואָס איז עס פֿאַר אַ מין ליטעראַטור?!  
 שלום-עליכם (קײַטעניק) - ניין! דאָס שאַפֿט מצען „ייִדישע קולטור“!...

## Preface

In the summer of 2016, while assembling the scaffolding for this thesis, I came upon this image at McGill University's McLennan Library. With astonishing serendipity, it was displayed with other rare Jewish books and manuscripts from theological tracts from Early Medieval Cairo to Yiddish translations of Spinoza, Emerson, and Hughes. Unlike the ancient leaflets or translations of paradigmatic thought, this illustration found its way into the rare books section because of how easily it could have not existed. Originally printed 1926 in a book of Yiddish poems by forgotten author and illustrator Berele Hagay, under the pen name Hayim Goldberg, the drawing depicts a deep struggle to reconcile Jewish thought and history in a world that increasingly stigmatized it. Not only would Hagay perish in the Holocaust, but Yiddish Warsaw and the Jewish Weltanschauung he offers up for rumination are little more than ashes.

The image, entitled "On Olympus," depicts a Purim Roast. Both Jewish and non-Jewish literary, artistic, and philosophic figures such as Goethe, Mendelssohn, Homer, Monet, Dante, S. Ansky, Heine, Maimonides, Shakespeare, and Rembrandt. In the foreground one can see Raphael reaching out toward a cup balanced on Schopenhauer's head. Meanwhile, Sholem Aleichem is holding onto I. L. Peretz's feet, as Peretz peers down at the music and dancers below. The Purim roast, or *Spiel*, is the annual opportunity to poke fun, satirize, and humorously criticize the one's company. Simply, Hagay diagrams the way he imagines his influential textual acquaintances mocking his earthly, contemporaries and their milieu.

This dynamic, between imaginary historical influences and a schema of identity and culture in the present, animated Jewish life and thought before the Holocaust.



European Jews stood at the margins of their society, borrowing from it while bringing their own textual nexus to light. On one hand, Jewish modernity was characterized by this struggle to reconcile contemporary and historical relationships to produce a meaningful Judaism. As a result, Hagay's moment consisted of committed, contradictory, and deeply historical embedded varieties of Jewishness. On the other hand, these perspectives shared a certain level of marginality. Even those who escaped this marginality were notable through their lack there of. While clearly academic in language and agenda, this thesis is also a story of the marginalized that details the challenges, opportunities, and liabilities of inbetweenness.

The concept Hagay's illustration illustrates with such clarity is that marginalization entails ambiguity within social taxonomies, models for describing who we are in relation to others. This ambiguity naturally offers a wealth of resources: unlike someone who fits neatly within one social category, an ambiguous person can draw from the entire scope of many categories. This natural wealth is underscored by a mathematical problem. While the marginalized person holds great social wealth they can draw from, they must always represent themselves as a singular person. This mandate to butcher the many potential selves, in order to sculpt a single human, demands great internal violence. Hagay depicts the empowerment and beauty of marginality. He shows that the many sources and voices one can access will always mock, criticize, and stand above the worldly, fragmented single human. The Zionist movement was and is the ultimate rejection of this appreciation of life at the margins. It shows the violent side of marginality and a hatred of the internal mockery and criticism, which, in the case of the Zionists, ultimately resulted in the sublimation of this internal violence onto the

Palestinians. This paper tells the story of Zionism in the language of the universal, not as the world-historic realization of the Jewish people, or as a simply modern phenomenon. Instead, it is an episode in tradition of global exile and marginality articulated with modern peculiarity, idiosyncrasies, and unique, tragic ironies.

## Chapter One: Introduction

Zionism, the movement to create a Jewish “homeland,” in Palestine, is in crisis. Across the world, many Jews in diaspora who have placed their faith and advocated the necessity of the project feel shocked to find themselves standing in similar positions to the variety of ideologies that sought to immolate global Jewry throughout the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century. In this thesis, I explore the origins and future of the contradiction of Zionism. The crisis these have developed is not limited to the heavily reported and studied conflict with the Palestinians, though certainly this is the most salient and important manifestation. Zionism is not a political opinion, but a way of seeing the world and making history manifest in the present. As a nearly omnipresent imaginary, Zionism not only impacts the relation of the Zionist to the Palestinian, but all Zionist relations, along with the world they inhabit and belong in. This imaginary is reinforced by day-to-day practices, ideological state apparatuses, and a world-historical narrative that informs the community, “how they got to where they are.”

To invalidate this imaginary is the task of a project much larger than this paper (if it can be the job of a paper at all). Instead, I want to examine the roundabout motion the Jew had made from oppressed to oppressor and how that has changed the landscape of narratives. The Jews have loomed disproportionately large as characters in the world of stories. Antisemitism depended upon the ability to tell these stories and place the Jew in a number of demonized positions. The phenomenon this paper will study is how perspectives on Jewish identity and the non-Jewish co-constitution and rejection of this identity, have been interpreted by the Zionist project. Beyond the academic agenda of this study, I want to bring to light the how historical assumptions and contradictions of the

Zionist project, necessary for the ingathering of the Jewish diaspora into a state, have made certain perspectives on Jewish identity and belonging untenable. I believe by identifying these contradictions and laying bare the stasis they produce by undermining Jewish pluralization (active pluralism), we can better identify better alternatives.

## **1.2 Why it Matters**

Israel and Zionism are paradigmatic globally. Certainly, many people's livelihoods are directly caught up in a variety of conflicts with Israel. However, the intensive study and research on Israeli/Palestine and the Jewish people heightens the importance of the issue. It becomes the case *par excellence* for studies of exile, refugees, religious persecution, migration, and nationalism. Beyond its academic importance, Israel and Palestine both exemplify some of the global problems impacting persons around the world. Zionism is formulated to solve the problems of diaspora and minority living in the face of nation-states which structurally insist on internally homogeneous populations. This dynamic between diaspora and nation, between exile and belonging, are the tensions that pervade global communities and serve as the ideological means by which the hegemonic classes stay in power. In this regard, Israel/Palestine is also the testing site for the world order. Zionism confirms a series of limitations on the functional and ethical possibilities of our world. It determines that diaspora is a depleted mode of living and that the nation-state is the only valid form for a modern community. It affirms the recent notion that exiles and refugees are naturally produced and that their lack of belonging is a natural piece of the human condition. For those trapped in the conflict, for those invested academically, for those affected or oppressed by ideological axioms Israel supports, this topic is of the utmost importance.

### **1.3 Methodology**

The method of inquiry is heavily influenced by the work of Hannah Arendt. Following Walter Benjamin, Arendt saw history as non-linear. Instead, it was mostly cyclical, statically reproducing the current paradigm though violent means. However, quite often, especially once the current paradigm becomes unsustainable, people are forced to come together and engage in political action. The cyclical reproduction of the paradigm and the eventual breakdown of this stasis prescribe a historical analysis that locates internal contradictions, structures of reproduction, and opportunities for coming together. Within this paper, these important markers occur within the context of the ambiguity of Jewish social belonging and the way the image of the Arab is implicated within this discourse. Zionist attempts to give an account of the place of Jews in the world created contradictory responses. As opposed to coming to a dialectical synthesis, these contradictions are maintained through violence. Through the reproductive apparatuses of the state, the Zionist abstraction of Jewish belonging gains a life of its own, enforcing its reality upon the material world. Arendt and Benjamin both use history to locate cracks, moments ripe for spontaneity and action, to flash up and shatter the violent reproduction of the hegemonic ideology. For both, this means paying special attention to the modes that offer alternatives to the present while also being muted by it, thus requiring the work of the historian to give them voice.

### **1.4 Thesis**

The common account of Zionism tell us that the overwhelming antisemitism of nineteenth and twentieth century produced on obvious necessity for an autonomous

Jewish state outside of Europe. While antisemitism is a piece of the driving force behind Zionism, it is not the whole. In this paper, I argue that Zionism attempted to remove the ambiguous status Jews held in European social taxonomies by positing a Jewish identity through the oppositional binaries used to evidence a Eurocentric worldview. To realize this identity, Zionists assembled the history of the Jews and their interlocutors to corroborate this account. Zionists sought that this new identity produce a new age of Judaism, creating a radical break from the past that rendered all other interpretations of Judaism invalid and untenable. The urge to create a pristinely definable and intelligible Jew, mixed with the conditions of settler colonialism and the existential fear and social uprooting of the Holocaust, created the need for Zionists to cleanse the Jewish polity of any alternative narratives of belonging. As a result, the Palestinian and diasporic Jewish modes of belonging, latent within the land and subjects, were denied the right to appear in public. By removing the ground for dissent by those who “belong,” the Zionist project lost its ability reevaluate its own goals and ethic, removing the presence of the “other” with vigor beyond reason or restraint, leading to ideological stasis. To escape the cyclical self-constitution of Zionist violence and suppression, I turn to Edward Said and Hannah Arendt’s reading of the history and political significance of Jewish Cosmopolitanism, which identifies belonging in within ambiguity, as a way to share the means of narration.

### **1.5 Structure of Thesis**

This thesis is separated into six interlocking sections. First, very briefly, I have outlined my agenda, why I found it worth investigating, and why my investigation is meaningful for a wide-audience. Next, I build the conceptual framework for the piece. Here, I employ the systematic theory of Hannah Arendt to discuss the relationships of

politics, narration, and violence. Within this context, I dissect Edward Said's analysis of Orientalism using Arendt's framework. Afterwards, I review the genesis of the Zionist ideology. In this first phase, I integrate a variety of primary voices and modern reflections on early Zionism as it was first formulated in Europe. I locate this within the political and cultural environment of the day and offer some brief reflections on the strengths and liabilities of the ideology within its original historical context. Next, I examine the formulation of Zionism within the Middle East by discussing the way the European thoughts were revised to meet the necessary settler colonial practices. The utopian dreams of the romantic Germanic Zionists were realized with revolutionary zeal. Yet, the implementation of Zionism presented many unpredictable challenges. Instead of addressing them to create a more flexible ideology, Zionism resorted to overwhelming the voices of dissent. Despite this, the changes in the world order at the mid-19<sup>th</sup> century, Zionism was able to cement itself as the primary interpretation of Jewishness in the modern world.

After this, I turn back to Said and his interlocutors to describe and analyze the way Zionists confronted the indigenous population and their neighbors. In doing so, I want to expose the roots of the Israel/Palestine conflict, not only within Zionism, but to the colonial notions the ideology was premised upon. Furthermore, I briefly survey the way Israel investment in military and development of social institutions through the military have made the ability of Israeli Jews to think of alternatives to Zionism nearly impossible. Finally, I interpret the conflict through the shared tradition of Said and Arendt's thought: Jewish Cosmopolitanism. Through this frame, I explore ethical alternatives and ways out of the traps of Zionism. I try to demonstrate why the trends and

processes of globalization will only compound the difficulties and continue to bring Zionism deeper into crisis. These new ethical stances are at once about sharing land between Jews and Palestinians, addressing the failures of Zionism in ways besides overwhelming violence, and edifying the importance of the Jewish voice in modern times.



## Chapter Two: Concept Overview

Zionism is best conceived of as a revolution against Jewish ambiguity. To understand the scope of this claim, it is important to examine the place of ambiguity and definition within societies and politics. Belonging is the fluid and changing negotiation of a subject's place in the intersubjective public sphere. The inescapable condition of human plurality makes a utopian full belonging impossible. Meanwhile, without a claim to belong, one becomes superfluous to the community. The fact that humans are social beings, traps them between the impossibility of full belonging and the slavish terror of not belonging. Within this paradox, public identity contently moves between belonging ambiguously and clearly within an explicit order. With this view, Zionism is less of a movement towards disambiguation than a rejection of manifold forms of ambiguity.

Before investigating the creation, implementation, and crisis of Zionism, this section defines the conceptual language used throughout the thesis and the interconnections between these concepts. This requires some backtracking. This concept overview begins with Arendt's reflection on Aristotle's philosophy, in order to sharpen the use of politics and the "good life" by liberating it from the economic notions that dominate its analytic function today. Next, it explores the necessity of politics for cohabitation through Arendt's conceptions of narration and belonging. Through the mediums of political action and storytelling, humanity engages in cyclical and unending processes of obscuring and explicating belonging. This motion is a necessity for a society to represent the experiences of its members. However, when one perspective dominates a discourse, they are able to remove this motion, replacing dynamic politics with self-referential representations. In *Orientalism*, Edward Said concretely describes how the

hegemonic power is able to withdraw the representation of the “Oriental” from any dynamic or intersubjective discourse. After exploring the problem of static disambiguation through self-constituting representation, this section continues to Arendt’s examination of the Pariah as the catalyst for a radical universalism.

## 2.1 Political Action

Hannah Arendt’s philosophical project employs comparisons between Hellenistic political life and the cruelties of modern politics that pervaded her personal life. To understand Arendt’s categorical analysis of modern politics, one must first survey the landscape of ancient politics she receives from Aristotle. In Aristotle’s Greece, life was divided between the household and the polis. The household (*oikia*) was the site of private life where the master of the family, the paterfamilias, (*oikonomos*) would manage the affairs of the clan (*genos*). The private life of the household was composed of explicitly hierarchical power structures where the activities of each member followed the paterfamilias’s prescription according to proto-bureaucratic goals of functionality and stability. In the polis, the paterfamilias stood on equal ground their fellow heads of households. Here, they would debate the issues confronting the diverse interests of each master on the basis of truth and morality.

The Hellenistic philosopher was tasked with determining truth and justice. Arendt’s interest revolves around the relation of politics, production, and position in the polis. As Marcel Hénaff writes:

What is good wealth? Aristotle’s answer is wealth that stems from the activity of the *oikonomos* – the master of the household – and proceeds from a property. Aristotle defines property (*ktēsis*) as... “A possession (*ktēma*) is an instrument (*organon*) for maintaining life.” (Pol. 1.1253b30) But this life as subsistence is life within the circle of the *oikos*. Property has to be defined by its position within the space under the responsibility

of the *oikonomos* who is expected to direct the instrument (*organon*) toward its goal (*telos*), to unify and direct mere living (*zen [bios]*) toward the good life (*eu zēn*). It is therefore necessary for property to be and remain included within action and not become an autonomous instrument.<sup>1</sup>

For Aristotle, the affairs of production and economy (from *oikonomos*) are limited to the realm of means: the only just purpose of production is the protection of physical life (*bios*). Thus, production is a limited part of human communities because, “life is action (*praxis*) and not production (*poiēsis*).” (Pol. 1254a7-8)

Action is separate from production because it is an end in itself. Unlike production, it cannot be divided into discrete results and it cannot be undone or unmade. “In this it remains immaterial; its time is the living present, but it is a continuous present. Action is not a particular way of living, but the very movement of living. Because it is not defined by an external result, action finds its closure within itself.”<sup>2</sup> Production is a means of sustenance. What do we sustain ourselves for? Action. Thus, it is action that separates mere life from the good life.

The Hellenic paterfamilias manages his household with maximum efficiency and order. If he is successful, his pantry gathers food, he accumulates fibers for the women of his house to spin, and amasses slaves for labor. However, he does these things because his household and property are his entry ticket to the public sphere. The historical importance of understanding of household accumulation for Arendt becomes clear when the citizen is compared to the slave. The distinction between slave and citizen was the separation of outsiders from insiders.<sup>3</sup> The status of slave did not limit a person’s

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<sup>1</sup> Hénaff, Marcel., Jean-Louis Morhange, and Anne-Marie Feenberg-Dibon. 2010. *The Price of Truth : Gift, Money, and Philosophy*. Cultural memory in the present; Cultural memory in the present. Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. Page 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid. Page 83.

<sup>3</sup> Finley, Moses I. 1997. *The Ancient Economy*. Enskede: TPB. Page 70.

potential modes of labor, but formally constrained their social belonging. By definition, the slave is a stranger in a society that is not their own.<sup>4</sup> The result of their misplacement was that they were banished from politics: the slave did not exist in public. Crucially, this distinction between slave and citizen displays that Greek politics and the contemporary concept of social belonging or, even more anachronistically, social capital were one and the same.

Arendt defines modernity as “the break with tradition.” Truth located in human activities is uprooted and replanted. The “break” does not insinuate an end of tradition, but the detachment of tradition from historical positions of authority. The changes in the sites of truth uncoupled society and politics. Arendt writes:

The emergence of society – the rise of housekeeping, its activities, problems, and organizational devices – from the shadowy interior of the household into the light of the public sphere, has not only blurred the boarder between private and political, it has also changed almost beyond recognition the meaning of the two terms and their significance for the life of the individual and the citizen.<sup>5</sup>

The emergence of society, from its clear subservience to politics, entails a new form of equality. In the household, all members were equal before the despotic rule of the paterfamilias. In society, the sovereignty of the head of the household is replaced by, “one common interest and one unanimous opinion...enforced by sheer number.”<sup>6</sup> After the break with tradition, authority loses its bond with aristocratic hierarchy. Social authority was no longer determined by place of birth. However, Arendt insists, the problems of natality persist through the break.

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<sup>4</sup> Graeber, David. 2011. *Debt : The First 5,000 Years*. Brooklyn, N.Y.: Melville House. Page 146.

<sup>5</sup> Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Charles R. Walgreen Foundation lectures; Charles R. Walgreen Foundation lectures. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Page 38.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

Humankind is fundamentally a social being. By virtue of birth, all of us are fated to live amongst people different than ourselves. Modern equality removed the structures that formerly designated politics as the site *sine qua non* for negotiating human pluralism. Instead, society prescribes each social identity certain behaviors, values, and interests so that plurality can be managed without active participation by each community or, in Aristotelian terminology, each household. Instead of active negotiation and confrontation of politics, society predicates the right to public appearance on a rational self-discipline to achieve an accepted mode of behavior. With the break with tradition, the public realm shifts from a political paradigm to an economic version. On this, Arendt writes:

This modern equality, based on the conformism inherent in social and possible only because behavior has replaced action as the foremost mode of human relationship, is in every respect different from equality in antiquity...to belong to the few “equals” (*homoioi*) meant to be permitted to live among one’s peers...The public realm, in other words, was reserved for individuality; it was the only place where men could show who they really and inexchangeably were...It is this same conformism, the assumption that men behave and do not act with respect to each other, that lies at the root of the modern science of economics, whose birth coincided with the rise of society and which, together with its chief technical tool, statistics, became the social science par excellence. Economics...could achieve a scientific character only when men had become social beings and unanimously followed certain patterns of behavior, so that those who did not keep the rules could be considered to be asocial or abnormal.<sup>7</sup>

Following Marx, Arendt identifies the centrality of new kinds of exchange and commensurability to the ways modern societies imagine themselves. In the polity paradigm, the interdependence of multiple distinct, incommensurable identities drove them to politics as a way to confront and accommodate these differences. In the modern social paradigm, identities, like commodities, are no longer valued for their subjective use or activity, but are assumed to belong to a single field of valuation. Identity becomes

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<sup>7</sup> Ibid. Page 41-42.

exchangeable and commensurable because it becomes secondary and deferential to behavior.

From the juxtaposition between the polity and the society, Arendt devises three broad classifications of human activity: labor, work, and action. In labor, “men produce the vital necessities that must be fed into the life process of the human body.”<sup>8</sup> Thus, labor never achieves an end. It is endlessly, cyclically repetitive. Labor produces goods for consumption, which hold no expectation of durability or meaning beyond the fulfillment of necessity. Meanwhile, work produces objects that are made to be used, but to not disappear after use. “They give the world the stability and solidity without which it could not be relied upon to house the unstable and mortal creature that is man.”<sup>9</sup> In order for humankind to raise their claim to subjectivity, we must build an objective environment that mediates between humanity and nature. Man does not fabricate meaning from his natural environment, but builds a world between him and the latter. While repetition characterizes labor, multiplication typifies work. While a carpenter constructs many tables, these tables are not bound to biological processes of consumption and sustenance. Work is far more durable than labor, but is not irreversible.

Action is distinct from labor and work because it is irreversible and an end in itself. Action is not an eternal value hidden in the psychology of all mankind, but is a necessary activity for the conditions of being human:

Wherever men live together, there exists a web of human relationship which is, as it were, woven by the deeds and words of innumerable persons, by the living as well as by the dead. Every deed and every new beginning falls into an already existing web, where it nevertheless somehow starts a new process that will affect many others even beyond

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<sup>8</sup> Arendt, Hannah, P. R. Baehr, and Rogers D. Spotswood Collection. 2003. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. New York: Penguin Books. Page 170.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.* Page 173.

those with whom the agent comes into direct contact. It is because of this already existing web of human relationship with its conflicting wills and intentions, that action almost never achieves its purpose.<sup>10</sup>

By virtue of being born, every human comes from somewhere and does so at a certain time. The impossibly complex, mobile, and self-organizing properties of large-scale social relationships insist that action serves as an end in itself and that its results cannot be reversed. Action also demands two prerequisites: freedom and plurality. Freedom is not simply the ability to do otherwise; it is the ability to start something new or unexpected. Freedom is manifest in human spontaneity and our confrontation with the novel. Pluralism is inherent in any human community: difference of opinion and will within a group of people is a constant in human history. However, pluralism threatens modern society, which insists upon a minimum of conformism and standardization to maintain large political and economic communities.

## **2.2 Narration and Storytelling**

While Arendt's philosophy employs the social arrangements of the *polis*, it is the comparative work between modern society and the Hellenic world that drives her philosophy. She proposes a compromise between traditional philosophy, which believed that a truth existed independent from humankind, and modern philosophy, which determined that man made the truth. Instead, she proposes that contemporary political thought substitute the traditional category of truth with the inescapable conditions of human social worlds. "Conceptually, we may call truth what we cannot change,

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid. 179 – 180.

metaphorically, it is the ground on which we stand and the sky that stretches above us.”<sup>11</sup>  
The truth consists of the conditions that humankind can never escape or change.

The irrevocable conditions that Arendt determines most influential to humanity are *natality* and *mortality*: that everyone must be born to exist and that everyone must die. Therefore, Man is not only forced to live amongst other people, but he is forced to live among people who have different lived experiences. As a result, humans must develop commonalities and modes of understanding differences. As Jackson writes, “[I]n every human society, the range of experiences that are socially acknowledged and named is always much narrower than the range of experiences that people actually have.”<sup>12</sup>  
Political action reforms, revises, and revalues the public sphere to meet private and personal experience. The prerogative that drives man to politics is the need for “rootedness” or belonging within the named and acknowledged order.

For Arendt, the search for belonging demands cyclical movement between subjective, private, contemplative life and intersubjective, public, active life. However, because the conditions of natality and mortality insist that both the subjective and intersubjective are always changing, the exchange between the two is endless and an “end in itself.” Politics fulfills the fundamental precondition for living amongst other people. When people come together with the ability to rework the public order to better root themselves within the social collectivity, it allows for members of the polity to adapt their belonging in tandem with the ebbs and flows of morality and natality.

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<sup>11</sup> Arendt, Hannah, P. R. Baehr, and Rogers D. Spotswood Collection. 2003. *The Portable Hannah Arendt*. Penguin classics; Penguin classics. New York: Penguin Books. Page 574.

<sup>12</sup> Jackson, Michael. 2013. *The Politics of Storytelling : Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt*. Second edition. Denmark: Museum Musculanum Press. Page 41-42.



Conceived in this way, storytelling becomes the necessary medium of politics, As Jackson writes, “storytelling is never simply a matter of creating either person or social meaning, but an aspect of the ‘subjective-in-between’ in which a multiplicity of private and public interests are always problematically in play.”<sup>13</sup> Through narratives, subjective lived experiences become articulable within the public realm and how political action, once completed, can contextualize and prescribe future action. However, Arendt’s standards for storytelling as a “subjective-in-between” are exceptionally rigorous. As Julia Kristeva writes:

Arendt does not believe that the essential feature of narration can be found in the fabrication of coherence within the narrative or in the art of spinning a tale...In Arendt’s view the most important thing in the narrative testimony is to recognize the “moment of accomplishment” and to “identify the agent” of the story. The art of the narrative resides in the power to condense the action into an exemplary space, in removing it from the general flow of events, and in drawing attention to a “who.”...A narrative of this sort, one that is formulated in the web of human relationships and that is fated to the political in-between, is fundamentally bound up with action. It can manifest that essential logical process only if it becomes action itself. In other words, such a narrative must expose itself and act as if it were “drama” or “theater” and as if it were “playing a role.” Only then can *muthos* [narrative] remain *energeia* [actualized]. If narrative is to become a means of disclosure and not simply remain stuck in reification, it must be acted out. Opposing the static mimesis Arendt reclaims gestural theater as the *modus operandi* of the ideal narrative.<sup>14</sup>

Just as action requires narrative, narrative requires action: they are two sides of the same coin. Again, perpetual circling between two potentially static objects emerges as a central pattern to Arendt’s understanding of human flourishing (*zen*).

The symbiotic relationship between political action and contemplation entails the enacted narrative as catalyst between the two. Thus, not only is, “storytelling a strategy

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. Page 31.

<sup>14</sup> Kristeva, Julia. 2001. *Hannah Arendt. European perspectives; European perspectives*. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 73-74.

for transforming public meanings,” but also, “a vital human strategy for sustaining a sense of agency in the face of disempowering circumstances.”<sup>15</sup> As opposed to a tool for organizing social life, narrative becomes imperative for existential rootedness and belonging in a fundamentally plural and changing world. More simply, because the intersubjective cannot reflect the broad spectrum of the subjective, narration will always be a sight of conflict. In any social arrangement, only so many stories can be publically meaningful and only so many interpretations of those stories appear valid and able to disclose subjective truths and establish intersubjective ones.

For Arendt, the human condition implies a will to narrate and engage narratives. However, the means of narration are not universally available. Not all stories are remembered, not all stories hold equal meaning, and not all stories appear “true.” All three of these variables fluctuate with changing social conditions, itself subject to natality and mortality. The audience or spectators and their willingness to recollect, ruminate, and reinterpret action, so that it may become history, constitute the means of narration:

For a true story to become a recounted story, two related events must occur. First there needs to be an in-between that leads the way to memory and testimony. Second, the type of narrative must be determined by an in-between that provides the logic of memorization as a means of detachment from lived experience *ex post facto*. Only when both conditions occur can the “happening” be turned into “shared thought” through the articulation of a “plot.”<sup>16</sup>

Through these conditions, power enters into the play of narrative. Not only must the storyteller have the power to enter their story before the spectators with significance, but also to reject and defend against other narratives that claim to represent the entire intersubjective collectivity. The storyteller must have a sense of agency to tell the story,

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<sup>15</sup> Jackson, Michael. 2013. *The Politics of Storytelling : Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt*. Second edition. Denmark: Museum Musculanum Press. Page 34.

<sup>16</sup> *Ibid.* Page 73.

while the audience must sense the storyteller's agency in order to act as an in-between. It is this sense of agency, the mutual recognition that the individual oscillates between actor and acted upon, that distinguishes those who belong to the community from superfluous humanity.

For Arendt, agency is both crucial to her understanding of politics and inseparable from the categories of *praxis* and *poiēsis*. Recalling earlier distinctions between labor, action, and work, Arendt insists that intersubjective agency follows similar limitations that separate politics from work and labor. Agency is the ability to bring one's subjective experience into the acknowledged order and having one's subjective experience recognized as able to change the order. Like politics, agency is not a means to an end. It is not the ability to remake the order in accordance with preconceived notions, independent from the lived experiences of others.

The notion of agency as the overcoming of other subjectivities is contingent on an understanding politics as *poiēsis* or productive. In this case, instead of constantly cyclical politics, action is reified into a single order, which statically represents the polity. With this static representation, agency becomes understood as achieving an end through the determinable order. Enforcing this stasis requires the objectification of members of the collectivity. As Jackson concludes, this objectification must occur through violence:

Though violence may or may not entail physical harm, we may conclude that a person's humanity is violated whenever his or her status as a subject is reduced *against his or her will* to mere objectivity, for this implies that he or she no longer exists in any active social relationship to others, but solely in a passive relationship to himself or herself (Sartre's *en-soi*), on the margins of the public realm. For this reason it may not matter whether a person is made an object of compassion, of abuse, of attack, or of care and concern; all such modalities imply the nullification of the being of the

other as one whose words and action have no place in the life of the collectivity.<sup>17</sup>

Through its objectivizing properties, violence and stasis entail one another. Violence allows one to speak for others, thus edifying their order and their narratives, and subverting the constants of change and plurality implied by mortality and natality. Arendt's conception of violence is not as the damage done to the individual, but the destruction of, "the fields of interrelationship that constitute their lifeworlds," which allow for individuals to monopolize the means of narration.<sup>18</sup>

### **2.3 Orientalism**

Edward Said's masterpiece, *Orientalism*, describes how through historical and contemporary processes of European and American imperialism, colonial forces created a worldview that spoke for the world. The array of colonial military, political, and intellectual institutions posited a figure of the Orient, which claimed to represent the colonized peoples, lands, and culture, but fully independent from them. Thus, "because of Orientalism the Orient was not (and is not) a free subject of thought or action."<sup>19</sup> Through the inherently violent processes needed for objectification, the colonial polities, "gained in strength and identity by setting itself off against the Orient as a sort of surrogate and even underground self."<sup>20</sup> The colonizer knew the colonized as an externalized aspect of themselves, negating the need for any interaction with the colonized subject, and shoring up their own identity.

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<sup>17</sup> Jackson, Michael. 2013. *The Politics of Storytelling : Variations on a Theme by Hannah Arendt*. Second edition. Denmark: Museum Musculanum Press. Page 62.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. Page 57.

<sup>19</sup> Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books. Page 3.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

Reading *Orientalism* within the confines of Arendt limits the critical weight and analytical tools Said offers the reader. However, Said's many kaleidoscopic definitions and presentations of Orientalism present both insight and liability. To describe the variety of processes and products of Orientalism meaningfully, Said employs a broad range of description. Those who seek to use the near-canonical text for their own study often become tangled up in the multiplicity of Orientalism, producing reflection or studies that lack any real bite. Instead, I propose to briefly read the text through Arendt's framework to highlight both theoreticians' analysis of the structural adjustment of narrative through violence and power.

In this view, Orientalism serves as the corresponding narrative practice to colonial conquest, which justifies past and future objectification by rendering the colonized peoples, history, and civilizations superfluous to the action and identity of the colonizer. The colonizer does not relate to the Orient directly, but through, "learned grids and codes provided by the Orientalist."<sup>21</sup> Accordingly, the intersubjective relationship between the occident and orient is simply the superimposition of Western ideas, beliefs, notions of self, and fear onto the orient. The western can then interact with, discover, repress, reject, praise, and be seduced by their own displaced reifications. Within the world imagined through the orientalist grid, truth, for Arendt the product of intersubjective *praxis*, "becomes a function of learned judgment, not of the material itself, which in time seems to owe even its existence to the Orientalist."<sup>22</sup> Subsequently, the Orientalist gives the Orient its veracity and intelligibility, depriving the Orient of the ability to do so in its own right.

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid. Page 67.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

The Orientalist project, coterminous with violent European territorial expansion, operates by monopolizing the means of narration and employing them for the purposes of continuing that expansion and perpetuating the ideology that drives it. Of course, as Arendt writes, there is always conflict between the self and others. Orientalism does not reconcile this conflict, but subverts it, preventing the dialectic friction that could lead to a new paradigm outside of endless European domination. As Said writes:

This whole didactic process is neither difficult to understand nor difficult to explain. One ought again to remember that all cultures impose corrections upon raw reality, changing it from free-floating objects into units of knowledge. The problem is not that conversion takes place...cultures have always been inclined to impose complete transformations on other cultures, receiving them not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, they ought to be. To the Westerner, however, the Oriental was always like some aspect of the West...the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something into something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, and in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental. This process of conversion is a disciplined one: it is taught, it has its own societies, periodicals, traditions, vocabularies, rhetoric, all in basic ways connected to and supplied by the prevailing cultural and political norms of the West.<sup>23</sup>

Orientalism objectifies the culturally different subject and represents them as the expatriated object of the westerner's own worldview. As a result, this brash stasis allows for the colonial forces to engage in projects. The colonizer subjects the globe to their collective enterprise, treating the totality of the world as a means to a teleological end. Accordingly, colonial exploits often failed to demonstrate substantial economic or social reason, instead they appeared to the metropole as projects to realize colonial fantasies.

## **2.4 Pariah and Parvenu**

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. Page 67-68.

Arendt and Said similarly engage European imperial project. For Arendt, European imperialism forged the way for political practices that would evolve into totalitarianism, whose rejection and prevention became the impetus for her philosophy. As Jackson footnotes in his work on Arendtian storytelling, her understanding of the Jew as a pariah resembles the conclusions Franz Fanon draws on the consciousness of the colonized in *Black Skin, White Masks*. Like Said, who ignites post-colonial theory by demonstrating the lacunar absence of the colonized, Arendt chose to emphasize the effects of antisemitism that obliterate the Jew to themselves. She writes that the “greatest injury which society can and does inflict is to make [the pariah] doubt the reality and validity of his own existence, to reduce him in his own eyes to the status of a nonentity.”<sup>24</sup> This observation persists through *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, in which Arendt begins with a modern anthropological analysis of the Jewish people in Europe. She details the frustration and failure of always and everywhere being either a pariah, outcast and excluded from the community, or a parvenu, the obscure newcomer who lacks the historical weight to justify their wealth or wellbeing.

The presence of the Jew as pariah begins with the secularization of Judaism. As Kristeva summarizes, “Arendt asserts that the secularization of ‘Judaism’ into ‘Jewishness’ entails abandoning ‘identity’ (‘to be’) in favor of ‘belonging’ (‘to belong’).”<sup>25</sup> For Arendt, this operates as a paradox. The Jew abandons their politics, belief, and notions of truth and centrality in order to belong to the gentile community. The

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<sup>24</sup> Arendt, Hannah, Jerome Kohn, and Ron H. Feldman. 2007. *The Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken Books.

<sup>25</sup> Kristeva, Julia. 2001. *Hannah Arendt*. European perspectives; European perspectives. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 87. The argument is drawn from Arendt’s interpretation of Proust: Arendt, Hannah. 1966. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. Page 82-85.

greater political community subsequently rejects the Jew for dismissing their constitutive characteristics, suspicious that the Jew lacks the integrity to maintain any type of “being.” Through this paradox Arendt presents her famous argument that, with modernity, many lack “the right to have rights.” As Seyla Benhabib writes, Arendt’s statement is less tautological than it appears. The first use of rights “is a moral claim to membership and a certain form of treatment compatible with the claim to membership.”<sup>26</sup> Within Arendt’s systematic philosophy, this might be better understood as belonging or as liberation from objectification. Arendt’s second use of the word “rights” depends upon the prior claim of membership. To have this right “meant that ‘I have a claim to do or not do A, and you have an obligation not to hinder me from doing or not doing A.’ Rights claims entitle persons to engage or not in a course of action, and such entitlements create reciprocal obligations.”<sup>27</sup> This claim implicates three entities with tripartite responsibility for upholding these claims: those entitled to the rights, those whose obligation to protect these rights creates a duty, and the organization, institution or legal organ responsible for arbitration and enforcement. Instead of the American notion of inalienable rights endowed by higher powers, Arendt’s secular age show that these rights, integral for the type of equality necessary for political action, presuppose a series of rights that include *place* and *political belonging*.

The European Jew, provided the legal freedoms offered by Napoleonic law, lacked the right to belong these freedoms presupposed. However, this mode of Jewish suffering is not the immemorial condition of European Jews, but a product of modern the nation-state. In the same work, she shows how, “for structural reasons, the nation state

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<sup>26</sup> Benhabib, Seyla. 2004. *The Rights of Others : Aliens, Residents and Citizens*. The John Robert Seeley lectures, 5; John Robert Seeley lectures, 5. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 56.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. Page 57.



produces mass numbers of refugees and *must* produce them in order to maintain the homogeneity of the nation it seeks to represent, in other words, to support the nationalism of the nation-state.”<sup>28</sup> The social and psychological predicaments of those trapped between the labels of pariah and parvenu extend to refugees and all those cleansed from nationalist homogeneity. For Arendt, the Jew is the representative of these people, with a history of its own, but a suffering and story archetypal of this modern phenomena.

Through this framework, Jewishness develops an affinity with other dislocated and distinguished people. Judith Butler defines this as, “a mode of living in which alterity is constitutive of who one is.”<sup>29</sup> From this understanding, the Jew can never understand or give an account of oneself independent from their relation to others. For Arendt, this mode of living is deeply engaged in her understanding of religion, love, and politics in the world, which was tested and contested by notions of belonging. After the publication of her work *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, much of world Jewry rejected her, finding the piece traitorous. One such Jew was Gershom Scholem, who accused her of lacking *Ahabath Israel* (love of the Jewish people). Arendt’s response is telling:

I found it puzzling that you should write “I regard you wholly as a daughter of our people, and in no other way.” The truth is I have never pretended to be anything else or to be in any way other than I am, and I have never even felt tempted in that direction... You are quite right – I am not moved by any “love” of this sort, and for two reasons: I have never in my life “loved” any people or collective – neither the German people, nor the French, nor the American, nor the working class or anything of that sort. I indeed love “only” my friends and the only kind of love I know of and believe in is the love of persons. Secondly, this “love of the Jews” would appear to me, since I am myself Jewish, as something rather suspect. I cannot love myself or anything which I know is part and parcel of my own person. To clarify this, let me tell you of a conversation I had with a prominent political personality who was defending the – in my

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<sup>28</sup> Butler, Judith. 2012. *Parting Ways : Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New directions in critical theory; New directions in critical theory. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 121.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. 120.

opinion disastrous – nonseparation of religion and state in Israel. What he said – I am not sure of the exact words anymore – ran something like this: “You will understand that, as a Socialist, I, of course, do not believe in God; I believe in the Jewish people.” I found this a shocking statement and, being shocked, I did not reply at the time. But I could have answered: The greatness of this people was once that it believed in God, and believed in Him in such a way that its trust and love toward Him was greater than its fear. And now this people believed only in itself? What good can come out of that? – Well, in this sense I do not “love” the Jews, nor do I “believe in them; I merely belong to them as a matter of course, beyond dispute or argument.<sup>30</sup>

At its simplest, Arendt responds to Sholem by claiming that her right to belong to the Jewish people is not produced by her behavior, but by natality. This point, however, leads to a nuanced critique of liberation projects within an intersubjective world. Israel sought to liberate the Jewish people from the pariah/parvenu bondage in Europe. To liberate a people, one must delineate the people. Thus, for Arendt, when one asks someone to engage in a project of liberation, what they are really asking is for them to exchange their current chains for new ones.

From this, Arendt rejects this form of love for a people alienated from the plurality of persons that constitute the grouping. To accept this love would equate to relenting to the homogenizing agenda of the nation-state, the same agenda that plagued modern Jewry from the beginning:

She is suggesting that our efficacy and the true exercise of our freedom does not follow from our individual personhood, but rather from social conditions such as place and political belonging. This is not a matter of finding the human dignity within each person, but of understanding the human as a social being, as one who requires place and community in order to be free, to exercise freedom of thought as opinion, to exercise political action that is efficacious.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Arendt, Hannah, Jerome Kohn, and Ron H. Feldman. 2007. *The Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken Books. Page 465-467.

<sup>31</sup> Butler, Judith. 2012. *Parting Ways : Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New directions in critical theory; New directions in critical theory. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 148.

By absolutely rejecting the site of freedom, and love, as within oneself, Arendt creates an argument against nationalism and ethnocentrism. Instead, she locates her love within the pursuit of her ideals and their reconciliation with a constantly changing society. It is not the “survival” of the Jewish people that makes them great, it is the overcoming of fear and suffering in pursuit of their sacred ideals which Arendt praises. At the cost of not belonging, Jews have held values that have made them pariahs. Her criticism of internal love is, therefore, criticism of belonging in a manner that is static. As she concludes in her analysis of imperialism, “our political life rests on the assumption that we can produce equality through organization, because man can act in and change and build a common world, together with his equals and only with his equals.”<sup>32</sup> Freedom and the quest for a meaningful political equality come through motion, action, and the desire to belong despite its impossibility in human diversity.

## 2.5 Universalism

In her analysis of the pariah and parvenu, Arendt uncovers another paradox: humanity has a fundamental need to belong while, simultaneously, that belonging is produced through our relationship to others, and the individuals that constitute those others are always changing, preventing belonging from being full or permanent. However, Arendt maintains throughout her life that every human holds the universal right to belong. This right of belonging is inevitably connected to a place. Arendt’s universal right to belonging, differs from universalism. Everyone has the right to political belonging somewhere, but no one has the right to political belonging everywhere.

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<sup>32</sup> Arendt, Hannah. 1966. *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. New ed. New York: Harcourt, Brace & World. Page 301.

Judith Butler frames this interpretation through William Connolly's term *pluralization*, which invokes the motion and cyclicity Arendt demands beyond the term *plurality*. The commitment to pluralization entails, not only the protection of differences, freedoms, and identities, but also a commitment to future versions that have not yet come into existence and the judicious reevaluation of past versions that have lost legitimacy and stand only on the ground of orthodoxy. Using this concept, Butler claims:

The distinction between pluralization and universalization is important for thinking about unchosen cohabitation. Equal protection or, indeed, equality, is not a principle that homogenizes those to whom it applies; rather, the commitment to equality is a commitment to the processes of differentiation itself...But there is always a redoubling here that dislocates the claim from any specific community: everyone has the right of belonging. And this means there is a universalizing and a differentiating that takes place at once and without contradiction – and that this is the structure of pluralization. In other words, political rights are separated from the social ontology upon which they depend; political rights universalize, although they do so always in the context of a differentiated (and continually differentiating) population.

Butler is hasty to claim that universalization and differentiation exist without contradiction. These actions both entail many practices and potentialities that can contradict and incite moral panic within the community. Arendt does not deny this contradiction, but instead determines that politics serve as the catalytic agent to overcome the contradictions.

Putting plurality into motion also avoids the traps of capitalism's pristine universalism. As opposed to political action, commodification can also operate as a catalytic agent between universalization and differentiation. As a world system, capitalism functions for the endless accumulation of capital through the exchange of commodities, capital, and labor-power. Within capitalism, universalism operates to facilitate smooth exchange. As Immanuel Wallerstein argues, "by a sort of impeccable

logic, particularisms of any kind whatsoever are said to be incompatible with the logic of a capitalist system, or at least an obstacle to its optimal operation.”<sup>33</sup> Thus, capitalism implements a universalist meritocracy in which labor and goods hold different values, but are made of the same medium: capital. While Arendt demonstrates the philosophical failures of this notion, Wallerstein turns to the historical:

Racism operationally has taken the form of what might called the ‘ethnicization’ of the work force, by which I mean that at all times there has existed an occupational-reward hierarchy that has tended to be correlated with some so-called social criteria. . . Racism has always combined claims based on continuity with the past (genetic and/or social) with a present-oriented flexibility in defining the exact boundaries of these reified entities we call races or ethno-national-religious groupings.<sup>34</sup>

Therefore, within capitalism, the contradictions between universalism and racism are reconciled through processes of making and remaking hierarchies. The universalist tendency functions to ensure the hierarchy can include all peoples, but presumes no equal relationship between them. “Society,” management, and progress cannot serve as the basis of the reconciliation of difference and universalism.

By understanding this contradiction as the primary quandary of modernity and politics as its only acceptable resolution, Arendt grounds the pariah/parvenu worldview in some level of permanence. If our epoch condemns us to confrontation with difference and we commit ourselves to a universal right to belong, on the basis that it is the only way to ensure one’s right to belong and constitutes the basis of our experience of freedom, the sensation of being a newcomer or feeling ostracized is inevitable. Of course, many people train themselves to experience the world through self-referential representation, like the

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<sup>33</sup> Balibar, Étienne, and Immanuel Maurice Wallerstein. 1991. *Race, Nation, Class : Ambiguous Identities*. London England: Routledge, Chapman & Hall. Page 31.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. Page 33-34.

orientalist, or engage in systems that presume the world is homogeneous and produce this sensation through labor and fetishized value, like the capitalist. However, these people will always struggle to encounter the Jew or the refugee whose very existence demonstrates the insufficiency of their world. With this in mind, Jewishness, as a project of belonging, entails not only a people, but also a perspective accessible far beyond the boundaries of the Jewish ethnicity:

It may be that the sense of belonging to this group entails taking up a relation to the non-Jew that requires departing from a communitarian basis for political judgment and responsibility alike. It is not that “one” (over here) approaches the “other” (over there), but that these two modes of existence are radically implicated in one another, for good and bad reasons. “Here” and “there” as well as “then” and “now” become internally complicated modalities of space and time that correspond to this notion of cohabitation. Moreover, if Jewishness mandates this departure from communitarian belonging, then “to belong” is to undergo a dispossession from the category of Jewishness, a formulation as promising as it is paradoxical. It also obligates the development of a politics that exceeds the claims of communitarian belonging. Although Arendt herself values the way exile can lead to action in the service of broader purposes, here we might read dispossession as an exilic moment, one that disposes us ethically. Paradoxically, it is only possible to struggle to alleviate the suffering of others if I am both motivated and dispossessed by my own suffering. It is this relation to the other that dispossesses me from any enclosed or self-referential notion of belonging otherwise, we cannot understand those obligations that bind us when there is no obvious mode of belonging and where the convergence of temporalities becomes the condition for the memory of political dispossession as well as the resolve to bring such dispossession to a halt.<sup>35</sup>

Though a comfortable presence within alienation, a rootedness derived from ambiguity, and a fragmented modality of time and space, the Jew challenges any self-referential worldview. Unlike hierarchical universalism, this Jewish cosmopolitanism implicates the other *within* the self. It internalizes notions of marginality, recognizing Arendt’s human condition: any acknowledged, public order is partial and fails to represent the whole. The

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<sup>35</sup> Butler, Judith. 2012. *Parting Ways : Jewishness and the Critique of Zionism*. New directions in critical theory; New directions in critical theory. New York: Columbia University Press. Page 127.

power of a society is the ability to maintain the most representative intersubjective space through flexibility and constant adaptive motion. In opposition to collectivity through homogeneity, as in the case of the nation-state, this “exilic” polity assumes that rootedness is produced through interactions with the other. This universalism accepts an unfulfilled and fragmentary belonging within the world as the fundamental precondition for ethical belonging.

### **Chapter 3: The Origins, Opportunities, and Liabilities of Zionist Ideology**

By and large, Zionism has become naturalized. By 2017, the once revolutionary and contentious assumptions and historical interpretations the movement depends upon are latent in many Jewish and global narratives of the formation of the contemporary moment. This ideology has a place of origin, belongs to an era of thought, and reflects its contemporary historical events. Within its own time, to Jews and non-Jews, the ideology presented a series of opportunities and liabilities for the Jewish people and their communities. Today, Zionism's concerns and praises echo louder than when they first entered the discourse. Importantly, that the original shortcomings of Zionism remain prescient is telling. Zionism's original positions, assumptions, and value have remained at the center of the movement despite massive changes in its context and agenda. One of the most remarkable things is how closely the movement has brought to life the ideology, despite serious incentive to do otherwise. This chapter traces the causes of the Zionist movement, beyond the myopic account relied upon until recent academic intervention, and examines the initial articulations of the project in light of the political and socio-economic changes within Germanic Jewish communities. After considering the origins, I will present what I consider the major strengths and liabilities of the ideology.





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<sup>36</sup> The Return of the Jewish Volunteer from the Wars of Liberation to His Family Still Living in Accordance with Old Customs. Moritz Daniel Oppenheim (1833-34). The Jewish Museum New York.

### 3.1 Emancipation, Anxiety, and Assimilation

Walter Laqueur begins *A History of Zionism* with the figure of Moses Mendelsohn.<sup>37</sup> Indeed, most narratives of the origins of Zionism select this as the starting point for the Zionist corpus. Moses Mendelsohn, they claim, demonstrated to the European Jewish elites that they could join the rest of Europe by accepting the Enlightenment's universal principles. Obviously, this discovery came with serious pitfalls and tensions. The wistful youth of the Jewish community might desire entry into European society without properly understanding the value of the Jewish tradition they would leave behind. Additionally, once Mendelsohn demonstrated that the impasse between Jewish and gentile communities could be overcome, Jews feared the integrity of their community would dissipate.

Moses Mendelsohn was the product, not the producer, of European social tectonic shifts that created an incredibly volatile atmosphere for European Jewish identity. The implementation of enlightenment political thought produced policies of universalism that removed many state-imposed limitations on Jews. In the terms of Arendt, the Jews were granted "rights" without the belonging necessary to take advantage of them. Most clearly and extensively, Napoleonic conquest emancipated Jews from local residential, economic and social restrictions. Napoleonic law ensured freedom of religion and freedom of worship. Once implemented, Jews could leave the ghetto, hold jobs, and enroll in universities that historically forbade Jewish enrollment. Moses Mendelsohn became the first Jew to publically achieve Enlightenment standards of greatness.

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<sup>37</sup> Laqueur, Walter. 1972. *A History of Zionism*. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson.

The Moses Mendelsohn narrative supports the problematic idea that Jews in the Enlightenment faced a decision between two identities: the traditional Jewish life from before emancipation and the assimilated lifestyle that Mendelsohn represents. In contradiction, the historical record shows that emancipation was not experienced as a dichotomous choice between “old” and “new.” It presented Jews with a plethora of potential new identities. Emancipation included Jews in new political, economic, and nationalist networks. The internal Jewish dialogue and interrogation of these diverse futures was rife with anxiety and insecurity. Historically unquestioned practices faced rigorous scrutiny. Values, which for centuries were accepted on the basis of authority, were forced to prove their worth from a variety of dissonant perspectives. These problems of authority were not new, but resulted from accelerated and condensed forms of cultural hybridity.

In the process of redrawing Jewishness, the concept of assimilation arose as a term of evaluation for any potential mode of Jewish life. Accusations of assimilation referred to different, and sometimes oppositional, lifestyles. As Stanislawski writes, “both ‘assimilation’ and ‘assimilated Jew’ became terms of opprobrium rather than of precise meaning; an ‘assimilated Jew’ came to mean any Jew whose version of Jewishness one did not like.”<sup>38</sup> Just as Jews lacked a clear consensus on what it meant to be Jewish, they also failed to explicate what was foreign and incommensurable to that domain. Assimilation served as the great straw man for the arguments of this era. As Gerson D. Cohen argues:

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<sup>38</sup> Stanislawski, Michael. 2001. *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siècle : Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*. The S. Mark Taper Foundation imprint in Jewish studies. Berkeley: University of California Press. Page 7.

Throughout Jewish history there have been great changes in law, in thought, and in basic categories of expression, reflecting the need of the Jews to adapt themselves and their way of life to new conditions. This assimilation, or adaptation, was not the consequence of a desire to make things easier, but the result of a need to continue to make the tradition relevant.<sup>39</sup>

Jewish longevity is not, as commonly argued, produced by an incredible stubbornness or fortitude against assimilation. Historically, the Jew's durability as a minority results from historically successful adaptation or assimilation. This chapter departs from the perspective that Zionism, as a body of thought, must be interpreted and evaluated in its original context: as a subgroup of Jewish assimilationist movements born from a particularly tumultuous and anxious time in Jewish identity.

### **3.2 The Fin de Siécle**

Zionism entails many different thinkers, influences, and agendas. Even today, it is still a quite diverse body of thought. However, nearly all iterations of contemporary Zionism claim some type of genealogical relationship to the thought of Theodore Herzl and Max Nordau. As Stanislawsky profoundly displays, Herzlian Zionism's roots lay much deeper in the cultural and political thought of the Fin de Siécle than Jewish theology or history. Herzl aimed for success in playwriting long before he became a Zionist activist. Nordau's prestige within the movement was originally borrowed, and seriously paralleled, his work as a social critic. Both bring the style to their activism.

The end of the nineteenth-century contained a distinct and socially powerful artistic movement. European prestige searched for new sources of fortification as it struggled to find new areas to colonize. Victorian rationalism no longer monopolized the

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<sup>39</sup> Cohen, Gerson D. 1997. *Jewish History and Jewish Destiny*. The Moreshet series, v. 15; Moreshet series, v. 15. New York: Jewish Theological Seminary of America. Page 152-153.

voice of social and political movements. The result was an epoch, “more concrete and more cosmic than what came before, either searching anxiously for some sure foundation or making do with frail imitations of the infinite.”<sup>40</sup> European literature embraced this cultural extremism by perpetually depicting a model of the world in which a fascinating, but fearful reality rested underneath, “the paper-thin structure of civilization.”<sup>41</sup> Each thinker of this era sought to offer a way to break through the norms and consensus of civilization and create a society rooted in this dark reality. They intended to achieve this by investing cosmic meaning in mundane practices. Grand utopian worlds became attainable by giving world history a push in the right direction.

### **3.3 Herzl, Nordau, and Jabotinsky**

According to Zionist mythology, Herzl turned to Zionism because, after his coverage of the Dreyfus affair, he recognized Zionism as the only escape from European antisemitism. Meanwhile, his actual reporting reveals a Jewish journalist just as unenthusiastic about Zionism as other Jews prior to 1890.<sup>42</sup> His embrace of the ideology grew out of his disillusionment with European cosmopolitanism. Prior to the rise in the popularity and reputation of Zionism, Herzl belonged to the group of intellectuals and artists that advocated for an ostensibly avant-garde cosmopolitanism. Herzl and his peers came from bourgeois backgrounds, but presented themselves with an intentionally aristocratic aesthetic. They believed in a pan-European culture that rejected any restrictions or heterogeneity between national identities or communitarian ties. This

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<sup>40</sup> Terry Eagleton. 1995. *Cultural Politics at the Fin De Siècle*. Cambridge U.K.: Cambridge University Press. Page 13.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. Page 14.

<sup>42</sup> Kornberg, Jacques. 1993. *Theodor Herzl : From Assimilation to Zionism*. Jewish literature and culture; Jewish literature and culture. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

belief arose from a notion that humankind could be cultivated to a universal identity. This was a cosmopolitanism of persons, not of cultures. Herzl, like many other Enlightenment offspring, believed that in order to achieve their utopia, they needed to elevate Oriental or primitive peoples to the cosmopolitan European culture they deemed supreme. While his peers resented the aesthetic and drive for endless accumulation, the mode of universalism resembled capitalism's need for homogeneity masking larger systems of hierarchy. While belonging was theoretically unlimited, it was also inherently exclusionary.

In his utopian novel, *Old-New land* or *Altneuland*, Herzl displays how Zionism attempted to redeem the ideals of this cosmopolitan movement. He claimed the Zionist movement would build a piece of Europe in Asia. The Europe he imagined looked nothing like the Europe he lived in. It was a Europe born exclusively of Fin de Siècle ideals. Religion would be relegated to the private sphere. Arabs would celebrate the arrival of the Jews because their immigration promised great technological and cultural advances. The Zionist groups would construct a peace palace with Terence's famous line, "Homo sum, humani nihil a me alienum puto," (I am human, and nothing of that which is human is alien to me) carved over each entryway. Most importantly, the Jewish state would rid itself of, "the worst invention of the nineteenth century, the fetish of nation-statehood."<sup>43</sup> Instead, the Zionist project would come to fruition through a decentralized government with social solidarity built upon the recognition of cultural supremacy. Herzl's writings are characterized by a deeply humanistic intent, undermined by a deep

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<sup>43</sup> Stanislawski, Michael. 2001. *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siècle : Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*. The S. Mark Taper Foundation imprint in Jewish studies. Berkeley: University of California Press. Page 16.

ignorance of the political realities within both European Jewry and Palestine, which was reinforced by his Orientalism.

Max Nordau developed Herzl's presentation of the Zionist ideology by adding a messianic historical narrative. As opposed to Herzl who believed the Zionist project was a way for Jewish people to break into the bonds of European humanity, Nordau identified it as a task of redeeming Europe's world historical greatness. The Hungarian social critic is best known for his work in degeneration theory. He contended that human progress had become stifled by egomania and mystification. He planned European and Jewish emancipation from degeneration by cleansing it of its religious elements. His political direction in both European and Jewish aligns with one of the most misunderstood and deeply problematic ideological axioms of the nineteenth and twentieth century: Social Darwinism. "In both his pre-Zionist works and those written after he became a Zionist, he presented a cultural and political theory that was neither liberal nor conservative, neither radical nor reactionary, though it contained all of these sensibilities."<sup>44</sup> Nordau sought to use the Zionist movement to cleanse the Jewish people of religion, which he believed to be a fetishized artifact of the past. It would be replaced by rational practices, discerned by science to fulfill the human needs religion historically fulfilled. Thus, through Zionism, the Jews would lead Europe to the next stage of human evolution.

Vladimir "Ze'ev" Jabotinsky built out this secular messianism through the rhetoric, aesthetic, and practices of militant nationalism. He identified his own political thought as a more correct interpretation of Herzl than his traditional followers. Many claim it is a right wing or fascist offshoot of the more palatable Zionism. Jabotinsky's thought and followers have been too essential to the state to not include him in an

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid. 22.

analysis of Zionism and expect the analysis to represent Zionism as it is contemporarily and historically *practiced*. While Herzl clearly holds greater clout in Israeli history textbooks, Israelis also complete compulsory service Israeli Defense Forces (IDF), which originated and still relies upon Jabotinsky's militant ideology. The dependence of Israel on the "proudly cruel" thought of Jabotinsky will be addressed later in the thesis, as it deserves its own investigation.

Jabotinsky's critics are clearly right to identify incredible dissonance between his overwhelming nationalism and Herzl's distaste for the nation-state. This conflict needs to reflect stages in which the state came into fruition. Herzl's Zionism showed public disdain for religion alongside its desire to eliminate the nation-state. This left very little material for Jabotinsky to excavate a practical shared identity to sustain a settler colonial mission. Meanwhile, Zionism's material infrastructure belonged to middle-class secular, Germanic Jews. Again displaying the meaninglessness of the accusation of assimilation, Jabotinsky accused religious Jews of being "assimilated Jews" by virtue of their religiousness. For Jabotinsky, the Jewish people were bound together by a dormant nationalism, which was misunderstood by Jews and misinterpreted by Europeans as a distinct "religion." To limit Jewishness to a religion was a self-denying imposition by gentile forces. Any Jewish emancipatory movement could not proceed along this alienating imposition.

### **3.4 The Revaluation of Judaism**

In the context of the *Fin de Siècle*, Zionism presented both advantages as a political belief and serious liabilities. The advantages of Zionism are best reflected by the most influential and misinterpreted thinker of the time: Friedrich Nietzsche. Though



European society achieved new freedoms through emancipatory movements that installed democratic regimes, Nietzsche argued that these movements failed to emancipate the mind. The impetus to maintain the authority of cultural communities and traditional identities contained and condemned freethinking. Democratic governance within the confines of traditional authority structures deprived individuals of their capacity for judgment and creativity. These authority structures work by training communities to reject thought and argument outside a limited range. Thus, it functions by herding people to reproduce outdated values. As Nietzsche writes in *Beyond Good and Evil*:

When the highest and strongest drives, erupting passionately, drive the individual far beyond and above the average range of the herd conscience, they destroy the self-confidence of the community, its belief in itself, breaking as it were its spine: consequently it is just these drives which are branded and vilified most. High and independent spirituality [Geistigkeit], the will to stand alone, even reason on a grand scale are conceived to be a danger; everything that raises the individual above the herd and causes one's neighbor to be afraid is called *evil* from now on; the equitable, modest, adaptive, conforming mentality, the *mediocrity* of desires, acquires the names and honors of morality.<sup>45</sup>

Goodness and morality become hollow achievements. They are the fetishes of authority. For the individual, their value derives from the tautological notion that because society is good, the practices and beliefs that reproduce it hold intrinsic value.

Nietzsche's rejection of this misplacement of value does not grow from an antisocial agenda, but the understanding that the individual consents to the limitations of living in a society because social life makes the individual's life meaningful. However, this process occurs over constant flux, fluidity, and social change. Morality, the herding of individuals through tradition and authority, operates by creating false notions of stasis

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<sup>45</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and Carol Diethe. 2007. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Rev. student ed. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 149.

and eternity in societies that are constantly moving in complex and unpredictable ways. This illusion works so well because it hides the fact that all truths can only be perspectival. Instead it advocates for one truth; one truth established by authority, as the only possible result of history, which lacks verisimilitude for the individuals with different perspectives. As a result two competing wills pervade human social arrangements: the will to nothingness and the will to truth. The former is the will to preserve the empty values of morality, the later to overturn them to include space for new perspectives while keeping the old relevant and meaningful. For a society to maintain its vitality, integrity, and inclusiveness, it must follow the will to truth to adapt through “the revaluation of all values.”<sup>46</sup>

Zionism pursued the revaluation of Jewish history and morality. Critically, Zionism sought to redefine Jewish presence within European society. In the first section of *The Jewish State*, Herzl addresses the paradigmatic believe of Jews and non-Jews that the Jew depended on gentile society, but never contributed to it. “Jews faithfully parrot the word of anti-Semites: ‘we live off ‘Host-nations; and if we had no ‘Host-nation’ to sustain us we should starve to death.’”<sup>47</sup> This symptom is emblematic of a larger problem. For centuries, gentiles could claim Jewish inferiority on the basis of their Jewishness. With the rise of the Enlightenment paradigm, this argument became less defensible. Those looking to defame the Jew continued to do so, often employing pre-Enlightenment trope, but altering them so they resonated within the context of post-Enlightenment industrial capitalism. The Jew was unproductive while the gentile was productive, the Jew was greedy while Christians were charitable, and the Jew was a

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid. Page 120.

<sup>47</sup> Hertzberg, Arthur. 1960. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York: Meridian Books. Page 207.

displaced oriental in the midst of the Occident. Research apparatuses produced historical evidence to ratify this accusation. Emancipation granted Jews legal freedom, but lacked its social counterpart.

This partial inclusion resulted in, what Nordau termed, “Jewish spiritual misery.”<sup>48</sup> As Nordau acutely perceived, the French legally emancipated the Jew, “not because the nations had decided to stretch their out the hand of fraternity to the Jews, but because their intellectual leaders had accepted a certain standard, one of whose requirements was that the emancipation of the Jew should figure in the statute book.”<sup>49</sup> As a result of this emancipation, the Jew lost the ghetto, their universally recognized site of Jewishness. The ghetto, often depicted as a prison, also served as a refuge. In addition, it was the site of Jewish veradiction or truth telling.<sup>50</sup> The ghetto was the place where Jewish identity was defined, performed, criticized, and accepted.

With the loss of the ghetto, sites of Jewish identity disaggregated. In his address to the First Zionist Congress, Nordau characterizes the situation of the contemporary emancipated Jew in Western Europe:

He has abandoned his specifically Jewish character, yet the nations do not accept him as part of their national communities. He flees from his Jewish fellow, because anti-Semitism has taught him, too, be contemptuous of them, but gentile compatriots repulse him as he accepts to associate with them. He has lost his home in the ghetto yet the land of his birth is denied as a home to him as his home. He has no ground under his feet and he has no community to which he belongs as a fully accepted member. He cannot count on justice from his fellow Christian countrymen as a reward for either his character or his achievements, and still less on the basis of any existing good feeling; he has lost connection with other Jews. Inevitably

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<sup>48</sup> Ibid. 239.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. 237.

<sup>50</sup> Foucault, Michel, Michel. Senellart, and Collège de France. 2008. *The Birth of Biopolitics : Lectures at the Collège De France, 1978-79*. Basingstoke England: Palgrave Macmillan. Page 30-35.

he feels that the world hates him and he sees no place where he can find the warmth for which he longs and seeks.<sup>51</sup>

Nordau's account is remarkably acute. However, he continues to scapegoat simple antisemitism for larger social changes in the life of Jews. The emancipated Jew gained access to new sites of self-discovery. Jews were no longer limited to producing their identities in strictly Jewish spaces. However, they were unable to fully belong to any non-Jewish space because they were Jewish. Therefore, as Nordau correctly characterized, the emancipated Jew found only partial acceptance in a variety of places. In this atmosphere, Jews debated how to escape the trap of their new freedoms, how to change the Jewish identity to make it palatable to non-Jewish spaces. The first great merit of the Zionist movement was its declaration that, "we are not dependent upon the circulation of old values; we will produce new ones."<sup>52</sup>

### **3.5 Centralization and Jewish Intersubjectivity**

The second advantage of Zionism was its important desire to create new networks of Jewish identity while the territory Jewish intersubjective needed to cover grew in size and disaggregated. More clearly, once released from the ghetto, Jewish migration within Europe caused enlarged diversification of the lived experience of Jews. Increasingly, Judaism seemed like an incompetent system to address the needs of all its members, and one that offered comparatively limited fulfillment. Meanwhile, abandoning the system held minimal efficacy because it would not prevent Jews from being labeled "a Jew" by

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<sup>51</sup> Hertzberg, Arthur. 1960. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York: Meridian Books. Page 239.

<sup>52</sup> Hertzberg, Arthur. 1960. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York: Meridian Books. Page 207.

gentiles. Emancipation resulted in a huge population of Jews who rejected by historic Jewish institutions, but did not belong in new communities.

Jewish identity needed to expand and centralize, so that Jews could maintain various new intersectional identities created by new liberties. This is not to claim that there was even one, all-encompassing Jewish identity. However, new freedoms of movement, nationality, civic belonging, occupation, sexuality, and ownership broadened and intensified Jewish subjectivity. Zionism pioneered the centralizing movement. Ahad Ha'am's early writings confirm that much of the appeal of Zionism came from its ability to centralize disaggregated Jewish identities. For Ha'am, Zionism was a means to revitalize and enable these new forms of Jewish life:

Hibbat Zion [Love of Zion] neither excludes the written word nor seeks to modify it artificially through addition or subtraction. It stands for a Judaism which shall have as its focal point the ideal of our nation's unity, its renaissance, and its free development through the expression of universal human values in the terms of its own distinctive spirit. This is the conception of Judaism on which our education and our literature must be based. We must revitalize the idea of the national renaissance, and use every possible means to strengthen its hold and deepen its roots, until it becomes an organic element in Jewish consciousness and an independent force. Only in that way, as it seems to me, can the Jewish soul be freed from its shackles and regain contact with the broad stream of human life without having to pay for freedom by the sacrifice of its individuality.<sup>53</sup>

Ha'am's characterization of centralization is clearer than those of Herzl, Nordau, or Jabotinsky. While the later focused on the merits of Jewish centralization through state building, Ha'am maintained suspicions of the potentials of a state. Instead, Ha'am supported the development of a physical focal point for Judaism because it would designate a space for the reinterpretation of the Jewish tradition.

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid. Page 255.

Zionism entailed, for Ha'am and the others, the space necessary to effectively revalue Judaism. In this formulation, the accessibility of the individual to Zion is the same as Judaism's vitality to the individual. For Ha'am, the centralization of global Judaism in Israel served as a means to create an inclusive and fulfilling Judaism. Zion was a permanent convention, with open invitation to global Jewry, to come and debate what a meaningful Jewish life looked like from a variety of vantage points. For Herzl, Nordau, and Jabotinsky, Zion was the studio where Jewish elites dissatisfied with their life in Europe could sculpt a New Jew. Before launching into a critique of the later, victorious group, it is important to stop and recognize that the Zionist appeal for centralization was legitimate, necessary, and still remains the most advantageous aspect of Zionism for contemporary global Jewry. Simultaneously, it has served as the medium for one, or arguably a few, modes of Jewish life to dominate and subvert the multitude of alternatives. The vitality centralization provided also created new networks of intra-Jewish hegemony. With that, it clearly becomes time to examine the liabilities of Zionism.

### **3.6 Remembering and Forgetting**

Zionism bares many of the same failures as nationalism. Before examining problems more unique to Zionism, it would be useful to cover the peculiarities of nationalist thought. In his justifiable masterpiece, *Imagined Communities*, Benedict Anderson displays the deep historiographical work prerequisite for individuals to imagine themselves as part of a nation. The nation needed a history that could account for its communal boundaries within Euromodern conceptions of time. For this reason, Creole colonial settlements in the Americas were the first to successfully install nationalism.

Originally, these settlements operated as subsidiaries to European metropolises. As they rose in power and prestige through the expansion of industry, they began to imagine their own communities as, “*parallel and compatible* to those in Europe.”<sup>54</sup> Peculiarly, instead of demanding a larger or fairer share within their empires, they fought for independence. Their justifications of independence were not historical arguments. The American declaration of independence does not argue that “Americas” are a historic identity; that this identity had any duration in time prior to 1776. Instead, their calls for revolution grew from a, “profound feeling that a radical break with the past was occurring – a ‘blasting open of the continuum of history’”<sup>55</sup> New Creole nations identified as communities fundamentally new to the world. No American history existed before 1776. The nationalist revolutionaries easily escaped the burden of upholding historical mandates and precedents.

Nationalist revolutionaries in Europe could not rely on this explanation of their new social formation. No Greek nationalist could hide the fact that a Greek identity existed long before the modern, nationalist form. In Europe, nationalist movements relied on the idea that the national consciousness was awaking from a deep slumber. Unlike the Creole settlements that could claim their nationalism was novel, Europeans insisted theirs came from time immemorial, but lay dormant until the right conditions occurred. Importantly, this notion of dormant nationalism insisted that each subject, not only forget different notions of identity, but remember enduring experiences of separation and longing for their nation. Nationalists encoded a history of longing into works of art, literature, and history for the masses to experience and remember this long fomenting

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<sup>54</sup> Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. 2006. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso. Page 192.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 193.

desire. Zionist historical claims amalgamated the structure of both European and Creole nationalism.

### 3.7 Foundational Myths

In *The Returns of Zionism*, Gabriel Piterberg convincingly describes the way Zionist ideologues developed a historical narrative that would have profound effects on Israeli identity and politics. This master narrative or, for Piterberg, the “how we got to where we are and where we should go henceforth,”<sup>56</sup> borrows from both the Creole and European models of remembering and forgetting. As Raz-Krakotzkin famously argued, Zionist ideology relies upon three intertwined historiographical alterations: the negation of exile (*shelilat ha-galut*), the return to history (*ha-shiva la-historia*), and the return to the land of Israeli (*ha-shiva le-Eretz Yisrael*).

The negation of exile works by dividing Zionism into three historical periods: the majestic period of the biblical and classical Israelites, the period of Galut or exile in 70 CE following the Roman destruction of the second temple and the failed Bar Kokhba revolt, and the return to the land of Israel. Zionist thought followed the concept of a national destiny or *volkgeist*: the inevitable and intransferable end determined from birth. However, instead of following the linear model of progress towards national fulfillment, the Zionist model claims the Jew fell off the track by leaving the land of Israel. With this model of Jewish history, the Zionist movement identified the culture and historic of the exilic period as a perversion of the true Jewish nation. As a word, *Galut* carries a specific political significance. “*Golah* means Diaspora, the actual circumstance in which Jew happen to reside outside of the land of Israel. *Galut* signifies something that is

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<sup>56</sup> Piterberg, Gabriel. 2008. *The Returns of Zionism : Myths, Politics and Scholarship in Israel*. London: Verso. Page 94.



meaningful both literally and figuratively: it is exile as an experience, as a material circumstance, as an existential state of being, as consciousness.”<sup>57</sup> The Zionist project emphasized the need to quarantine *Galut* to the period of exile. Any public appearance or encouragement of the exilic Jew within the land of Israel threatened the purity of the movement.

The Zionist division of Jewish history into three parts also periodized Jewish historical efficacy. A teleological rationality drives this periodization. During the genesis of Zionism, historians widely accepted that the nation was the quintessential form of human collectivity. Perhaps peoples became dispersed or misdirected on the way, but they irreducibly belonged in these immemorial groupings. Thus, the nation was the historical subject. Human history was the movement and development of nations towards great civilizational achievements. To continue along this path, the nation needed to grow from the language and the land of its origins, which the Jews disbanded long ago. Ben-Gurion evoked this narrative in reaction to the 1917 Balfour Declaration:

Since our last national disaster, the suppression of the Bar Kokhba revolt, we’ve had ‘histories’ of persecutions, of judicial discrimination, inquisition and pogroms; of devotion and martyrdom; of Jewish scholars and personalities, but we haven’t yet had Jewish history; because a history of a people is only that which the people creates as one whole, as a national unit, and not what happens to individuals or groups within the people. We have been extricated from world history, which consists in the annals of peoples.<sup>58</sup>

Ben-Gurion reprises Johann Gottfried Herder’s understanding of the Jewish people. The historical suffering of the Jew throughout European history resulted from their

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<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 95.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. 98.

geographical alienation from Israel. Jews suffered because they were foreigners.<sup>59</sup> They were an Asiatic people attempting to establish a community in Europe. The Jewish-European project could never gain traction; with this concept of history, diasporic Judaism was a naïve and foolhardy project. Amos Oz, the face of liberal Zionism, presented the same argument nearly seventy-five years later, at Berkeley:

Now, my point is that in all exiles, including America, Jewish culture is essentially in danger of becoming a museum where the only proposition that parents can make to their children is, Please do not assimilate... The other option... is live drama. And live drama is no rose garden, nor is it ever pure. It is a perpetual struggle; sound and fury. Sometimes even bloodshed. But Israel is the only place in the Jewish world now, where there is a live drama on a large scale at work.<sup>60</sup>

Oz separates Jewish life into two forms: live drama or preserved object. The diaspora, in contemporary time or its nearly two thousand-year history, is synonymous with stasis, reproduction, the primitive social goal of survive. Israel, and its return to live drama, yields the opportunity for creative production, flourishing, and motion.

The diasporic Jew finds its counterpart in the land of Israel. While the nations lived a wayward existence in its separation from the land, the absence of the Jews corrupted the land itself. This relationship was articulated in the famous Zionist slogan, “a people without a land to a land without a people.” Early Zionists clearly knew that Arabs resided in the land. The slogan claimed that Palestine was devoid of any historic potential – any people that mattered. Just as the Jews would return to the land, the land would return to it. Zionist and Israeli culture emphasizes performances of this reunion.

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<sup>59</sup> Arendt, Hannah, Jerome Kohn, and Ron H. Feldman. 2007. *The Jewish Writings*. New York: Schocken Books. Page 54.

<sup>60</sup> Siegel, Richard, and Tamar Sofer. 1993. *The Writer in the Jewish Community: An Israeli-North American Dialogue*. Sara F. Yoseloff memorial publications in Judaism and Jewish affairs; Sara F. Yoseloff memorial publications in Judaism and Jewish affairs. Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press. Page 119.

These cultural productions and self-fashionings of reunion were demonstrations of a new Jewish potential for historic action.

### 3.8 Internal Otherness

For millennia, the Jew functioned as a living synonym for the imaginary “other.” The great thinkers of European civilization regularly deployed the image of the Jew to identify what was wrong with the present society.<sup>61</sup> Thus, the Jew delineated that of the “self” that needed to be rejected or in some way did not belong. Clearly, the figure of the Jew was not simply rhetorical. Attacks on Jews and the objects of their identity cropped up throughout European history. These attacks borrowed the same frame. The Jew was “the other,” toxically located at the heart of the self.

With the rise of nationalism, Jew-hatred took a new form. As Anderson notes, the nation was conceived as a community delineated by language. Languages are relatively easily acquirable and problematic because one individual can belong to many linguistic communities at the same time. While the nationalist model of community offers powerful understandings of communal continuity, it cannot provide the tools necessary to express hatred and stigma. Historically, these use platforms that operate akin to class and, like the aristocrats of feudalism, are only valid within the boundaries of the nation:

The fact of the matter is that nationalism dreams of historical destinies, while racism dreams of eternal contaminations, transmitted from the origins of time through an endless sequence of loathsome copulations: outside history. Niggers are, thanks to the invisible tar-brush, forever niggers; Jews, the seed of Abraham, forever Jews, no matter what passports they carry or languages they speak or read. (Thus for the Nazi, the *Jewish* German was always an imposter.) The dreams of racism actually have their origins in the ideologies of class, rather than in those of nation: above all in claims to divinity among rulers and to ‘blue’ or ‘white’ blood and ‘breeding’ among aristocracies. No surprise...that, on

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<sup>61</sup> Nirenberg, David. 2013. *Anti-Judaism : The Western Tradition*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.

the whole, racism and anti-Semitism manifest themselves, not across national boundaries, but within them. In other words, they justify not so much foreign wars as domestic repression and domination.<sup>62</sup>

Just as class systems varied across the European continent, so did Jew-hatred. More importantly, the pseudo-scientific projects of the nineteenth and twentieth century held little precedent and limited durability.

The Zionists accepted that while the language delineated the official community, superseded versions of class held an eternal position as the mode hegemonic groups used to articulate grievances. In fact, they did not only “accept” this contradiction. They preserved it as the *raison d’être* of the Zionist movement. Zionists agreed that antisemitism existed eternally, as an immemorial and unending condition of history that existed outside of human assembly, as opposed to being produced and reproduced within it. Even while advocating that the Jew disavow any religious or cultural marker, Herzl saw European disdain for the Jew inescapable:

Though perhaps we could succeed in vanishing without a trace into the surrounding peoples if they would let us be for just two generations. But they will not let us be. After brief periods of toleration their hostility erupts again and again. When we prosper, it seems to be unbearably irritating, for the world has many centuries been accustomed to regarding us as the most degraded of the poor. Thus out of ignorance or ill they have failed to observe that prosperity weakens us as Jews and wipes away our differences. Only pressure drives us back to our own; only hostility stamps us forever again as strangers. Thus we are now, and shall remain, whether we would or not, a group of unmistakable cohesiveness. We are one people – our enemies have made us one whether we will or not, as has repeatedly happened in history. Affliction binds us together, and thus united we suddenly discover our strength. Yes, we are strong enough to form a State, and, indeed, a model State.<sup>63</sup>

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<sup>62</sup> Anderson, Benedict R. O’G. 2006. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. ed. London: Verso.

<sup>63</sup> Hertzberg, Arthur. 1960. *The Zionist Idea: A Historical Analysis and Reader*. New York: Meridian Books. Page 220.

As Herzl wrote these words, Jews held little consensus about what it meant to be Jewish. However, experiences or stories of discrimination and prejudice brought them together to reinterpret this tradition and history. Instead of positing an answer, Zionism grounded its argument upon the reason for coming together in the first place. Beyond the acceptance of Eternal antisemitism, Zionism accepted an intensely European identity.

With the rise of European imperialism, the figure of the Jew, the internal Other, became a metric of global otherness. “A construction of Jew, quite unrelated to any objective feature pertaining to the Jews of the time, was used throughout the world as a means of explicating unknown or little-known peoples of wildly differing characteristics.”<sup>64</sup> The Jew became a catalytic agent deployed to understand the relationship between the Orient and the Occident. Thus, the Jew sat insecurely between the sides of the paradigmatic dichotomy. The Zionist movement sought to resolve this ambiguity and the insecurity it entailed:

While modern Jewish discourse produced expressions of ambivalence and resistance, Zionism was based on the explicit denial of that ambivalence. Despite the Zionist rejection of “assimilationist trends,” it can be read as an extreme expression of the desire to assimilate the Jews into the Western narrative of enlightenment and redemption. The condemnation of assimilation was, in fact, the rejection of ambiguity and “in betweenness.” Generally, Zionist thought, in spite of very important differences from assimilationist ideologies, did not challenge the dichotomy between Europe and the Orient; rather, it was based on the desire to assimilate into the West. The process of Jewish colonization embodied the perspective of both the colonized and the colonizer, by transforming the colonized and assimilating the perspective of the colonizer.”<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>64</sup> Parfitt, Tudor. “The Use of the Jew in Colonial Discourse.” 2005. *Orientalism and the Jews*. The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jews series; Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry series (Unnumbered). Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press.

<sup>65</sup> Raz-Krakotzkin, Amnon. “The Zionist Return to the West and the Mizrahi Jewish Perspective.” 2005. *Orientalism and the Jews*. The Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jews series; Tauber Institute for the Study of European Jewry series (Unnumbered). Waltham, Mass.: Brandeis University Press.

The Zionist understanding of the return to Israel as the return to the Orient is a strikingly odd notion. The Jew could only become Occidental by returning to the Orient. The Zionist solution to their uncertain, globalizing world was to invert a long Jewish history as the internal Other by embracing its reciprocal: the external Self. The Jewish People would become an oasis of the Occident within the Oriental. Prime Minister Ehud Barak famously phrased this as a “villa in the Jungle.” This mentality pervaded Zionist ambitions at the onset of the ideology and Israeli dreams of securitization today.

### **3.9 Two New Men**

The Zionist project suffers from a binding dual identity. Israel, from its founding, conceived of itself as both a liberal and ethnocratic state. These projects coexist within different government institutions and civil spheres until they are brought into conflict through a moment of exceptional crisis. More often than not, both sides return to equilibrium as quickly as possible, and develop an explanation satisfactory to their overall narrative of Jewish identity. The fact that this contradiction does not generate serious impasses or loom with the weight of catastrophe illuminates the larger shortcomings of the Zionist state.

Throughout the history of Israel, ethnocracy has been the prerequisite for democracy. This logic draws its justification through the conditions of a settler colony. As the narrative goes, obviously Israel should be a democracy like all the other enlightened nations. However, unlike other Western nations, Israel held the unfortunate difficulty of residing in the midst of the irrational, threatening Orient. The politics and rhetoric rooted in the notion of “being surrounded” ignores the reality that Israel is a bi-national state: the state has always consisted of Jewish immigrants and indigenous Arabs.

While the relationship between the Jewish state and the Palestinians has held democratic elements, Israel clearly maintains resolute support for a Jewish public. The issues this situation presents, ethnic cleaning and discrimination, will be addressed later. Here, the contradiction is useful to highlight unresolved tensions within the Zionist movement that both increase latent dangers and highlight the difficulties and inconsistencies of Zionist critiques.

Within the foundational debates of Zionism, the “ends” of the project were always a site of dispute. While Zionism was promoted as necessary movement, debates raged about what the movement was for. The major figures of the movement fell into two camps. The first, home to cultural Zionists, socialist Zionists, and liberal Zionists who found Fin de Siécle unappealing, viewed the foundation of a Jewish state as a means to liberate themselves from the ghetto and achieve the freedoms of their non-Jewish countrymen. The later believed the foundation of a Jewish state belonged to a process of civilizational flourishing. As Jabotinsky addressed an audience at the founding of the New Zionist Organization:

Nor is the Jewish state the final goal. The Jewish state is but a first step in the process of the fulfillment of High Zionism. It will be followed by the second stage: the return of the nation to Zion, the exodus from exile, the answer to the Jewish question. And the true final goal of High Zionism will appear only in the third stage – the thing for which, in fact, the great nations exist: the creation of a national culture that will impart its magnificence to the whole world, as is written, “For out of Zion shall go forth the Law.”<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>66</sup> Naor, Arye. 2011. "Jabotinsky's New Jew: Concept and Models." *Journal of Israeli History* 30 (2): 141-159. Take from Jabotinsky, “Ha-tziyonut ha-romemah, devarim ba-knesiyat-ha-yesod shel ha-histadrut ha-tziyonit ha-hadashah” (High Zionism, remarks at the founding conference of the New Zionist Organization), trans. into Hebrew by B. Lubecki, in idem, *Ne’umim*, 2:180. Jabotinsky delivered the remarks in German but translated the expression “High Zionism” (hoch Zionismus) into Hebrew (tziyonut romemah) himself.

Jabotinsky advocates an intensive Jewish exceptionalism. This prospect is not particularly surprising or suspect on its own right. The issue was the way the ideology materialized.

The Zionist movement sought to achieve reform through individuals practicing change upon themselves. As opposed to attempting to create a magnificent national culture through social reorganization, restructuring, and institutional improvement, the Zionist movement identified the site of world historic change in bodily fortification and embodied practices. The founders identified the ambiguity and abnormality of the diaspora with two archetypes: the greedy, gluttonous bourgeois Jew of capitalism and the thin, intellectual Jew of ghetto, strangled by tradition. Just as the return to Eretz Israel would revitalize Judaism, the return would transform the individual Jew into the New Jew. This “Sabra” Jew embodied the new capabilities of Jew in Zionism. He was hetero-masculine, aggressive, proud, athletic, and, most importantly, a human manifestation of the capacity for action.

The denial of exile found its home in institutions that remade Jewish bodies through self-discipline. The individual Jew could be seen practicing Zionism through their participation in scouting groups, paramilitaries, and gymnasium. At an influential speech at the opening of a Jewish gymnasium in Germany, Max Nordau lectured the new members:

We must think again of creating a Jewry of muscle. Again! For history is our witness, that such once existed, but for long, all too long, we have engaged in the mortification of our flesh. I am expressing myself imprecisely. It was others who practiced the mortification on our flesh, and with the greatest success, evidenced by the hundreds of thousands of Jewish corpses in the ghettos, church squares, and highways of medieval Europe...Our new muscle-Jews [*Muskeljuden*] have not yet matched the heroism of our forefathers who in large numbers streamed into the



gymnasia to take part in competitions, and pitted themselves against the well-trained Hellenistic athletes and the powerful Nordic barbarians. But morally the new muscle-Jew surpasses the ancient Jewish circus-fighters, who were ashamed of their Jewishness, and tried to surgically conceal the sign of their covenants with a surgical operation, as we learn from the outraged rabbis of the times, while the members of the Bar Kochba society loudly and freely profess their nationality.<sup>67</sup>

For Nordau, the body is the easiest way to access and measure the place of the Jew along their teleological history. The Sabra Jew returned to history through their reformed bodies, but held the extra advantage of expressing their Judaism in a modern-nationalist paradigm that their ancestors lacked. Meanwhile, the Zionist movement still missed the defining acts of heroism documented in Hebrew mythology.

The contradictory identities of Israel as an ethnocentric state and a democratic state are made compatible through designating different sites of each paradigm. Israeli Arabs, non-Jewish Arab granted citizenship within the state, are clearly the victims of some state discrimination. Unlike Israeli Jews, they are not conscribed to the military, which is often used to denounce their loyalty to the state and removes them from a crucial process of social solidarity. Every year, many PMs are elected to the Knesset on racist platforms and introduce legislation to support the prejudice of their constituents. In spite of this, they rarely achieve success beyond underfunding Arab media and education or inciting violence from the platform the Knesset provides. The more successful platforms of Arab oppression and Jewish ethnocentrism grow from the civic apparatus. This claim seems outrageous until it is qualified with some history of Israeli politics. Before Israel achieved statehood, it was a coalition of expanding agricultural settlement built on stolen

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<sup>67</sup> Stanislawski, Michael. 2001. *Zionism and the Fin-De-Siècle : Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism from Nordau to Jabotinsky*. The S. Mark Taper Foundation imprint in Jewish studies; S. Mark Taper Foundation imprint in Jewish studies. Berkeley: University of California Press. Page 92.

land. The land was claimed and protected by fiercely rigorous paramilitary organizations that removed and pacified the indigenous populations.

With the founding of the state, the disaggregated paramilitaries combined to form a national army. Even with centralization, the military has maintained this paradigm. Originally, the Israeli Defense Forces operated with autonomy from the democratic state. After coming under state control in 1976, the IDF maintained an identity as parallel to the parliament. Israeli classrooms display pictures of both the Prime Minister and the Defense Minister. While the government operates with relatively thorough democratic standards, the military, local paramilitaries, and national culture are the site a deeply ethnocentric project and culture. These three areas are accepted as the areas that Noradu's muscular Jew, the Sabra, are performed, enacted, and embodied. Jewish ethnocentrism is inscribed on the body of the Zionist archetype and in their mandatory participation in Israeli military institutions: both areas outside of the control of a conventional liberal democracy. Thus, Israel appears in many serious ways a full and flourishing democracy. However, the Jewish nation affirms its name through embodied ethnocracy and military violence. Later in this paper, I will explore how this dynamic can cause internal conflict and limit one another, but also that these two sides compliment and embolden one another.

## Chapter 4: State Founding

The period between the formulation of the Zionist project in Europe and its fulfillment as an independent Jewish state in 1948 is understudied. In this period Zionism was no longer articulated as a series of world historical objectives, but as tangible goals to implement the European ideology. The Zionist community debated how these could be attained. On one end of the spectrum, voices like Martin Buber and Hannah Arendt sought to achieve these goals by organizing the indigenous populations, global Jewish émigrés, and developing institutions, independent of colonial rule, that could stably navigate power sharing and demand independence through centralized, organized resistance. At the other end, voices like Jabotinsky and Menachem Begin sought to implement the ideals through paramilitary violence and terror. This period was decisive in determining whether Zionism would be realized through adapting to meet the land, people, and places it sought to cohabit, or by overcoming these conditions through violent destruction and rebuilding.

By 1948, the voices that sought to build a Zionism that functioned through militancy had not only come to dominate the discourse, but they built institutions that edified their inextricability to Zionism, determined the requirements for belonging in Israel, and introduced their narratives and mythologies onto the global stage, intertwining their own domination of the Zionist project with American hegemony around the globe. To demonstrate the way this period of implementation shaped Zionism, this section will introduce the rise to power of the Israeli paramilitaries and their leaders. Next, it will show how Jewish immigrants to the new state neither grew out of commitment to the ideology, nor were allowed to bring their own culture into the state. Instead, they were

quarantined and economically marginalized until they could present themselves through the pristinely European principles Zionism refused to abandon. Lastly, this section explores the way the holocaust became remembered in a way that aids and sustains this hegemony.

#### **4.1 From Utopia to Underground**

In the 1920s, the Zionist project began to confront a deep internal divide within its ranks. The utopian visions of Zionists living in Diaspora created a platform that was deeply impractical for the settlers in Palestine. The settlers shared the land with two other forces: the British colonial administration and the indigenous Arab population. The settlers, internally administered by the Yishuv, perceived these two groups as distinct obstacles. They perceived the British as calculating, experienced, and heartless, while writing off the Palestinians as empty fanatics. The settlers entered with, and perpetuated at each turn, the belief that the indigenous peoples could never articulate a platform for independence of sovereignty acceptable to global discourse. With historically astounding ignorance of the cosmopolitan flourishing in nearby Cairo and Alexandria and the nationalist affluence of Damascus, the settlers believed their Arab opponents to be religious fanatics whose power was limited to the efficacy of mob mentality.<sup>68</sup>

David Ben-Gurion changed his position on how to deal with the Arab population drastically between the early twentieth century and the independence of the state in 1948. In a 1918 article Ben-Gurion proclaimed that, “even if the Jews were given the right to evict the Arabs they would not make use of it.”<sup>69</sup> Instead, the settlers needed to find a

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<sup>68</sup> Bell, J. Bowyer. 1977. *Terror Out of Zion : Irgun Zvai Leumi, LEHI, and the Palestine Underground, 1929-1949*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Page 22.

<sup>69</sup> Laqueur, Walter. 2003. *A History of Zionism*. New York: Schocken Books. Page 232.

way into the hearts of the Arabs and work towards mutual engagement and coexistence. Thirty years later, Ben-Gurion would oversee and publically affirm the ethnic cleansing of the Arabs from Palestine. In the thirty years between, the Zionist ideologies synchronized with settler practices. Zionists in Israel developed paramilitary organizations and a militant *ethos* that the Bourgeois ideologues of the Diaspora and the leftist groups in the Yishuv found abhorrent. As Ben-Gurion exemplifies, these developments were accepted, internalized, and espoused as the core of the Zionist project during and after the creation of the Israeli state.

Jabotinsky initiated the movement toward synchrony. He broke with traditional Zionism, which claimed had been “watered down.”<sup>70</sup> Instead, he advocated what he termed as Zionist monism and others call revisionist Zionism. He disdained thinkers like Martin Buber who, he claimed, “regard Zionism as a dream that is desirable for it to remain a dream, never become a reality.”<sup>71</sup> Jabotinsky undertook the task of developing the forcefulness of Zionism. He reinterpreted the work of Herzl and Nordau to produce a nationalistic and militaristic aesthetic akin to those of early 1900s Italy, which he became enamored with while serving as a foreign correspondent. He perceived this reinterpretation as being both the truest to Herzl and Nordau, but necessarily monistic. Jabotinsky defined “monism” as the unification and purity of the Zionist movement. In his words, this version, “does not tolerate any ideological *sha’atnez*.”<sup>72</sup> Jabotinsky uses *shatnez*, the Jewish taboo on weaving fabric from both linen and wool, to condemn the intermixing of any type of social reform with the Zionist project. More explicitly, he

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<sup>70</sup> Jabotinsky, Vladimir. "Sha'atnez Lo Ya'Ale Alekha - Thoughts on Betar Monism." *The Jewish Herald*, January 21, 1938. Accessed December 14, 2016.

[http://www.infocenters.co.il/jabo/jabo\\_multimedia/articles/205\\_1929/אנגליית\\_1929\\_205.pdf](http://www.infocenters.co.il/jabo/jabo_multimedia/articles/205_1929/אנגליית_1929_205.pdf).

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

argued that the success of the Zionist project derived from the individual settler's ability to subvert all other aspects of their identity to a unified identity as a Zionist pioneer:

The essence of the movement which is crystallizing itself laboriously within Berit Trumpeldor, lies in its ideological monism. The majority of its members, if they will be admitted to Palestine, will also serve as workers. They know it, are proud of it, and are ready for it. But they are also ready for something else – always remember that their material function in the upbuilding dare not influence their soul. One may be a breaker of stones or a teacher, an engineer or a policeman – above all he remains first and foremost a pioneer.<sup>73</sup>

The pioneer is the man who unquestioningly does everything he can to build the state, who is willing to sacrifice anything for his settlement. Monism advances the principle that militancy and the capacity for overwhelming violence are prerequisites to any of the other potential identities a Zionist could hold.

Jabotinsky founded Betar, an international Jewish scouting group that trained and instructed Jews in revisionist thought. Along with Jabotinsky, many members of the Haganah believed that the Yishuv paid too much attention to moral and ideological concerns while they should focus on tactical planning and fortification. In 1929, after growing tension over the expansion of Jewish settlements and competition over access to sacred sites in Jerusalem, the Jerusalem's Arab population rioted, killing 133 Jews, with 110 Arabs killed by both Jewish settlers and British police. Outraged by the riots, revisionist members broke away from the Haganah to form Haganah Bet (The National Military Organization for the Land of Israel) commonly shortened to "Irgun." They filled their ranks with Betar trainees smuggled in from the diaspora. Unlike any dispute the British colonial administration encountered or suppressed, the Jews and Arabs exchanged arson, explosive, and sniping attacks for most of the decade.

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

In 1937, the British colonial forces evaluated that Arab and Jewish cohabitation of the same land impossible. The Peel commission declared that the writers and signers of the Mandate for Palestine, which promised the eventual creation of the Israeli state, could not have foreseen this level of conflict between Jewish and Arab populations. The British claimed that a single, bi-national state would be unworkable for the inhabitants and proposed partition instead. For Zionist paramilitary leaders, the changed promise felt outrageous and reiterated their belief that a Jewish state could only be liberated through force. In July of 1937, in Alexandria, Jabotinsky returned from his work in the diaspora to meet with Irgun commanders Bitker and Rosenberg. Though initially hesitant about accepting a policy of indiscriminate retaliation, the commander explained the impossibility of achieving liberation if they limited operations to the guilty.<sup>74</sup> Once Jabotinsky accepted, the Irgun received the *carte blanche* they needed to develop into an incredibly effective terrorist organization.

Initially, orthodox groups and international Zionist agencies expressed outrage at the decision to abandon the principle of *havlagah*: absence from retaliation against the innocent. Their indignation resonated with some moderates in the revisionist and Irgun bases. Any dismay over indiscriminate killing ended with the execution of Shlomo Ben-Yosef. Ben-Yosef joined two other members of the Irgun to plan a “revenge attack” on a busload of Arab citizens traveling along the Tiberias-Rosh Pina road. The plan relied upon a grenade that turned out to be a dud. When captured, the British colonial authorities decided to make an example out of him. While his companions were released, Ben-Yosef was sentenced to hang by the neck until death. On June 29<sup>th</sup>, the day of his

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<sup>74</sup> Bell, J. Bowyer. 1977. *Terror Out of Zion : Irgun Zvai Leumi, LEHI, and the Palestine Underground, 1929-1949*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Page 36.

hanging, Ben-Yosef walked towards the gallows singing Shir Betar, the anthem of Betar written by Jabotinsky himself:

Betar  
From the pit of decay and dust  
With blood and sweat  
Shall arise a race  
Proud generous and cruel  
Captured Betar, Yodefet, Masada  
Shall arise again  
In all their strength and glory

As they fixed the noose around his neck, Ben-Yosef shouted the anthem of Betar, “long live the Jewish state! Long live Jabotinsky!” He became the Martyr of the Irgun. The mythology developed around the symbolic death of Ben-Yosef hollowed out the moderate Irgun and heightened the sympathies of those outside of the organization.<sup>75</sup>

The following year was shockingly bloody. The quantity and brutality of the year illustrates the newfound effectiveness of the Irgun. Over 1,500 Arabs were killed while only 292 Jews died.<sup>76</sup> Even with this success, The Irgun began internal meetings to evaluate continuing their attacks. The British faced war with Nazi Germany, who declared themselves the foe of the Jew. The Irgun needed to choose between acting in the name of Jews or acting in the name of Israel. The decision forced a schism in the organization. Just as the Irgun grew out of the militant faction of the Haganah, LEHI, Fighters for the Freedom of Israel, grew out of the Irgun. Led by the brutal, handsome, and brilliant Avraham Stern, LEHI was built out of distrust for the Yishuv, belief in force, and a deep hatred of the Arabs. LEHI developed the canon of contemporary terrorist undergrounds. The group lacked the means to operate with the fascistic grandeur of the Irgun, but ran an effective underground, both deadly to the Arabs and humiliating

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<sup>75</sup> Ibid. 41.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid. 46.



to the British. Retrospectively shocking, but quite calculated within the moment, under Stern's orders LEHI conducted a failed attempt to seek an alliance with the axis party. British authorities captured and killed Stern in 1942, only temporarily leaving LEHI leaderless and weak.

After the Axis defeat, the British people elected the labor party to run the country in 1945. Their anti-Imperialist platform and history signaled to the Jewish people that the independence of Israel was imminent, that finally the Balfour declaration would be fulfilled. It soon became quite clear that the British were not eager to withdraw. Politicians like Ben-Gurion and Chaim Weizmann were left with little traction for their liberal and leftist visions of a Jewish state. Peace seemed an empty promise. When the Asian stage burned-out after Japanese surrender, the world's press turned to Palestine. Afraid of losing status, the Haganah began to adopt similar resistance tactics to those of LEHI and the Irgun. They continued militant resistance tactics until the state received official recognition and liberation. When independence was granted, the new Israeli government attempted to incorporate all fighting factions into the newly formed Israeli Defense Forces (IDF). Both the Irgun and LEHI agreed to incorporation. However, in the murky transition period, the Irgun scheduled the importation of 153 million Francs worth of arms into the port of Tel Aviv on a ship named the Altalena, after Jabotinsky's *nom de plume*. Amidst humanitarian concerns surrounding Jewish importation of weapons and internal concerns that the state could not monopolize power, Ben-Gurion ordered that the Irgun be prevented from receiving the supplies. With a short exchange of gunfire, the IDF accidentally set off a gun inside the ship, causing a series of explosions that sunk the boat.

The Altalena affair was the final mission of the Irgun outside of the command of the state.

Within this period of fragmenting paramilitaries, steadfast martyrs, and reluctant politicians and writers making concession after concession, Zionism developed a new paradigm of governmentality. Through the internal struggles for power within the settler communities and external experiments in violent dispossession and subjectification, new forms of common sense arose from the settler population. On the right, militant groups within Israel and throughout Europe developed and institutionalized new practices. The Zionist could be trained in Betar scouting groups and brought to Israel to serve in any of the three major organizations. Once in the new Jewish homeland, they accepted that their purpose was to serve as a pioneer: a mixture of settler, soldier, and policeman. On the left, genuine ambitions to develop mutuality and a shared civic space with the indigenous population were undermined by settler colonial conception that violence was the only language that could communicate with the indigenous population. Socialist and anti-imperial ambitions were also victims of Zionism paramilitary action. Without the strong counterpoint to the newly emboldened right, Zionism lost much of its original ideological difference from colonial movements. The image of the Zionist sharing the land through a deep humanistic commitment was overwhelmed by the image of the Zionist reclaiming the land through pioneering might and greatness.

This reformulation of governmentality also created the potential for a uniquely amnesia-prone society. The Zionists considered their violence necessary to facilitate the radical break in Jewish history that accompanied the “return.” Through this lens, the past was condemned to generalization and deprived of voices of either dissent or nuance to

make it fit the Zionist phenotype of the diasporic period. This required regular acts of denial and forgetting on the part of the settlers. Simultaneously, the institutionalized terrorist tactics developed during this period were built upon a rationale of vacillating between overwhelming violence and periods of peace. This logic demands that the Israeli subject pretend that the designated “normal” periods of peace were equivalent, in spite of the manifold ways the violence changed things.<sup>77</sup>

## 4.2 The Ingathering of Exiles

After independence, many of the Jews who immigrated *en masse* could not fulfill the new demands of the state. The first half of the twentieth century held horrid misery for this long-suffering group. In Western Europe, the Nazis systematically exterminated the Jews. In the East, fervent ethno-nationalism incited pogroms, or raids and massacres of the Jews, often supported or tolerated by the governments. In the contemporary Zionist narrative, this half-century proved, in a nearly scientific manner, the validity of the Zionist project. If the Jews did not have a state and a strong military, their long history would not survive the modern era. However, as Tom Segev masterfully documents, the Jews that immigrated to Israel did so for a variety of reasons.<sup>78</sup> Some felt the Zionist cause newly compelling. Many fell behind the Iron Curtain and accepted emigration as their only route of escape. Some left for religious fulfillment. However, for most, the first half of the century destroyed the institutions they held dear. Jewish communities seemed

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<sup>77</sup> Foucault, Michel, Graham Burchell, Colin Gordon, and Peter Miller. 1991. *The Foucault Effect : Studies in Governmentality : With Two Lectures by and an Interview with Michel Foucault*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>78</sup> Segev, Tom, and Arlen Neal Weinstein. 1986. *1949, the First Israelis*. New York: Free Press. Page 114.

uncanny after the war. They would never hold the same meanings, mediate the same interactions, and provide the feelings of belonging they once promised their members.

In contrast, Israel held new promise and Jewish migration seemed to lead naturally to Tel Aviv. While many preferred to immigrate to the United States, the majority settled for Israel. For the Zionist leadership in Israel, this lack of enthusiasm and desperate acceptance of the Zionist program felt insulting and embarrassing. Both to continue the rapid flow of immigrants and to verify a narrative that spoke in terms of historical destinies, the Zionists propagated that another Holocaust or another pogrom could arise at any moment. The Israeli embassies acknowledged that immigration and acceptance of the Zionist ideology depended on maintaining the palpability of distress within the Jewish community.<sup>79</sup> Distress and fear replaced love and dedication as the drivers of immigration to Israel.

The pre-independence Zionists needed the military and labor power of the immigrants, but held deep spite for the Jews they needed to accept to achieve this goal. As Knesset member Giora Yoseftal claimed, “Israel wants immigration, but the Israelis don’t want the immigrants.”<sup>80</sup> On one hand, every party wanted Jewish immigration to Israel. As Israeli poet Nathan Alterman wrote:

“Its good to be a million  
You look at them and your eye grows moist  
Tears twinkle. Any why?  
For we’ve said it, brother – statistics  
Is not always something dry...”<sup>81</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Ibid. Page 110.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid. Page 117.

<sup>81</sup> Gover, Yerach. 1994. *Zionism : The Limits of Moral Discourse in Israeli Hebrew Fiction*. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minnesota Press. Page 17.

The statistical growth of Jews in Israel represented the fulfillment of long Zionist desires. It also held serious practical benefits. The Israeli government faced three urgent tasks after the state received independence: 1) to fill the land they captured with a Jewish majority population, 2) to grow the economy, 3) grow the force and size of the military. Continuing mass immigration proved crucial to all three. The early years of state development dedicated incredible funds to smuggling and negotiating the immigration of global Jewry. Israel crafted trade deals and focused all diplomatic operations on promoting immigration. The Israelis began buying Jews from the Eastern block: \$100 for each Bulgarian and Romanian Jew. In Hungary, the price was set at \$80, then raised to \$1000, and after Israel objections that this was too expensive, not enough, and that these Jews may be of inadequate quality, the price was lowered to \$300 per Jew.<sup>82</sup>

While Israel reacted to its dire need for immigrants, the actual immigrants were objectified and despised by the pioneers. To the disdain of those familiar with the writings of Herzl, Nordau, and Jabotinsky, the Jews arriving on the shores of the Eretz Israel were the Old Jews the Zionist ideologues used for contrast. The new immigrants were the Jews the movement hoped to cleanse from history. The wave of immigrants exposed, but did not amend, that the movement grew from internal disdain for certain types of Jews. Indeed, the same tropes about Jews employed by the antisemites.

In 1949, Haaretz journalist Aryeh Gelblum entered Israeli migrant camps under the name “Haim Klopstock.” In its day, his highly influential writing exposed the treatment of the immigrants. It still achieves this with insight, but also exposes the prejudiced lens of the early Israelis. Gelblum grouped the newcomers into three different

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<sup>82</sup> Segev, Tom, and Arlen Neal. Weinstein. 1986. *1949, the First Israelis*. New York: Free Press. Page 101.

categories: the elite, the second-rate, and the “African-Arabs.”<sup>83</sup> The first tier contained the New Jews, as imagined by Zionist ideologues, ready to join the military and labor for their nation. The second-rate were, for Ben-Gurion, “ugly, impoverished, morally unstable and hard to love.”<sup>84</sup> Gelblum described the “typical new immigrant” as “a short little Polish Jew with prominent jaws, accompanied by his little fat wife.”<sup>85</sup> The Zionists provided the “second-rate,” with the historical narrative of being the leftovers of the Nazi extinction attempt. As Ben-Gurion stated, they, “were people who could not have survived if they had not been what they were – hard, evil, and selfish people, and what they underwent there served to destroy what good qualities they had left.”<sup>86</sup>

The category of “African-Arab” is expressed in two parallel fields. First, they held a lack of productive utility. The Oriental Jews were described as a social and literal plague for the Israeli peoples.<sup>87</sup> A report from Aden concluded that the Falasha (Ethiopian) Jews would struggle to survive in Israel because they were the product and practitioners of intermarriage and pervaded by venereal diseases.<sup>88</sup> Before allocating recourses to import the Yemeni Jews, the Knesset questioned whether importing such a sickly people was worthwhile. As Itzhak Greenbaum asked, “Can we withstand an immigration of which 70% are sick?”<sup>89</sup> The accusations of sickliness paralleled indictments of spiritual infirmity and historical decrepitude. The foreign office warned its diplomats that, “preservation of the country’s cultural level demands a flow of

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<sup>83</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>84</sup> Ibid. 138.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. 138.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid. 138.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. 144.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. 145.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid. 185.

immigration from the West, and not only from the backward Levantine countries.”<sup>90</sup>

Maintaining a western society was the same as maintaining a Jewish society. The Oriental Jews suffered from an alienation from the Jewish historical destiny a degree greater than the European diasporic Jew. In an article in the Government Annual, Ben-Gurion wrote that, “The ancient spirit left the Jews of the East and their role in the Jewish nation receded or disappeared entirely. In the past few hundred years the Jews of Europe have lead the nation, in both quantity and quality.”<sup>91</sup> If the diasporic European Jew contained a seed destined for germination in Zion, the seed of Oriental Jew suffered from dormancy: they required enlightenment before they could hope to grow.

Meanwhile, the Zionist leaders were dependent on the Oriental Jews for human capital. Zionism intended to escape bourgeois industrial capitalism by building a nation of farm laborers. The vitality of the New Jew derived from their relationship to the land. While some farmers and Kibbutzim emigrated from Europe, the majority either was trained or wanted employment in urban labor. Initially, trade deals with the Eastern bloc, which intersected with the market for immigrants, sustained a secure source of food. However, importing food from Europe was expensive and posed an unnecessary drain on the state and Zionist charities. In a manner Ben-Gurion explicitly compared to American economic development through African slave labor, Israel needed the Oriental Jews for agricultural labor.<sup>92</sup>

The denigration of Jewish immigrants to Israel demands a comparative scope. The nation desperately needed strong workers and fighters, but received camps full of starved Auschwitz survivors, separated families beaten by pogroms, and embodiments of cultural

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid. 156.

<sup>91</sup> Ibid. 156.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid. 157.

differences that needed to be bridged before they could see productivity. To differing degrees, they would have faced anti-immigrant, anti-Semitic, and anti-Arab sentiment regardless of their destination. The voice of Aryeh Gelblum demonstrates the extent to which the Israelis critically engaged the immigration processes and offered the funds and sacrifices necessary for people they had never met, but sought a better life in their country. The extent to which the framework for immigration was constant with the period or unique to Israel deserves further debate. However, one achievement of the mass immigration was unique to Israel. At a local level, immigration succeeded to edify the conclusion that Israel was necessary. Before the foundation of the state, Zionism was a political fringe group. The narratives produced through exchanges between immigrants and the establishment, alongside the public expenditure of material wealth in resettlement and rescue, explained that a Zionist future was the only future for Jews in Israel. Within twenty years, it went from an opinion to a consensus. This historical framework was replicated at the global level through interpretation of the Second World War and the mass murders that would come to be termed, “the Holocaust.”

### **4.3 Zionism and Final Solutions**

After the first half of the twentieth century, Jewish objections to the Zionist project met new limitations. While dissenters could disagree, the overwhelming consensus within the Jewish community was that the Zionist project, and the human sacrifices and moral concession it entailed, was necessary for the survival of the Jewish people. Support for Zionism became an existential matter. Critique of the movement was often approached as a dangerous psychic failure. The trope of the self-hating Jew allowed for disagreement with the necessity of the project to be written off as a psychological



ailment akin to a mental illness with serious potential for social harm. This astonishingly strong social solidarity and discursive power to silence dissent and critique of the Zionist project was attributed to the “Holocaust.” The fear and fragility of the death factories provided a reservoir of social power. However, the actual event does not prescribe the silencing of disagreement in its own right. The use of the historical Holocaust for the Zionist project occurred through global processes that interpreted and fashioned the meaning of the murder within networks of collective Jewish and non-Jewish. In other words, Elie Weisel’s famous claim in the 1970s that the Holocaust represented an “ontological evil” nullifies the insight of history and social science. In these fields evil is an epistemological question: how did the Holocaust *become* evil?

The contemporary view of the Holocaust attaches it to a tradition of viewing Jewish history as “an uninterrupted record of antisemitism and persecution.”<sup>93</sup> It operates on a global stage by allowing both Jewish and non-Jewish communities to invoke the Holocaust symbolically within their own political discourses. As Jeffery C. Alexander argues, this has not always been the framework, nor has this framework always held such broad utility and consensus.<sup>94</sup> The material capacity for this framework was chiefly American and Nazi German. German propaganda depicted the Jew as the enemy of the Third Reich. American propaganda depicted the Nazism as the enemy of universalism. The American sentiment toward the Jew was constructed through the Jew’s relationship to the Nazi. American media and politicians began portraying the Jew in a positive manner. However, the Jews were not included on stable principles of creating an accepting and diverse community against Germany’s racial supremacist state. Acceptance

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<sup>93</sup> Podeh, Elie. 2000. "History and Memory in the Israeli Educational System: The Portrayal of the Arab-Israeli Conflict in History Textbooks (1948-2000)." *History & Memory* 12 (1): 65-100.

<sup>94</sup> Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2012. *Trauma : A Social Theory*. Oxford: Polity Press.

of the Jew was secondary to the primary goal of anti-Nazism. Instead, antisemitism, which had long histories in American and other Western nations, became synonymous with fascist and anti-democratic projects. Accordingly, democratic and liberal nations necessarily became “anti-antisemitic.” For the Zionist project, this interaction held significant political promise through its ability to bind the fates of the American and Jewish nations. The newfound interdependence of these two identities shaped how each could assert themselves the world order.

After the war, the Jew, the Nazi, and the American became symbolic characters within democratic political discourse. These characters existed in two contradictory narratives. The first “progressive narrative, “depended on keeping Nazism situated and historical, which prevented this representation of absolute evil from being universalized and its cultural power from being equated, in any way, shape, or form, with the power possessed by good.”<sup>95</sup> This narrative portrayed Nazism as anomalous. The past could only become the present by passing through a threshold of chaos. However, this trauma was deeply liminal. The progressive narrative stabilizes American and Israeli social order within a narrative of interconnected progress between the two nations.

The progressive narrative is clearly exemplified by the layout and structure of both countries Holocaust Memorials. At United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, the visitor follows a path through chronological exhibit of the Holocaust. It begins with the antisemitic propaganda preceding the war, continues through the capture of Jews and the experience of the *konzentrationslager*, and progresses through the liberation of the camps. Before returning, the visitor walks through a changing exhibit that details global genocides between the Holocaust and contemporary times. Finally, the visitor resumes

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<sup>95</sup> Ibid. Page 43.

normalcy, left to contemplate the Holocaust and its continuity through global genocides while looking over the Jefferson and Washington memorials. The visit delivers a message of juxtaposition between two paradigms: the democratic, tolerant United States and genocidal hatred. Genocide acts as a foil, one that is defeated over and over by the United States, but through this contained progression, the identity, legitimacy, and social order of the United States is reproduced and reaffirmed.

Yad Vashem follows a similar, but more brilliant and powerful, progressive layout. The visitor begins their journey at the museum built into the side of Mount Herzl greeted by the flourishing and vitality of Jewish life before the Holocaust. From there, they journey through its decent. It concludes with the deeply empathetic and associative moment where the visitor walks over piles of shoes, taken off the victims just before gassing and cremation, for resale to fund the German empire. The shoes are illuminated and placed under glass. The visitor watched as their own shoes move through those of the murdered. Unlike the victims, their feet continue onward to a multimedia display of the exhumation of mass graves. They emerge from the horror and enter exhibits that intertwine the founding of the Israeli state and the trial of Nazi leaders. Nuremberg and Tel Aviv attain similitude by both delivering justice to the Jewish people. Just like Washington DC, the visitor emerges to gaze over the hills of Jerusalem. They are delivered from the darkness of the European Holocaust directly to a promising future in Israel.

The progressive interpretation has held incredible creative power in both Israeli and American history. Holocaust survivors, as we have seen, were originally rejected and despised by both states. Once the progressive narrative became a framework for the

symbolic trauma, survivors became objects of reverence, embodying the ability to rise out of the darkness and move beyond it. As Alexander writes:

This interpretation suggests that it was by no means simply Realpolitik that led President Truman to champion, against his former French and British allies, the postwar creation of Israel, the new Jewish state. The progressive narrative demanded a future oriented renewal. Zionists argued that the Jewish trauma could be redeemed, that the Jews could both sanctify the victims and put the trauma behind them, only if they returned to Jerusalem. According to the Zionist world view, if Israel were allowed to exist, it would create a new race of confident and powerful Jewish farmer-warriors who would redeem the anti-Jewish atrocities by developing such an imposing military power that the massive murdering of the Jews would never, anywhere in the world, be allowed to happen again. In important respects, it was this convergence of progressive narratives in relation to the war and the Jewish mass killings that led the postwar paths of the United States and the state of Israel to become so fundamentally intertwined. Israel would have to prosper and survive for the redemptive telos of America's progressive narrative to be maintained.<sup>96</sup>

The progressive narrative created a deep and expensive interdependence between the two nations. It provided both a historical mandate on the global stage. However, the progressive mandate was not the only frame used to interpret the meaning of the Holocaust.

Deeply contradictory to the movement of the progressive narrative, the Holocaust is depicted as an inescapable manifestation of evil that the world must return to, eternally. The progressive narrative placed the Holocaust within a historical time and it belonged to certain people: Jews, Nazis, and Americans. The eternal-return narrative removed any notions of historical time, politics, and social conditions. The Holocaust "came to be understood as a unique, historically unprecedented event, as evil on a scale that had never

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<sup>96</sup> Ibid. Page 54.

occurred before.”<sup>97</sup> As Geoffrey Hartman, the literary theorist who ran the Yale Video

Achieve for the Holocaust wrote:

The promise of academic fields is based on their promise for intelligibility. That promise is not so readily available in this case...the scholars most deeply involved often admit an “excess” that remains dark and frightful. We can, of course, suspend the search for meaning by adopting a purely descriptive approach, or point to the fact that fields are constituted by areas that have become intelligible, and the hope that other areas will follow suit. Yet something in the specific case of the Shoah remains dark at the heart of the event, not just in its peripheral regions; and it leads to reflection that seems “theological”...A comparison to the French revolution is useful. The sequence *French Revolution: Enlightenment* cannot be matched by *Holocaust: Enlightenment*. What should be placed after the colon? “Eclipse of Enlightenment” or “Eclipse of God”?<sup>98</sup>

From this viewpoint, the function of the Holocaust is certainly theological. It deeply resembles Durkheim’s sacred-evil that operates as an omnipresent reference that orders and delineates the profane world. “In this tragic narrative of sacred-evil, the Jewish mass killings become not an event in history but an archetype, an event out of time. As archetype, the evil evoked an experience of trauma greater than anything that could be defined by religion, race, class, region.”<sup>99</sup> In this narrative, to be human is to empathize and actively remember the Holocaust. The Holocaust situates morality and meaning for all of mankind.

These two narratives are fundamentally contradictory. Their contradictory nature does not operate dialectically, combatively overwhelming the other until the order breaks and a new paradigm is realized, but complementarily. The dual symbolic utility of the Holocaust, as specifically American and Israeli and as a universal archetype, works to

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<sup>97</sup> Ibid. Page 56.

<sup>98</sup> Hartman, Geoffrey H., and Mazal Holocaust Collection. 1996. *The Longest Shadow : In the Aftermath of the Holocaust*. The Helen and Martin Schwartz lectures in Jewish studies Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Page 4.

<sup>99</sup> Alexander, Jeffrey C. 2012. *Trauma : A Social Theory*. Oxford: Polity Press. Page 60.

reproduce and edify the impunity and necessity of Israel. In the progressive narrative, the creation of Israel is necessary to move beyond the Holocaust. History produced antisemite after antisemite. The ability of Israel to oppress and contain the Arabs, the newest face of antisemitism, displayed progress: for the first time, the Jews were able to dominate the antisemite, as opposed to vice versa. On Israeli independence day, the history of the Jewish people is summarized in the slogan “*M’shoah L’tkuma*” (from Holocaust to revival). Here, the Jew wills their way out of darkness through admirable strength. Meanwhile, the trope of the “return to the Holocaust,” depicts the Jewish people as constantly on the brink of destruction. On the right, Menachem Begin employs this trope throughout his speeches and writings. After visiting Yad Vashem with Sadat, Begin recalled the Holocaust:

“No one came to save us-neither from the East nor from the West. For this reason, we have sworn a vow, we, the generation of extermination and rebirth: Never again will we put our children in danger, never again will we put our women and children and those whom we have a duty to defend – if necessary at the cost of our lives – in range of the enemy’s deadly fire.”<sup>100</sup>

Alternatively, the leftist leader Abba Eban compared the option of a return to the 1967 borders was a return to the borders of Auschwitz.

Israel moves between the two narratives flexibly. Paradoxically, the Holocaust belongs to the Jew, but represents all of humanity. The intersection of these two characteristics makes dissent against Israel, for Jews, Arabs, and others, deeply problematic. Through the narrative of eternal return, to be against the Jews is to be against humanity. Meanwhile, through the progressive narrative, Israel and the Zionist project represents Jews after the Second World War. Subsequently, through the

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<sup>100</sup> Segev, Tom. 1993. *The Seventh Million : The Israelis and the Holocaust*. New York: Hill and Wang. Page 398.

consensus that both narratives are true, to be against Israel is to be against humanity. The discursive power the Holocaust narrative carries globally is the final piece in the creation of the Israeli state. At its founding, Israel was not a world power. The affairs of the Zionist movement began as peripheral to the global Jewish community, and after it gained clout within this world, peripheral to the worlds of global power. Though Jabotinsky, Stern, and Begin liked to imagine themselves at the center of Britain's concerns, they were a small colonial issue: a problem for certain offices. Through the reformulation of world order after the end of the Second World War, Israel succeeded in two enduring accomplishments. First, through symbolic and discursive force, developed interdependence with global economic and military powers. Second, within global discourse, "anti-antisemitism," and subsequently support of Israel, became synonymous with the Western democratic project. Thus, no matter how illiberal the paramilitaries that achieved Israeli independence acted or how xenophobic the new immigrants were treated, Israel retained its status as a *fetish* of Western democracy.



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<sup>101</sup> “View From Yad Vashem.” Wikimedia Commons. July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2008.

Yad Vashem’s architecture evokes the “death factory” and “slaughterhouse” feel of the concentration camps through its industrial concrete walls and claustrophobic interior design. The feeling of an over-packed and inescapable journey ends when the guest is released onto to this viewpoint for further reflection.



## Chapter 5: Zionism and the Palestinians

Thus far, I have presented how Zionism developed as a fringe within debates on Jewish identity at the end of the nineteenth century to become the major Jewish social movement of the twentieth century. From its inception, and until the present, socialists, conservatives, liberals, and fascists produced coherent interpretations of Zionism, but processes of state founding variously favored and institutionalized these interpretations. Until this section, I have abstained from exploring the most important understanding of Zionism for any critical review: the standpoint of its victims. It was quite easy to delay telling the story of Zionism's victims. The perspectives of those who believe Zionism has been a justifiable project and those who seek justice for its victims are so divergent that a single author can rarely propose an argument satisfactory to both. In part, this justiceless lacuna is produced by the uneven oppression of the colonizing force. As Fanon writes in *The Wretched of the Earth*, colonialism begins through violence. Once it has razed the ability of the indigenous population to resist, destroying the internal mechanisms independently operating society, it replaces it with colonial means for prescribing justice. While the colonizer determines their own mechanisms sufficient for discerning justice, the colonized never entered into these consensually, and no result that come from them can be considered just. Thus, the two, "follow the dictates of mutual exclusion: there is no conciliation possible, one of them is superfluous."<sup>102</sup>

Therefore, opposed to claiming an objective approach, I think it is more judicious to attempt to understand both bodies of texts, and their subjects, with compassion and humanity. Again, thus far this task has been relatively easy. The Zionists attempted to

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<sup>102</sup> Fanon, Frantz. 1991. *The Wretched of the Earth*. 1st Evergreen ed. New York: Grove Weidenfeld. Page 4.

find a place in the world for one of modernity's great victims. It is broadly accepted nowadays that the Jew represents the classic victim of modern times. However, this makes telling the story of the Palestinians very difficult. How does one tell the story of the victims of the victims?<sup>103</sup> The first option is to identify them as the ironic mistake of the victims. Through no fault of their own, the original victims, the Jews, ended up persecuting others through reckless or unpredictable circumstances. The simplest summary of this perspective is taken by Isaac Deutscher, who describes Israel as a man jumping out of a burning building and only surviving by landing on the body of another, the Palestinians. The injury of the Palestinian is regrettable, but accidental.

The second option is to identify them as inextricable and within the redemptive project of the victims. Certainly, one can identify examples of Palestinian oppression that occurred through mismanagement. However, from its origins, Zionism has emphasized explicitly the internal destruction of Arabs and Arabness. Like Fanon's accusation that colonialism entails mutual exclusion, Zionism has sought to make the Palestinian superfluous in their own land. This section selects moments from this history of colonization to illuminate the origins of the most unresolvable antagonisms in the Israel-Palestine conflict and to demonstrate that many of these were first imagined by European Zionists to resolve the ambiguity of the Jew and brought to fruition through settler colonial practices. First, this section reviews *The Question of Palestine*, in which Edward Said recreates the Zionist encounter with the Arab. Next, it examines the contemporary formation of the Palestinian identity and the diverse ways that being Palestinian is experienced. Afterward, it continues by exploring the dual processes of ethnic cleansing

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<sup>103</sup> Said, Edward W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage. Page xxi.

and pacification that have maintained Israeli ethnocentrism and hidden the oppression of Palestinian subjugation.

### 5.1 Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims

The early platforms for Zionism were formulated in an atmosphere that asked whether the Jews were an occidental or oriental people. Zionism answered that Jews were unambiguously occidental. Accordingly, alongside the project of Jewish reestablishment and historical redemption, Zionism sought internal purification. Within Europe, the Jew could not practice a response to accusations of Orientalness. The character of the Orient flexibly met the characteristic the antisemite accused the Jew of embodying.<sup>104</sup> As hard as the Zionist in diaspora fought to prove they were not Oriental, they could not escape their enigmatic status. Once the Jew “returned” to Israel, the Zionist rejection of the Orient became a practical matter. Just as the occident was antithetical to the Orient, the Jew was antithetical to the Arab. Zionists sought to negate the public appearance of anything Arab.

The great gap in literature on Zionism is not accidental. Depending on which side of the Occidental/Oriental dichotomy one stands on, the ideology holds completely different meanings. Zionism’s internal disagreements, historical background, and legality have mattered to global Jewry, world powers, and colonial Europe. Meanwhile, the lived experience of Palestinians leaves no space for this history. As Edward Said confirms, “what these ideas expressed to Arabs was *only* a rejection of Arabs. Thus, Israel itself has tended to appear as an entirely negative entity, something constructed for no other reason

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<sup>104</sup> Sartre, Jean-Paul, and George Joseph. Becker. 1976. *Anti-Semite and Jew*. New York: Schocken Books.

than either to keep Arabs out or to subjugate them.”<sup>105</sup> To Arabs, the Zionist project can only be experienced as the chains on her feet or the drone overhead. The Arab understands Arabness with a deeply personal perspective. It constitutes their history, their self-understanding, the contemporary worlds they inhabit. In the Zionist imagination, even prior to any actual interaction with living Arabs, they represent pure negation. “In his body and being, and in the putative emotions and psychology assigned to him, the Arab expressed whatever by definition stood *outside, beyond* Zionism.”<sup>106</sup> The Israeli-Arab conflict is a zero-sum game. Both sides presuppose rejecting the other.

In some respects, this paradigm operates similarly to other settler colonial worldviews. It establishes an absolute dichotomy between colonized and colonizer and divides the world, down to the most trivial details, on this taxonomy.<sup>107</sup> In standard colonial worldviews, the settlers emphasized their connection to the metropole and viewed the land they settled as foreign, exotic, and wild. The Zionist doctrine of the “denial of exile” and the belief in “return,” demanded that the Israeli settlers reconfigure this worldview. As Said writes

Zionism was not only a reproduction of nineteenth-century European colonialism, for all the community of ideas it shared with that colonialism. Zionism aimed to create a society that could never be anything but “native” (with minimal ties to a metropolitan center) at the same time that it determined not to come to terms with the very natives it was replacing with new (but essentially European) “natives.” Such a substitution was to be absolutely economical; no slippage from Arab Palestinian to Israeli societies would occur, and the Arabs would remain, if they did not flee, only as docile, subservient objects. And everything that did stay to challenge Israel was viewed not as something *there*, but as a sign of something *outside* Israel and Zionism bent on its destruction – from the outside. Here Zionism literally took over the typology employed by

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<sup>105</sup> Said, Edward W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage. Page 88.

<sup>106</sup> Ibid.

<sup>107</sup> Stoler, Ann Laura. 2002. *Carnal Knowledge and Imperial Power : Race and the Intimate in Colonial Rule*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

European culture of a fearsome Orient confronting the Occident, except that Zionism, as an avant-garde, redemptive Occidental movement, confronted the Orient *in* the Occident.<sup>108</sup>

The Zionist history of linear, Jewish progress culminating in a return to the land they have legitimately owned since time immemorial was placed on top of a diverse population with different histories. Unlike Zionism, colonial projects could tolerate these narratives, as long as they recognized colonial supremacy, distinctions, and subjugations. The linear, continuous narrative of Zionism excluded all other histories. Thus, while the colonial project sought to control the natives of the land, Zionism sought to supplant them, both in the present and in all historical representations.

## 5.2 The Palestinians

Prior to Zionist colonization, the indigenous Palestinian population lacked a national social solidarity. Like many colonial delineations, the borders “Palestine,” drawn by the British, seemed relatively arbitrary. Palestinians maintained acute awareness that they inhabited a “holy land.” For centuries, Palestine was imagined through much of the globe as the symbolic and devotional center of the world. Art, literature, and poetry composed fantastic imaginations of sites like Bethlehem, Jerusalem, and Hebron. While world interacted with these sites through their religious and political imaginations, the Palestinians interacted with them in their day-to-day realities. This dissonance has always undermined Palestinian collective claims. “Epistemologically, the name of, and of course the very presence of bodies, in Palestine are – because Palestine carried so heavy an imaginative and doctrinal freight – transmuted from a reality into a nonreality, from a

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<sup>108</sup> Said, Edward W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage. Page 88 – 89.

presence into an absence.”<sup>109</sup> If Palestine belongs to the whole world, it is difficult to claim exclusive rights to the actual land. Meanwhile, before the arrival of Zionism, Palestinian solidarity consisted of a shared consciousness that living in Palestine was “special.”

The history of the Palestinian people is, at once, authentic and mythological. Becoming the victim of the Zionist project served as the onus for the majority of these disaggregated communities inside Palestine to come together. Yet, once this coming together occurred, Palestinians only occupied the land briefly before Zionist forces either removed them from the land, forcing them into peripheral colonies or “territories” or global diaspora. Thus, while Palestinians have a longer documented history within the land than perhaps any other “people,” their unified understanding and display of their Palestinianness is quite modern and articulated in response to the Zionist project.

Contemporary Palestinians live in diverse conditions. Palestinians live in Gaza and the West Bank, in local diaspora in the Levantine region, and in global diaspora. “Being” Palestinian means different things to these populations. For those living under Israeli control, it is the reason for their oppression: their desire for Palestine is an emancipatory project. For those in diaspora, Palestine is something they have lost: they experience Palestine as a category of dispossession. Again, turning to Said:

In a very literal way, the Palestinian predicament since 1948 is that to be a Palestinian at all has been to live in a utopia, a *nonplace*, of some sort. . . . If we think of Palestine as having the function of both a place to be *returned to* and of an *entirely new* place, a vision partially of a restored past and a novel future, perhaps even a historical disaster transformed into a hope for a different future, we will understand better the words meaning.”<sup>110</sup>

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<sup>109</sup> Said, Edward W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage. Page 10.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid. 124-125.

Palestinians experience Palestine as the manifestation of dispossession and desire. At once, they experience this tangibly: through the keys of the houses their families have left and the moments of Palestinian *communitas* that bring meaning and joy to their lives. Simultaneously, they experience the idea of Palestine, as a “*nonplace*,” an axis mundi, the mystical utopia from where they came and will return.

### **5.3 The Zionist Treatment of its Victims**

While the Zionist worldview imparts a unique oppression upon the Palestinians, the way the Palestinian is less distinctive. Zionism assumed the Orientalist structure of interpretation other colonial apparatuses employed, again distinguished by the fact that Zionism imagined itself as a native movement. The Zionists perspective of the Arab was flexible. The Arab characterized various, often contradictory, qualities depending on the relation they held to the hegemonic Zionist occupation. For example, to the Zionist, the Arab man simultaneously embodies the rage of terrorism and an effeminate submission that legitimates their domination. Arab women are exotic objects of sexual fantasies, but also evidence the misogyny and repression of Arab society. For all its mystical aggrandizement through languages of destiny, messianism, and world-historical redemption, Zionism is an imperial ideology: “a political philosophy whose aim and purpose for being is territorial expansion and its legitimation.”<sup>111</sup> However, territorial expansion is only partially the act of domination and bloodshed that establish a foreign power over new land. Colonialism always needs a grand idea that justifies the procedural violence. This philosophy entails manifold operations and coercive manipulations to produce a the self-constituting hegemony of the colonizer, both within the occupier and

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid. Page 73.

the occupied. The new power engages in successive and interdependent acts of rearranging, renaming, reinterpreting, resituating, and reappropriating, until the land they occupy not only justifies their occupation, but the ideas behind and driving their action.

The Palestinian appears to the Israeli as whatever is necessary in the moment to justify the occupation and Israeli colonial culture. This staging of the Palestinian occurs through, “flexible *positional* superiority.” Through overwhelming force and control over the means of representation, the Israeli enters into, “a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing the relative upper hand.”<sup>112</sup> Notoriously, the Palestinian plays two incompatible roles in Israeli imperialism: both the marauding terrorist whose actions permanently mark the consciousness of the Israel or as a non-entity who does not belong. These popular characterizations of Palestinians are two of many representations that can secure Israeli hegemony and continue reproducing the imperial idea. Representing Palestinians as both terrorists and non-existent secures Israel the broadest range of potential action, while minimizing their responsibility. It allows Israel to act without regard to its indigenous population and, when forced to take the Palestinian into account, treat their appearance as unreasonable and requiring exceptional force.

The Israeli treatment of the indigenous Palestinian population is characterized by an absence of interdependence. From the original Zionist discourses to present day Israel, the indigenous Palestinian appears superfluous to the settler colonial project. At best, the Palestinian consents peacefully. At worst, they resist. The project has never seriously determined the Palestinians’ place within it. As Said wrote, this corresponds with the fact that Palestinians are always depicted as what is outside of Zionism. This strict delineation

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<sup>112</sup> Said, Edward W. 1979. *Orientalism*. 1st Vintage Books ed. New York: Vintage Books. Page 7.



itself derives from the premise that the land of Palestine has always been Israeli, waiting outside of time for redemption and reclamation by a Jewish national awakening. Contrary to many narratives of smooth return, where the Zionists and the land effortlessly flourish, the settlers needed to clear the land of other stories before they could perform their own production. The ideology claimed that the land was empty, pure, and untouched, waiting for the return of the Jews. Inconsistent with this belief, the land was occupied by diverse persons with centuries of their cultural heritage inscribed into the land.

The Zionist response to the inadequacy of their fabrication was twofold. First, they deterritorialized and reterritorialized the land and the culture. Second, they engaged in a campaign of purging and pacifying the indigenous population. Deterritorialization and reterritorialization normally refer to the processes colonial powers used to integrate a new people into their empire or a new economic subject into a market. In each case the unique social system of the subject needed to be destroyed (deterritorialization) and replaced with the social relations and culture of the imperial system (reterritorialization). For example, the British enclosure acts were parliamentary decisions that closed access to common land. Subsequently, the feudal relations of peasants and lord were no longer a tenable social and economic system. The bourgeois class deterritorialized feudal England by legally eradicating the common or cooperatively owned land, which the peasants required for their feudal tribute. However, the lords could buy the common land as private property to maintain their source of income. Now they could exploit the peasants through relations of landowner and tenant. Thus, the British countryside was reterritorialized by the capitalist social system. A cruder but simpler example of this is the Nazi deterritorialization and reterritorialization of the German people. The Nazi

officials burned any media containing values different to their own and replaced them with Nazi propaganda.

As Said illuminates, the Zionist project never sought to introduce Palestine and its subjects to diasporic Jewish social relations. It intended to create a New Jew and implant him as the native in the land. The subject of Israeli deterritorialization and reterritorialization was the land and the cultural symbols irrevocably connected or representative of it. Additionally, Zionism sought to create a new Jew by deterritorializing and reterritorializing the Jewish people. The agricultural, geographical, archeological, and historic symbols of the land became re-narrated to evidence and attest to the truth of the Zionist project.<sup>113</sup> Meanwhile, Jews were re-fashioned, re-education, and inscribed with the same narratives. The historically important point of these processes is that Zionists did not arrive in a land with a superfluous indigenous population. The Zionist produced the superfluosity of the Palestinians through violent operations and subsequently erased the memory of the Palestinians and the crimes against them.

#### **5.4 The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine**

The ethnic cleansing of Palestine in 1948 has been understudied. For a long time, very little serious scholarship existed in English. Benny Morris's prolific writing on the topic was the first serious, judicious attempt at interrogating Israeli military archives to challenge the ridiculous notion that Palestinians left spontaneously and voluntarily.<sup>114</sup>

While Morris clearly argued that the Palestinian exodus was planned and executed by the

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<sup>113</sup> Zerubavel, Yael. 1995. *Recovered Roots : Collective Memory and the Making of Israeli National Tradition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

<sup>114</sup> Morris, Benny, and Mazal Holocaust Collection. 1987. *The Birth of the Palestinian Refugee Problem, 1947-1949*.: Cambridge University Press.

Haganah, Irgun, and LEHI, he synthesizes his narrative from military testimony, which often excluded a good portion of the story. The paramilitaries had not been incorporated under the control of the state, so the testimonies were taken without an accountable review process or institutionalized scrutiny. Thus, English speakers lacked the full picture of the ethnic cleansing until 2006 when Ilan Pappé published an account that combined Israeli military documents with Israeli and Palestinian oral history.

Before Israeli independence in 1948, while the Irgun and LEHI engaged in a campaign of terror against the British and Palestinian population, Ben-Gurion and the Yishuv allocated their time and resources to the carefully detailed mapping and charting of indigenous communities.<sup>115</sup> The settler government conducted an aerial photography project of Palestinian villages. In 1947, the cartographic department, housed in the Tel Aviv “red house,” knew the location of each village, its roadways, its transport capacity, its population, its access to natural resources, and its religious composition. The amassed information served to help the administration understand the space they would control after the British left. According to United Nations resolution 181, once the British mandatory period ended, the territory would become divided between Zionist and Arab control. Two months before the withdrawal, Zionist leadership agreed that it would not honor the partition. Instead, they devised *Plan Dalet*: an operation to take over the land and expel the indigenous population by force.<sup>116</sup>

The scope of *Plan Dalet* was extensive. “Judging by the end result of this stage, namely April-May 1948, this advice was not to spare a single village. Whereas *Plan Dalet* gave the villages the option to surrender, the operational orders did not exempt any

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<sup>115</sup> Pappé, Ilan. 2006. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld. Page 17-18.

<sup>116</sup> Ibid. Page 41.

village for any reason.”<sup>117</sup> The effectiveness of the plan was only partially dependent upon military force. The force was preceded by public messages to the Arabs that Israel held no intent to include Palestinians: if they stayed, it would cost them their livelihood. The mix of this message and public uses of overwhelming force caused mass flight. In early April 1948, the Igrun and LEHI joined forces to begin an assault on the Palestinian town of Deir Yassin. The paramilitaries blocked the front entrance to the town and played a message over the speakerphone in Arabic, communicating to the inhabitants that they were being confronted by an more powerful force and their only options was to leave through the back exit.<sup>118</sup> While Israeli estimates on the civilians killed have lowered from 170 to 93, the quantitative estimates do not accurately depict the terror of the inhabitants. Among the massacred were 30 babies.<sup>119</sup> Plan Dalet used tactics that minimize casualties, while maximizing terror and subsequently forcing the Palestinians to accept expulsion.

After Deir Yassin, Palestinian villages received a break from assault as Plan Dalet turned to removing Arab inhabitants from urban areas. They intensified the shelling of Arab Haifa, along with adding sniper fire and pouring gasoline and liquid explosives down the mountainside.<sup>120</sup> As the case in many Palestinian cities, the inhabitants with the capital to leave and restart their life did so. The urban population left to fight was the newly leaderless poor. After Haifa, the Haganah moved quickly through Safad to Acre. Throughout both crusader and Napoleonic military attempts, Acre developed a reputation as a historically difficult military target. By the time it became the subject of Israeli siege, it was overcrowded with new refugees from surrounding Arab villages. Though never

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<sup>117</sup> Ibid. Page 88.

<sup>118</sup> Bell, J. Bowyer. 1977. *Terror Out of Zion : Irgun Zvai Leumi, LEHI, and the Palestine Underground, 1929-1949*. New York: St. Martin's Press. Page 294.

<sup>119</sup> Pappé, Ilan. 2006. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld. Page 91.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid. Page 93.

publically confessed, testimonies and Red Cross and Crescent reports incriminate Israel's use of biological weapons. For the first time in its 200-year history, in the midst of the war, the aqueduct that supplied the water to Acre carried typhoid to the inhabitants. As Pappé writes:

With their morale weakened by both the typhoid epidemic and the intensive shelling, residents heeded the call from loudspeakers that shouted at them: 'surrender or commit suicide. We will destroy you to the last man.' Lieutenant Petite, a French UN observer, reported that after the city fell into Jewish hands, there was widespread and systematic looting by the army, including furniture, clothes, and anything that might be useful to the new Jewish immigrants, and the removal of which might discourage the refugees' return.<sup>121</sup>

After Acre, the Haganah returned to the villages. Again, they continued their tactic of terror. In Ayn al-Zaytun, which became the model for later village expulsions, the villages were taken to the edge of the town where the Jewish troops fired shots over their head, ordering them to leave. Prior to their flight, however, the forces stripped them of their belongings.<sup>122</sup> Once the "intercommunal" war became the Israeli-Arab war on May 15<sup>th</sup>, with members of the Arab League declaring war on Israel, most Palestinian villages had been razed and urban populations expelled. Only once this massive, premeditated expulsion occurred, could Israel claim such dichotomized social relations between Jew and Arab, occidental and oriental, civilized and savage.

## **5.5 Memoricide and the Production of Binaries**

After the Palestinians were physically removed from their lands, Israelis continued their process of "hebrewization" or "judizing" of the land. The central government employed geographers, historians, and archeologists to reinvent the

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid. 100.

<sup>122</sup> Ibid. 113.

landscape. In 1949, groups of scholars from the “naming committee” journey through the newly captured Palestinian territories to renumerate the land.<sup>123</sup> They sought to apply the ideology to the landscape, to create a fertile environment for the New Jew and his worldview.<sup>124</sup> The Palestinians belonged to places that no longer existed.

After the geographic redemption of the land, the government began its botanical redemption. The Jewish National Fund confiscated huge swaths of Palestinian lands for “public use.” They were tasked with manicuring a “Jewish, European-looking, and green” Israel. On the ruins of the recently cleansed Palestinian lands, the JNF planted forests. The botanical project of the land paralleled the return of Jews to Israel. Just as the Jew would flourish in the land, the land would blossom with the return of its people. Thus, the forests the JNF planted realized the Zionist trope of, “making the desert bloom.” Although, the JNF chose to use only 11% indigenous species, the forests provided the New Jews an opportunity to experience the veracity of Zionism.<sup>125</sup> Hiking and agrotourism are still very popular forms of recreation in Israeli culture. The forests were meant to be experienced and were built with hiking trails, historical markers, and lodging. However, while Israelis visit to watch the blossoming of nonindigenous fig and almond trees bloom to mark the end of winter, the forests work politically to cover any Palestinian attempt at return or commemorative act.

The JNF’s project changed the narrative of the land both in the context of contemporary ownership and the historical narratives it could contain. Confronted with the task of building forests on top of the recently evacuated Palestinian civilization, the

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<sup>123</sup> Benvenisti, Meron, and Maxine Kaufman-Lacusta. 2000. *Sacred Landscape : The Buried History of the Holy Land Since 1948*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

<sup>124</sup> Pappé, Ilan. 2006. *The Ethnic Cleansing of Palestine*. Oxford: Oneworld. Page 226.

<sup>125</sup> Ibid. Page 227.

JNF needed to decide which buildings to preserve, which to excavate, and which to demolish. As curators of the Zionist lands, the decision followed the Zionist historical narrative. They excavated the ruins of antiquity and anything with Christian or Jewish value detachable from the Palestinian population. Any buildings that could attest to the millennia of Palestinian culture were demolished. The largest man-made forest in Israel, Birya, covers six Palestinian villages, including Ayn al-Zaytun. The historical markers, tours, and online descriptions of the forest follow a timeline that skips from the biblical period, to the Talmudic period, and then directly to the forest's creation in 1948.

Meanwhile, the new immigrants and refugees to Israel were subject to contrapuntal curating projects and enforced historical amnesias. As discussed earlier, after the state gained independence, it received and encouraged global mass migration. Jews from India to the Americas, from Scandinavia to South Africa joined the new nation. They experienced their Jewishness differently and held diverse expectations of the Zionist project. The Israeli government and society began an intensive program that might be best characterized as “deglobalization.” As with the land, the Zionist began a large, intricate project of subordinating the proliferation and commemoration of lived experiences that contradicted their ideology and its narratives. As Ella Shohat writes in her collection of essays on the topic, *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*:

The idea of the unique, common victimization of all Jews at all times provides a crucial underpinning of official Israeli discourse. The notion uniqueness precludes analogies and metonymies, thus producing a selective reading of “Jewish history,” – one that hijacks Mashreqian and Maghrebian Jews from their Judeo-Islamic geography and subordinates that geography to that of the Ashkenazi *shtetl*. This double process entails the performance of commonalities among Jews in the public sphere so as to suggest a more homogeneous national past, while silencing any deviance into a more globalized and historicized narrative that would see Jews not simply through their religious commonalities but also in relation

to their contextual cultures institutions, and practices... In the Zionist “proof” of a single Jewish experience there are no parallels or overlappings with other religious and ethnic communities, whether in terms of a Jewish hyphenated and syncretic culture or in terms of a linked analogous oppression. All Jews are defined as closer to each other than to the cultures of which they have been a part.<sup>126</sup>

Again, the Zionist movement rejected any ambiguity of the Jewish heritage between the cultural and ethnic dichotomy of east/west or occident/orient. The Jews living in Arab lands fully belonged to both the category of oriental and Arab and the category of Jew, synonymous to Occidental for Zionists. Thus, the Mizrahi Jew was unintelligible and inassimilable to the Zionist world historical narrative. As a result, Arab Jews acquired second-class citizenship.

The simplest way to explain the oppression of Arab and African Jews in Israel is to demonstrate how their material and ideological place within Israel parallel one another. The Arab Jews were brought to Israel with the intent that they would serve as the uneducated, proletarian labor source. Of course, the Zionists believed they were liberating the Arab-Jews from a cultural backwater, even more repressive of religious difference than their own. In many cases, this was false. In Baghdad, even after the Holocaust and Israeli independence, records show that most residents showed very little desire to leave. The city maintained a long history of inclusion. Unlike Europe where narratives of the wandering Jews made the identity synonymous with rootlessness, the Iraqi Jews held less doubt that they belonged where they lived. Once Israeli diplomats arranged easy emigration for Iraqi Jews, very few accepted the offer. In turn, the Zionist agents resorted to “cruel Zionism – namely the idea that Zionists had to use violent

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<sup>126</sup> Shohat, Ella. 2006. *Taboo Memories, Diasporic Voices*. Next wave; Next wave. Durham: Duke University Press. Page 214-215.



means to dislodge Jews from Exile.”<sup>127</sup> After the bombing of the Masouda Shemtob synagogue, the Jews of Baghdad left for Israel, in many cases greeted by bureaucrats who deemed their names impossible to pronounce and renaming them, just as they had done with the land.

The Israeli need for labor expedited the resort to cruel Zionism. Before independence, the country depended on Palestinian labor. Even the Kibbutz founded on socialist ideals and practices quickly turned to buying Palestinian labor. With the ethnic cleansing of the indigenous population, the Zionist pioneers turned to the “Sephardi option.” The importation of young, strong Eastern Jews added a temporary third, middle category, between Jew and Arab, in the Zionist hierarchy. The establishment determined that labor should be done by, “Jews in the form of Arabs.”<sup>128</sup> The Zionists’ orientalist belief in the underdevelopment of Arab land translated into a belief that the Jews coming from places like Baghdad, Sana, or pastoral cultures would be proficient in agriculture. As a result, the Arab immigrants were expected to labor, without training, for exploitive wages. The Western Jews, who owned the means of production, disdained the Arabs for failing to work with the productivity of trained Palestinian labor. Yet, the exploitation Arab-Jewish labor produced twenty years of sustained, quick economic development. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the Arab-Jews are still remembered as arriving to Israel slovenly, uncooperatively and repaying their admission with unproductive behavior. Ironically, the Western Jews narrative of sacrifice to save the Arab Jews is contradictory to reality: the labor of the Arab and African Jews saved the nation from economic failure.

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<sup>127</sup> Shohat, Ella. 1988. "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims." *Social Text*, no. 19/20: 12.

<sup>128</sup> Ibid. Page 14.

The intolerability of the Arab-Jew to Zionist intelligibility results in the reworking of dependencies. Systems of interdependence, like the economic success of early Israel, are transformed into evidence of the dependence of the Arab-Jew on the Eastern New Jew. These transformations permeate nearly all ideological state apparatuses and cultural institutions. This produces a hierarchy in which all non-Western or diasporic identities are dependent on the flourishing and distinguished presence of the Zionist master narrative in order to hold any right to the public sphere. Manuel de Landa, alongside Deleuze and Guattari, provide the cleanest tools of analysis for these processes. Central to expanding or globalizing any systems of oppression, the oppressor must transform systems of mutual interdependence, or “*meshworks*,” into *hierarchies* of dependence, in which each member recognizes their reliance on persons of higher class, but hold no obligation to those below them.<sup>129</sup> <sup>130</sup> In the case of early Israeli economic development, the systems of mutual dependence between the pioneers and their laborers was restructured as a history of the lower, oriental proletariat classes failing to fulfill their obligations to the Western bourgeois.

This class struggle mirrors the cultural and ethnic ideological struggle. As de Landa argues, processes of homogenization and subsequent re-heterogenization drive the movement from meshwork to hierarchy. The Zionist pioneers intended that the Eastern Jews assimilate absolutely. They were placed in housing settlements arranged to promote a Western lifestyle, in schools that taught them the correct Judaism and whose curricula

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<sup>129</sup> De Landa, Manuel. 1997. *A Thousand Years of Nonlinear History*. Swerve editions; Swerve editions. New York: Zone Books.

<sup>130</sup> Deleuze, Gilles, and Félix Guattari. 1983. *Anti-Oedipus : Capitalism and Schizophrenia*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

taught the great Yiddish writers, but never the work of Arab Jews.<sup>131</sup> The Zionists still clung to the hope that after immigrating, global Jewry would develop into their Eurocentric ideal of the New Jew. However, after 1967, when the treaties of the 6-day war formalized the security of the Zionist project, the paradigm of Israel as a homogeneous nation no longer felt necessary.<sup>132</sup> Instead, social and civic institutions adopted a paradigm of multiculturalism. However, the era of homogenization still loomed. The Zionist historical narrative and its supporting assumptions about the nature of Jewish culture were accepted as the truth. The entire spectrum of multicultural expression was limited to reproducing this truth. While Iraqi, Yemeni, or Ethiopian identity and history now entered the public sphere, it was only to verify and display Zionist postulates.

In his exploration of Jerusalem as a colonial space, Thomas Abowd identifies potent examples of how this destruction of social heterogeneity, homogenization through renaming and separation, and subsequent re-heterogenization under taxonomies favorable to the reproduction of racial hierarchies. He examines the neighborhood of Talbieh, a neighborhood for wealthy Arabs that also housed Jewish elites before 1948. In this space, prone to intellectual hybridization, people like Zalman Schocken, founder of Ha'aretz and Schocken Books, lived blocks away from Edward Said's family home. Religion delineated the major social demarcation within the neighborhood. Oral histories note that on occasions when children of different Christian denominations would get married, the parents would mourn and ring their church bells as they would for their respective

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<sup>131</sup> Shohat, Ella. 1988. "Sephardim in Israel: Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Jewish Victims." *Social Text*, no. 19/20

<sup>132</sup> Stein, Rebecca L. 2008. *Itineraries in Conflict : Israelis, Palestinians, and the Political Lives of Tourism*. Durham: Duke University Press.

funerary rites.<sup>133</sup> However, within acceptable religious boundaries, social, economic, and cultural interaction did occur. As educated elites under British colonialism, residents communicated in English and often ran their businesses in close proximity. Less orthodox Jews and Arabs developed particularly close connections and, in certain cases, “friendships and relationships of this kind actually kept Arabs from leaving Palestine as British rule waned and heightened violence washed over the city in the late 1940s.”<sup>134</sup>

After the ethnic cleansing of the neighborhood, the social demarcations were rearticulated along the binary between Arabs and Jews. Confirming the apartheid thesis that, “difference is preserved through distance,”<sup>135</sup> new racialized neighborhoods were devised to separate populations by these new social logics. Meanwhile, the old antagonisms faded: it became newly acceptable for to marry between different Christian sects. However, this reworking entailed a variety of processes to demarcate new boundaries and homogenize the space within. Talbieh was renamed “Komemiyut,” Hebrew for independence. The nearby neighborhoods of Qatamon and Baq’a became Gonen (defense) and Geulim (redemption). Meanwhile, when historical sites or landmarks contained narratives that created some ambiguity in the ethnic purity of a neighborhood, they were destroyed or attached to different narratives. For example, prior to Israeli occupation, the beautiful home of renowned Palestinian architect Andoni Baramki professed the owner’s own cultural hybridity by reflecting his forty-year career with influences from across the Mediterranean and Arab world. After Baramki’s expulsion, his house served as a fort for LEHI forces, referenced during the 1948 war as

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<sup>133</sup> Abowd, Thomas. 2016. *Colonial Jerusalem : The Spatial Construction of Identity and Difference in a City of Myth, 1948-2012.* : Syracuse University Press. Page 48.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid. Page 49.

<sup>135</sup> Crapanzano, Vincent. 1985. *Waiting : The Whites of South Africa.* New York: Random House. Page 39.

the Tourjeman Post. In the 1970's it became the Tourjeman Post Museum, offering visitor a story of the bravery of LEHI forces against Jordan Snipers. The changing history of the building is emblematic of the processes of deterritorialization and reterritorialization necessary for the sustainable reproduction of Zionist social hierarchies. Beyond these processes, a system of pacification prevents new social hybridity by enforcing the boundaries of the racial hierarchy.

## 5.6 Pacification

The Israeli/Palestine conflict is conditioned through perpetually representating the Orient and the Palestinians outside of Zionism. Meanwhile, Eurocentric hegemony limits Arab-Jewish expression to tell narratives that contradict their own genealogical experience and subordinate them to tell the story of their oppressors. However, unsurprisingly, both groups also have long histories of protest, riot, and resistance to Israeli domination. Israel domination is not constant. It requires regular reproduction. Said relies on Gramsci to explicate this point: “the consciousness of one really is... ‘knowing thyself’ as a product of the historical processes to date which has deposited itself in you an infinity of traces, without leaving an inventory.”<sup>136</sup> The inventory is composed both by acts of oppression directed at the subject and the acts responding to that oppression. However, Israel’s success at imposing its will upon the land and its former inhabitants comes through its success at managing the responses of its oppressed classes.

This is the other face Israel shows to its victims: a system of pacification. From one perspective, the impositions on Palestinian life used to insure their cooperation and

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<sup>136</sup> <sup>136</sup> Said, Edward W. 1992. *The Question of Palestine*. New York: Vintage. Page 73.

complacency are necessary for Israeli security. On the other hand, they achieve this by making Palestinian life nearly unlivable. The goal of the pacification is to remove or dissuade the subject from any form of resistance, ideally achieving perfect docility through discipline, surveillance, and punishment. Defense minister Ya'akov Amidror compared this to mowing the grass. The IDF:

...just “mows the grass” of enemy capabilities with no ambition to solve the conflict. It also attempts to achieve some deterrence to extend the time between rounds of violence. Periods of tranquility are important for Israel because its mere existence is a success over radical non-state enemies and sends them a constant reminder that their destructive goals are not within reach.<sup>137</sup>

In between the periods of active warfare or engaged raids, Israel imposes a “matrix of control.”

The term “matrix of control” emerges from Jeff Halper’s fastidious research in the West Bank. The term involves the massive bureaucracy Israel forces Palestine to endure, which impedes movement and communication, and the separation and restriction of Palestinians from their means of sustenance and any means of resistance. The Matrix of Control operates at three levels. First, there are the facts on the ground. These include fixtures like the Israel/West bank wall, internal borders and roadblocks, encirclements of Palestinian areas, and technologies that monitor movement through surveillance. It also includes the more abstract aspects of security bureaucracy: military government, planning and zoning regulations, mass detentions and limitations on civil liberties, creating categories of people with differential rights and life-spaces, and blurring civil/military lines in the enforcement of internal security. Lastly, the IDF studies and prepares the most effective military tactics, setting the global standard in interactive intelligence

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<sup>137</sup> Inbar, Efraim, and Eitan Shamir. 2014. “‘Mowing the Grass’: Israel’s Strategy for Protracted Intractable Conflict.” *Journal of Strategic Studies* 37 (1): 65-90.

gathering, limited use of unlimited and disproportionate force, complete aerial occupation, targeted assassinations, urban warfare, and weapons of suppression.<sup>138</sup>

The matrix of control has become such an effective system that it no longer just facilitates Israel's domestic security situation. It has become a commodity, unique to Israel, for sale on the global market. However, unlike other revenue streams, the sale of Israeli pacification technologies and techniques foster diplomatic relations. Anti-colonial world powers like China, Nigeria, and India silence their historical grievances with Israeli imperialism because of the national ruling classes dependence on Israeli counter-insurgency technology. Meanwhile, crucial geopolitical and trade allies like Azerbaijan and Ethiopia are webbed in through the same dependencies. The Israeli products and techniques are so superior because of their testing and refinement in protracted conflict. The products are sold claiming to be "tested in Gaza" or "used by the IDF." Through the global economy Israel's military occupation becomes its own justification.<sup>139</sup>

The more important consequence of Israel's pacification protocol is that it has undermined any legitimate prospects for a "two-state solution." Since the origins of the conflict, the central debate has been between resolution through a single, bi-national state or two separate nation-states. The two-state solution assumed a division between the two countries along either the 1949 or 1967 borders. However, the matrix of control operates by establishing settlements on top of the areas necessary for any type of sovereignty. Thus, Israeli settlements are not placed in areas where the settlers can find space to live, but on top of water reserves, transit points, below important airspace, and on top of the

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<sup>138</sup> Halper, Jeff. 2015. *War against the People : Israel, the Palestinians and Global Pacification*. London: PlutoPress. Page 149.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid.

most arable land. There are about 550,000 Jews living in West Bank settlements. Originally, the settlements were development towns populated by low-income Arab-Jews living on the periphery. However, once they became demonstrably and sustainably secure, Israel's elites have replaced the population. A two state solution would entail removing the elites from their land. In addition, Israeli pacification procedures demand that any major Palestinian town is surrounded by Israeli security and checkpoints. Meanwhile, Israeli controlled borders encircle the entire West Bank. As a result, communication and transportation in between Palestinian towns is incredibly difficult and dangerous. For the two-state solution to work as anything more than straw man, the Israeli's would need to concede all West Bank settlements and the Eastern border. Historically, both have been non-negotiable.

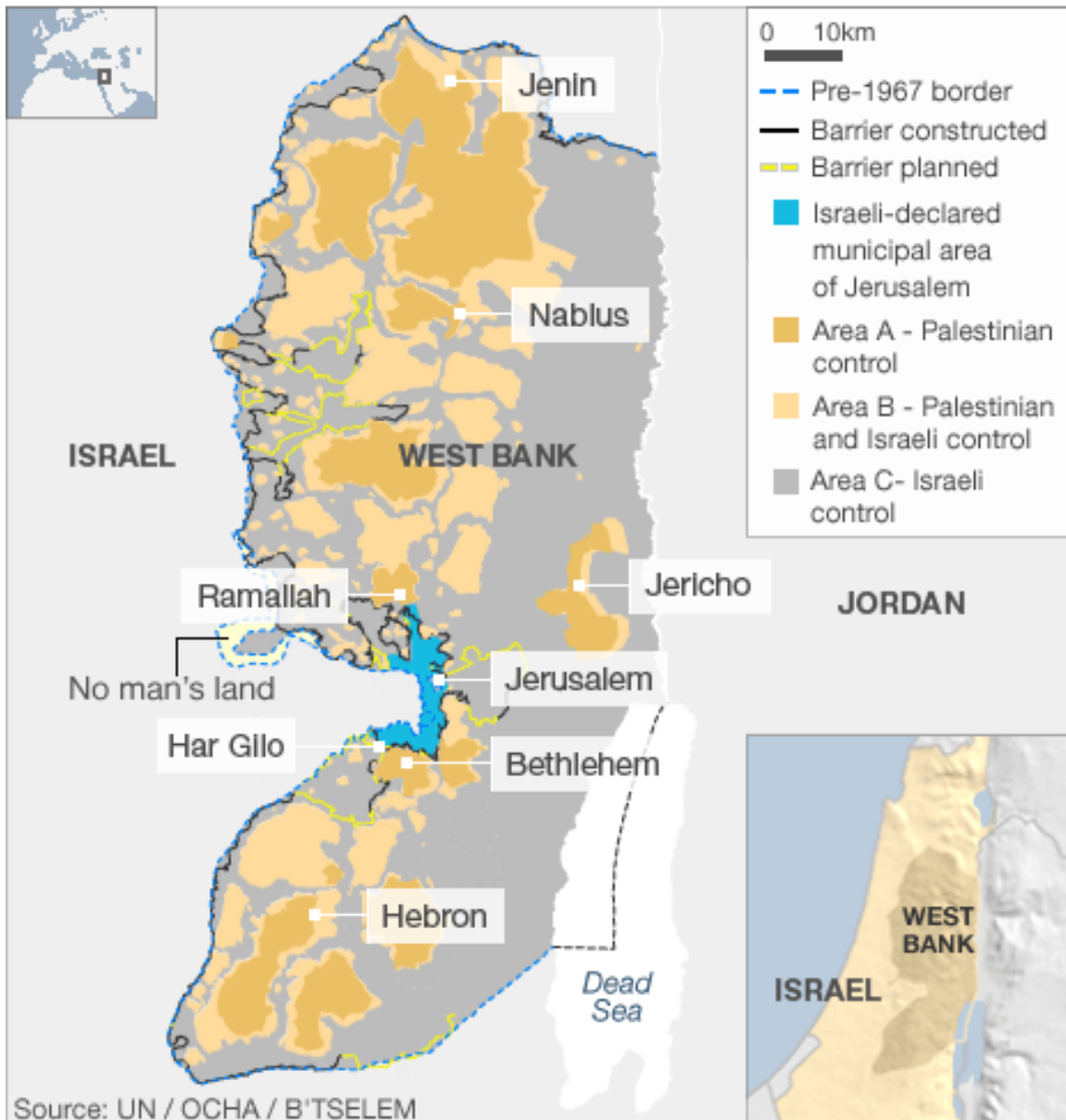
On the global stage, Israel successfully sold the narrative that indigenous Palestinians were never central to Zionism. Instead the settlers returned to find their land populated with a fundamentally irrational people who, despite all attempts, could not understand that they did not belong. Instead of accepting their fate, they resorted to the methods of terrorism. This narrative only becomes tenable after the Israel campaign to erase the history of the Palestinians and Arab-Jews. Even so, Zionist thought has always included the Orient and the Arab within its metrics and imagination. For the Zionist, the Arab looms large in both thought and practice. The country's geography, economy, national holidays, and military originate and operate significantly through the interaction and confrontation with the Palestinian and Arab.

The Arab threatens the Zionist at two levels. First, the two groups compete over the same materials: land, water, airspace, transit systems, and borders. However, they are



also in competition for the means of narration: the ability to tell their own national stories, to cultivate stable social structures, to affirm belonging, and to appear in the public sphere. Thus, the Palestinian threatens the Israelis ability to affirm that Zionism is the world historical truth. The Israeli oppression of Palestinian has never exclusively been about safety or greed. The ability to demonstrate and have faith in the pristine veracity and facticity of Zionism requires the oppression of the indigenous population and the rejection of the Orient.

## Control of the West Bank under Oslo Accords



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<sup>140</sup> Donnison, John. "Palestinians see 'sharp increase' in demolitions - Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine." *Palestinians see 'sharp increase' in demolitions - Architects and Planners for Justice in Palestine*. May 29, 2012. Accessed December 30, 2016. <http://apjp.org/palestinians-see-sharp-increas/>.

## Chapter 6: The (Anti)Politics of Militarization

### 6.1 Managing the Movement

Beyond its treatment of the Palestinians, Zionism suffers from internal contradictions that render political action impossible. The state insists on its status as a “Jewish state,” an ethnocracy, and a democracy. Like the contradictory narrative frames of the Holocaust, these antithetical political systems lack the opposing and negating aspects one would look for in hope that they would reach a dialectical synthesis. Instead, both are “managed.” I use the term “management” to denote a substitution for Arendt’s concept of “action.” Unlike political action, which requires pluralism and serves as an end in itself, management organizes the polity through training its subjects to act homogeneously, subsequently allowing for the bureaucracy and society to act as a means to an end. In Israel, this training occurs through the military penetrating and pervading society.

In Baruch Kimmerling’s book, *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness*, he chronicles the transition from the cosmopolitan paradigm of Zionism, in which the legitimacy of the state is founded on politics within a specific world historical view, to a state held together through military management. He argues, “that the strength and capability of the Israeli military to penetrate society is predicated by the military’s all embracing and civilian nature. For this reason, the state and its extension through the military institution has been a major actor in the Zionist story.”<sup>141</sup> Since independence, and even before it, Israel pursued the reckless establishment and pristine realization of their own ideology and historical fantasy. This project stands in conflict to the path of

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<sup>141</sup> Kimmerling, Baruch. 2001. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness : State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Page 3.

least opposition. The commitment to immaculate realization of Zionist mythology, the enduring obligation to the social taxonomies and teleology prescribed at the end of the nineteenth century have come at great material, social, and human sacrifice. Why has the Zionist narrative and mythology not adapted to meet reality? The historical social conditions of the settler colony inject military priority and management into every opportunity for political discourse, judgment, or action. “[T]he situation is one in which military and other social problems are so highly intermingled that the social and political issues become construed as ‘existential security’ issues and vice versa, making it almost impossible to differentiate between them...Israeli civilians are ‘partially militarized and the military is ‘partially civilianized.’”<sup>142</sup> This military framework carries its own framework of values. The dissent and discord necessary for reevaluation and adaption appear worthless to the military paradigm, which can only appreciate the violent ideological acceleration that helps its goal of establishing and protecting the Zionist utopia.

Zionism has not always operated inside the military paradigm. The problems found in Herzl and Nordau’s writings derive from their ignorant acceptance of certain Fin de Siècle notions of social Darwinism, orientalism, and race science. Only once Zionism needed reconciliation with the practical demands of building a settler colony could military impetuses demand ideological stasis. Initially, discourse concerning who belonged to the state was rare and peripheral. Zionism was a fringe group with few resources and heavy risks; the leaders could not afford to reject very many people. Additionally, the concept of the New Jew emphasized transformation as opposed to inclusion. Instead, Zionist discourse focused on questions of what was right for the state

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<sup>142</sup> Ibid.

and movement. After the development and success of the paramilitaries, independence, mass immigration, and ethnic cleaning, these two sites flipped in primacy. New diversity and the massive state expenditure to eliminate that diversity brought questions of Jewishness and belonging to the forefront. Meanwhile, the ascendancy of the military simultaneously delineated the limits of internal disagreement. Political questions could never challenge the power of the military.

After the founding years, and even more after the 1967 war, two consensuses marked the boundaries of Israeli politics. Kimmerling labels these the cultural code of Jewishness and the code of security. The cultural code operates as the discursive partner of the ethnocratic state. Israeli political positions must be identifiable as Jewish political positions. When the secular Ashkenazim held clear hegemony over the Zionist project, they controlled interpretation of the meaning of “Jewish.” With the influx of immigrants and the pivot to a multicultural paradigm, the meaning became a site of discourse. Thus, the project that sought to make the Jews, “a nation like all other nations,” developed a consensus that democracy must serve to retain the distinctly Jewish nature of the state.

The Jewish consensus presents particularly toxic ramifications to the reproduction of plurality because it undermines any institutionalized politics of intersectional identity. If an Arab-Jew is driven to a political cause through their Arab identity, they must present that cause as an interpretation of their Jewish identity. Other aspects, even universalist aspects, must be presented as an interpretation of Jewishness. Thus, democracy only extends as far as the Israeli public is willing to interpret the parameters of Judaism. In practice, this is not as overwhelmingly preventive as one might think. Many leftist and liberal paradigms of Judaism are flexible and include foreign causes. However, it

operates discursively to renumerate the *demos*. The entire spectrum of Israeli political action can be understood as exclusively Jewish.<sup>143</sup>

The code of security, better defined as the military-cultural complex, treats military preparation and the use of force as an “end in itself.” Since independence, the flourishing of the Israeli people, the space allotted for the good life, has been understood as coextensive with the potential or actual use of overwhelming military force. This belief is so fervently supported and immune from questioning, it resembles what sociologists term a “civil religion.” As the Jaffa Center for Strategic Studies found:

The “religion of security” is a metaphor for considering the phenomena of security in Israel. Just as a child is born into a certain religion, so too the Israeli is born into a very difficult geopolitical world with its attendant dilemmas. Just as a child accepts unquestioningly the religion he was born into and some basic answers he receives...so too the Israeli child absorbs at a very early age the basics of the core-belief in national security.<sup>144</sup>

It is not simply that the “very difficult geopolitical world” results in this faith and religiosity. The formative instruction in Israeli society trains and indoctrinates citizens with this belief. Kimmerling characterizes this as “total militarism,” a system in which most social institutions (economic, industrial, legislative) and cognitive frameworks are oriented toward preparation for war.<sup>145</sup> Schools, holidays, and civic life reproduce a value system that represents the military as the primary site of Israeli social collectivity.<sup>146</sup>

The mutual coopting of civic space by the military and military space by civilians hollows out the space needed for political discourse. As Kimmerling writes:

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<sup>143</sup> Ibid. Page 171.

<sup>144</sup> Arian, Asher, I. Talmud, and T. Herman. *National Security and Public Opinion in Israel*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press for Jaffe Center for Strategic Studies, Tel Aviv University, 1988. Page 81.

<sup>145</sup> Kimmerling, Baruch. 2001. *The Invention and Decline of Israeliness : State, Society, and the Military*. Berkeley: University of California Press. Page 214.

<sup>146</sup> Ibid. Page 216.

The civilian government, civilian elites, and most of the members of the collectivity all function as agents of civilian militarism. With respect to this type of militarism, it is not necessary that the military, as an institutional structure, govern the political sphere, nor is the military necessarily stationed at the center of a statist cult. Civilian militarism is systematically internalized by most statesmen, politicians, and the general public as a self-evident reality whose imperatives transcend partisan or social allegiance.<sup>147</sup>

The potential for the military-cultural complex to eliminate politics is absolute. In 1945, the British mandate government enacted a series of Emergency Laws that allowed colonial authorities to override the civil rights of the inhabitants to ensure British sovereignty and security. In 1948, the Knesset incorporated the provisions into Israeli law. In 1951, they recognized that the Emergency Laws were irreconcilable with the basic principles of democracy, but failed to revoke them because they provided the necessary legal basis for imposing military rule of Israel's Arab citizens. The Knesset launched another attempt in 1966, but again found the legal system necessary to "freeze" the legal rights of Palestinians in the occupied territories.

Israel's inability to relieve itself of the Emergency Laws, despite recognizing that they undermine the state's claim to democracy, illuminates how the ethnocracy/democracy paradox is resolved. The democracy extends as far as Israel is comfortable interpreting the cultural code of Jewishness. While it is clear to both Israeli Jews and global Jews that "Jewishness" and "Jewish people" is a pluralistic category that contains and promotes a political discourse, this is the perspective of those included within the democracy. Again, Israel shows its victims a different face. In the state of expectation, military action, and emergency laws, the state acts in the name of "the Jewish people." The entire occupation is predicated on the existence of an imaginary

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<sup>147</sup> Ibid. Page 214-215.

homogeneous Jewish population. Perhaps here is the most enduring legacy of the early Zionists' desire to create a "New Jew." The Israeli polity can be interpellated as a pluralistic democracy and a homogeneous nation. The military framework requires the homogenous representation. While space is allocated for a "Jewish democracy," the omnipresence, or omni-potentiality, of the military in Israeli civic life ensures that it can always be overridden by the mobilized ethnocracy.

## **6.2 Politics of Fear: The Totalitarianization of The Zionist Project**

In *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, Arendt explains why the Zionist project insists on realizing its dreams of ethnic purity, memocide, and hyper-militarism. Like other 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century ideologies, Zionism offers a teleological understanding of history. It insisted that in order to achieve this *telos*, Jews comport to the figure of the New Jew and an imagined stage for them to perform this character. Politics, an unpredictable action that cannot achieve a goal, is replaced with motion, progress toward the pre-determined *telos*. Structurally, this ideology resembles the totalitarian ideology Arendt described. However, Arendt's equation for totalitarianism expects that a regime of terror pervade the polity to remove the freedom to imagine oneself as anything outside of the ideology. Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia induced terror through arbitrary violence, the universal recognition that today's executioner may become tomorrows executed. Israel has no regime akin to this. Certainly, it practices arbitrary detention and, occasionally, execution of its colonized peoples, but the Jewish population does not hold these fears. Arendt's understanding is useful because terror is subjective. Historical Jewish terror crops up throughout nationalist discourses to justify the singular truth of military Zionism. With its non-linear nature, terror's social relations can be reproduced as long as the motion of the



polity is determined by a response to terror, its contemporary projections, and ideological path forward.

Zionism's contemporary clout arose on the coattails of the Holocaust. Unlike Arendt's examples of totalitarianism, Israel does not produce terror. Instead, it reproduces it. Jacqueline Rose explains Zionism's resort to militarism and exploitation as, "not so much restitution, as the colossal *sublimation* of historical pain."<sup>148</sup> The Zionists depicted every adversary to their project as both an echo and a seedling of *the* modern Jewish adversary: the Nazi empire. They projected the image of Nazi terror both forward and backward. In the paradigm of the Holocaust as eternal return, not only does the Palestinian farmer defending his land resemble a pogrom and the Arab family walking through Jaffa look like a band of "brown shirts," but also every historical instance of Jewish oppression appears as an iteration of Nazi antisemitism.

It is not only this terror, a reading of Jewish history through the lens of Nazi Jew hatred, which prevents revaluation and adaptation of the Zionist ideology. The Zionist ideology emphasizes the response to these Nazi phantoms. It was the diasporic Jew who responded to Nazi oppression by accepting their suffering with the silence of Job, fearfully begging for answers on the way to the gas chamber. The New Jew meets the Nazi with the full force of the IDF. The critique here is not the violence towards Nazis, but the Zionists ability to depict any opposition as Nazism and then prescribe nonnegotiable violence in response. Thus, Jewish terror in Israel is not produced through reanimations of Nazism and pogroms, but through a fear of fear:

Suffering, not just the response to real and present danger, becomes something like a national disgrace. Once the link was made between suffering and humiliation, once – we might say – the problem of historical

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<sup>148</sup> Rose, Jacqueline. 2005. *The Question of Zion*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Page 130.

injustice became a narcissistic wound, then any perceived assault on the Jews, regardless of its reasons, becomes, not just a danger (and even when in fact no danger at all), an affront to the Jewish self. The history of the creation of Israeli nation is in part the history of one displacement after another, in which, time and time again, the enemies of the Jews turn into the shades of past persecution, each one at once real and unreal, infinitely dangerous and a ghost.<sup>149</sup>

Facing the opposition, Israel withdraws from any responsibility to the truth, and, out of fear, responds only as ideology prescribes. This is a totalitarian relation.

Israel, while not a totalitarian state, faces its “other,” the Arab, the Palestinian, and memories of Arabness, with a totalitarian response. Responsibility, if one wished to assign it, weights differently, because the Jews in Israel confront fear created by others. Yet, Arendt’s analysis of totalitarianism is useful for understanding how the Zionist paradigm uses that fear to justify and realize its own fantasies. Simply, it deprives the Israeli of the freedom to imagine their relationship to the Palestinian differently. Again, we confront the difficulty of holding victims accountable for their own victims.

### **6.3 Dialogue and Depoliticization**

The breadth of institutions attempting to manage the Israel/Palestine conflict stretches across the spectrum of political beliefs. While the military-industrial complex develops pacification technologies and capabilities, liberal NGOs achieve a similar result through dialogue, inter-cultural, and narrative sharing groups. Groups like “Seeds of Peace” or “Children of Peace,” teach agendas of tolerance that are recognizably inapplicable to large scale reconciliation. Thus, these groups claim to be a model for something that they can never be. Instead, they curb the boundaries of acceptable dissent

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<sup>149</sup> Ibid. Page 130-131.

and demands to this model of tolerance. Through these organizations Israel colonial hegemony becomes the synchronized project of both the Zionist right and left.

Dialogue groups are founded upon practicing identity politics in a manner that does not inhibit any narratives from entering the conversation. In the case of Seeds of Peace, an Israel and a Palestinian are placed in a camp together in Otisfield, Maine. The program begins with the assumption that the conflict rests latently within the racial, religious, and ethnic inheritance of each camper. Subsequently, the project of tolerance attempts to remove the friction inherent the identities by practicing moderated cohabitation. The issue, as Wendy Brown points out, is that this depoliticizes the conflict. It practices “removing a political phenomenon from the comprehension of its *historical* emergence and from a recognition of the *powers* that produce and contour it.”<sup>150</sup> With this assumption, the training these programs often offer is not an alternative political space that can challenge, reformulate, and work through historical injustices in a different manner than everyday Israel/Palestine can offer, but teaches a mode of disposition and behavior that manages conflicting narratives, histories, and perspectives without conflict or friction.

The practice that dialogue groups offer is only half of the cyclical relationship maintained between storytelling and politics. Any story may be told in the public space, however, these stories lack the power to change the world around them based upon the truth they disclose. Instead of conflicting stories coming together to produce a new perspective, interpretation of the world, or paradigm of justice, they can only reproduce the current paradigm because their presence has effect on the power relations they exist

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<sup>150</sup> Brown, Wendy. 2006. *Regulating Aversion : Tolerance in the Age of Identity and Empire*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press. Page 15.

within. Without the interaction between stories, dialogue groups end up substituting “emotional and personal vocabularies for political ones in formulating *solutions* to political problems.”<sup>151</sup> The futility of society, in the Arendtian sense, or management becomes critical, “when the ideal of practice of tolerance is substituted for justice or equality, when sensitivity to or even respect for the other is substituted for justice for the other, when historically induced suffering is reduced to ‘difference’ or to a medium of ‘offense,’ when suffering as such is reduced to a problem of personal feeling, then the field of political battle and political transformation is replaced with an agenda of behavioral, attitudinal and emotional practices.”<sup>152</sup>

Simultaneously, this discourse offers more liability than opportunity. Tolerance can become akin to a fashion. In comparison to a discourse of justice, tolerance emphasizes form over content. Ironically, this allows for punitive injustice to be perpetuated against those lacking this affect of tolerance. The Palestinians who organize for justice in a way that rejects Israeli narratives of belonging are labeled as and punished for being intolerant. In this way, the dialogue groups act like a wall, both preventing Jews, Israelis, and Palestinians from organizing for justice in a serious and effective manner, and serving as something for the agents of state violence to “pin them against,” as a disciplinary example.

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<sup>151</sup> Ibid. Page 16.

<sup>152</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter 7: Urgent Futures

To conclude, this section engages the challenges and promises of a shared future between the Israelis and Palestinians. Given my own position, I want to highlight the path forward for Jewish people upset with the manner Zionism and the rejection of the Palestinian has transformed Judaism. I believe that by illuminating the discursive territory and historical legitimacy certain Judaisms have lost to Zionism, and presenting these as alternatives to Jewish colonialism, it can invigorate both Jewish and Palestinian resistance to military Zionist hegemony and increase the legitimacy that global powers and institutions can condemn and punish the crimes of “modernity’s great victims.” With this goal, I also want preface the tone of this section. The previous chapters have offered the “pessimism of the intellect,” confronting the reader with the truth of an oppressive history. As Gramsci loved to write, this must be met by an “optimism of the will,” a certain hopeful disposition and determination that prevents the necessary historical inquiry from defeating our emancipatory aspirations.

In line with Gramsci’s thought this chapter shows that there are truly meaningful frameworks for cohabitation and mutual belonging. However, these are no alternatives we can slide into, latent utopias that can appear through the sharing of ideas. These are ideas that must be fought for by the Palestinians and the global community that seeks justice for them. Also, and unfortunately, there are no alternatives without some discomfort and sacrifice on the part of global Jewry. Namely, the Jewish impunity developed through the global manipulations of Holocaust memory will need to be abandoned. By no means does this entail forgetting the Holocaust, or “getting over it,”

but does demand that it can be brought into the present in a manner that does not free Jews of their ethical and historical obligations to the world.

First, this section examines the challenges of Jewish and Palestinian mutuality and explores political structures able to handle the complexity of these relations. Afterward, I engage Said's writings toward the end of his life that reflect on the importance of exile in the age of nationalism and how the influence of exile to the Jews and Palestinian can create futures outside the mutual exclusion of the colonizer and colonized. Next, it bases these structures and futures within the culture and *ethos* of Jewish cosmopolitanism, giving a historical basis for these futures to draw from Freud, Said, and Deutscher. While Jewish cosmopolitanism has lost much of its popularity after the rise of Jewish nationalism, the social conditions produced by globalization offer an opportunity for revival. This revival, I argue, offers the opportunity for Jewish cosmopolitanism to become a global movement, in turn, resituating Jewish belonging in a more just position in the world order, as opposed to the de facto legitimation for the United States.

### **7.1 The Last Option: From Freedom to Belonging**

The disappearance of the two-state solution both empowers and disturbs those seeking a just future for the Palestinian and Jewish people. The parallel goals of achieving self-determination through a sovereign state have disappeared. Unchecked and enduring Israeli domination has undermined attempts to build two separate polities, one that belongs to the Palestinian people and one that belongs to the Jewish people. Instead, both groups are doomed to cohabitation. The clarity this fate offers is empowering. The consensus produced through Israel's destruction of all other alternatives beyond a single, shared state brings with it the wounds and trauma Israel has inflicted upon the

Palestinians, but it is a consensus nonetheless. The unity it provides allows engagement with the conflict to be prefaced by a much cleaner dichotomy than it has ever held. The mandate of cohabitation simplifies the conflict between those willing to recognize Israeli and Palestinian “right to have rights,” within the land and those unwilling.

In turn, “Justice for Palestine” becomes less a call for liberation from colonial forces, though this is certainly a valid and useable framework, and more accurately a demand for a legitimate, public, and sustainable belonging for Palestinians. The irony of this should loom large. The Palestinians are now engaged in a political project quite similar to the one that dispossessed them of land in the first place. Accordingly, Palestinians now need critiques of the Zionist project that are also constructive, as well as destructive. As in so many other cases, the follies of the colonizer often become the follies of the colonized. In contrast, Palestine has historically lead the Middle East in its insistence for a pluralizing democracy.

These intersecting agendas seem to prescribe a relatively simple solution: a binational, democratic state for both peoples. Voluntary commitment to a binational state has seen great success in the creation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, which went from the blistering trauma of the Yugoslav wars to a state with high, and steadily growing, human development. These achievements were facilitated by a decentralized political system that consists of three presidents that represent the three major ethnic groups, a bicameral legislature, two major autonomous regions: the Republika Srpska and Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina, and the locally administered Brčko District. The federation is formed by ten cantons that are administered by the local Bosniak and Croatian democratic parties. Competition for power between the two groups is fierce and often

leads to political stasis. However, the decentralized state reduces the scale and effects of the competition. Though it is recognized as an unwieldy system, it has been relatively viable and has proven its ability to adapt to the challenges of a new and diverse state.

Despite the capabilities of new forms of pluralistic political systems, in many respects Israel/Palestine is an unprecedented polity. Nearly one in three Palestinians live abroad. The level of wealth and education differs vastly throughout the homeland and diaspora. In parallel, Israel also represents about one third of global Jewry. In any formulation of the two ethnic groups within a single polity, both demand a right of return for their exiled members. In contrast, levels of commitment and identification with the homeland differ within both groups. Many Jews do not subscribe to the belief that life in Israel constitutes a “return” or is a necessity for the continuation of Jewish life. Many Palestinians have integrated within their new countries. In both cases, intersectional groups like American-Jews or Chilean-Palestinians are groups distinct and independent from Israel/Palestine. So, even with the binational option or “One State Solution” as the only outcome without more projects of ethnic cleansing, many important questions linger about the relationship between the homeland and the diaspora.

To complicate things more, Palestine cannot simply be added to Israel. Since it’s founding, the Zionist movement has focused on removing the ambiguity of the Jew in the Eurocentric worldview. The structure of Zionist thought employs antagonistic dichotomies between the Orient and the Occident, tradition and modernity, and redemption and backwardness. In practice, it has realized these ambitions ruthlessly and at great cost. Israeli identity will need to be excavated and re-conceived if a binational state or cohabited state is to exist.



On the global stage, Israel and Palestine will both need to rework their alliances. Many of Israel's global supporters depict the state as a symbol of settler colonialism, Eurocentric progress, militarism, anti-totalitarianism, white supremacy, and anti-Arab or Islamophobic sentiments. Reciprocally, the Palestinian struggle holds the support of antisemites, Arab nationalists, anti-colonial movements, and Islamism. Both ethnic groups will need to disavow, minimize, or differently avow these sources of support in order to form a single polity.

Developing some form of narrative and ideological mutuality between Israel and Palestine is still the challenge that looms largest. Both groups hold the rejection of the "Other" as formative to their identity and social solidarity. The formal federal bond between the groups will be insufficient to warrant the level of sacrifice demanded from both groups in order to form a binational democracy. Currently, Israel and Palestine both recognize themselves as independent from the other, with any mutual obligation produced by their counterpart's irrational stubbornness or zealotry. On the contrary, any future removed from this gridlock, one that hopes for a dynamic good life, instead of the static accumulation of enemy casualties is interdependent and shared. Once, or if, the reality of the one-state solution dawns, the immediate questions becomes how do Israel and Palestine create a shared national identity?

## **7.2 The Pluralizing Tradition of the Non-Jewish Jew**

For Edward Said, Jews and Palestinians occupy, not only the same land, but also the same cultural space of modernity. Both groups are exilic peoples. Without a state, they lack a place of belonging and are perceived as suspicious foreigners in any public sphere they occupy. Secular nationalist modernity confronted them with a political

lexicon incapable of expressing their fundamental challenges, leading to existential fears of impermanence, deep feelings of alienation, and the inescapable challenge of seeing oneself as anything other than a “nonentity.” Yet, at the same time, many of the great cultural achievements of modernity come from the exilic experience. The rigor and creative force of exilic thinkers, writers and poets lends, “dignity to a condition legislated to deny dignity – to deny an identity to a people.”<sup>153</sup> Still, this is only half the story of exilic achievement. Modernity, and the rise of the capitalist state, has resulted in an age of repression, anxiety, sickliness, slavishness, and, above all, alienation. As György Lukács argues, the characteristic achievement of modern culture, the novel, is a product of the pervasive experience of “transcendental homelessness.”<sup>154</sup> Thus, just as warfare, imperialism, and totalitarianism increase the number of people in exile, the experience of being in the world has become more exilic. These two trends heighten the importance of exile in modernity.

Meanwhile, there is another perspective to exile that explores how such deep pain produces the apex of human flourishing and injects the world with an essential vitality. Exile, the deprivation of the very communal belong that makes one human, forces the exiled person to imagine community from perspectives that might be untenable and unimaginable within the established community. Through this understanding, Said describes exile in a manner harmonious with Arendt. The dissonant view of the exile contradicts the stasis and homogeneity of the nation-state, supplying a dangerously static system with necessary dynamism:

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<sup>153</sup> Said, Edward W. 2000. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Convergences; Convergences (Cambridge, Mass.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Page 175.

<sup>154</sup> Lukács, György. 1971. *The Theory of the Novel: A Historico-Philosophical Essay on the Forms of Great Epic Literature*. Cambridge, Mass.: M.I.T. Press.

Nationalism is an assertion of belonging in and to a place, a people, a heritage. It affirms the home create by a community of language, culture, and customs; and, by doing so, it fends off exile, fights to prevent its ravages. Indeed, the interplay between nationalism and exile is like Hegel's dialectic of servant and master, opposites informing and constituting each other.<sup>155</sup>

The difference between the allegory of the servant and the master is that nationalism does not constitute the exile as something that is "whole." Nationalism insists that the modern community represent itself with a minimum of homogeneity, continuity, and seriality.<sup>156</sup>

Exiles, both as a person and as experiences or sensations that are exilic, are the indigestible bits that cannot be assimilated to the nationalist framework while maintaining order and integrity. From the perspective of the nation, the exile always appears fragmentary, conspicuous, and unwieldy.

While the nation accuses the exile of being discontinuous, the presence of the exile accuses the nation of being hollow. As Walter Benjamin famously postulated, history does not follow a linear schedule, shooting through "homogeneous empty time." Instead, it is structured by historical thresholds, where humanity bursts through the mundane reproduction of systemic oppression and binds themselves to an eternal revolutionary spirit of the human condition. This reading of time, drawn from a mix of Jewish mysticism, Marxism, and exilic sentiments, accuses all linear, nationalist narratives of lying: of creating illusory ties between these fragments. However, until the community rejects the present order, these illusory linkages carry power and the right to belong is contingent on their acceptance.

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<sup>155</sup> Said, Edward W. 2000. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Convergences; Convergences (Cambridge, Mass.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Page 176.

<sup>156</sup> Anderson, Benedict R. O'G. 1991. *Imagined Communities : Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Rev. and extended ed. London: Verso.

The exile, surrounded by polities with narratives they do not belong to and which trap them as either pariah or parvenu, attempt to create a new polity of their own with other rejected persons. This task demands that they connect their diverse array of fragmented belonging and discontinuous identity by manipulating their history into a national vision. They achieve this, Said writes, “by choosing to see themselves as part of a triumphant ideology or restored people. The crucial thing is that a state of exile free from this triumphant ideology – designed to reassemble an exile’s broken history into a new whole – is virtually unbearable, and impossible in today’s world.”<sup>157</sup> Without nationalism, or some “triumphant ideology,” the former exiles lack an assurance of belonging and mutuality. The project of building a community of exiles holds both great liability and great opportunity. On one hand, the coming together of desperate and dissonant voices, coming together to build an intersubjective life, is the basis of politics. On the other hand, the task of building an exilic state comes only out of disconnection and involuntary separation from the preexisting world. In response, even at its most successful, exile is a jealous state:

What you achieve is precisely what you have no wish to share, and it is in the drawing of lines around you and your compatriots that the least attractive aspects of being in exile emerge: an exaggerated sense of group solidarity, and a passionate hostility to outsiders, even those who may in fact be in the same predicament as you. What could be more intransigent than the conflict between Zionist Jews and Arab Palestinians? Palestinians feel that they have been turned into exile by the proverbial people of exile, the Jews. But the Palestinians also know that their own sense of national identity has been nourished in the exile milieu, where everyone not a blood-brother or sister is an enemy, where every sympathizer is an agent of some unfriendly power, where the slightest deviation from the accepted group line is an act of the rankest treachery and disloyalty. Perhaps this is the most extraordinary of exile’s fates: to have been exiled by exiles... It is as if the reconstructed Jewish experience, as represented by Israel and

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<sup>157</sup> Said, Edward W. 2000. *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*. Convergences; Convergences (Cambridge, Mass.). Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. Page 177.

modern Zionism, could not tolerate another story of dispossession and loss to exist alongside it.<sup>158</sup>

The desire for belonging, and the flight to escape one's condemnation of being unable to belong, is a cruel battle. To connect the fragments of discarded persons, a certain level of homogeneity must be introduced. This homogeneity is always hard fought and is, historically, not built on something, which is "true," from a rigorous historical perspective, but is jerry-rigged to catalyze different exilic sufferings. Zionism told lies and hid the truth to insure the verisimilitude of its narrative. The vigor with which it clung to its own illusions certainly grew from the diversity of people the project sought to include. However, Zionism's desire to produce something absolutely homogeneous, a single "New Jew," from a world of Jews prevented the minimum of heterogeneity necessary for revaluation and reconsidering the steadfastness of the project.

Within the "essential sadness" of exile, there is also the essential freedom that exile offers, not only to the exiled, but also to the world. Through rejection from the known order and the need to build new communities from nothing but the mutuality of their own rejection, exiles can illuminate new orders and expand the limits of the possible. Searching for the power that inhabits exile, Said writes:

I speak of exile not as a privilege, but as an *alternative* to the mass institutions that dominate modern life. Exile is not, after all, a matter of choice: you are born into it, or it happens to you. But, provided that the exile refuses to sit on the sidelines nursing a wound, there are things to be learned: he or she must cultivate a scrupulous (not indignant or sulky) subjectivity...seeing "the entire world as a foreign land" make possible originality of vision. 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.

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<sup>158</sup> Ibid. 178.

The exile is forced to embrace the foreign. Their new identity is always between “us” and “outsider,” in a way that forces the exile to attempt to render the two harmonically. Thus, the exile never fully belongs to each group and the successes of the exile engender the successful synthesis between the dissonant groups.

This embodied synthesis is a recognizable piece of the survival and creative force of the Jewish people. In a controversial but widely respected essay, Isaac Deutscher identifies this historical Jewish subgroup as, “non-Jewish Jews.” He explores this position through the parable of Rabbi Meir, one of the major sages in the Mishnah, and Elisha Ben Abuyah, a heretic referred to as Acher “the Other One” Like any heretic, ben Abuyah was not born a stranger. He was born into a family of wealth in Jerusalem and placed on the path to Jewish scholarship, leaving this path for beliefs considered heretical. Rabbi Meir, a voice of Mosaic orthodoxy, took lessons from Abuyah. On the Sabbath, Meir would walk alongside Abuyah who, against the rules of the Sabbath, rode a donkey. They would recite, teach, and argue, until they reached the ritual boundary delineating how far Jews could travel of the sacred day. At this point, Abuyah would continue beyond the boundary while Rabbi Meir would return home. Deutscher recounts this bit of scripture to argue that, “the Jewish heretic who transcends Jewry belongs to a Jewish tradition.”<sup>159</sup>

Deutscher associates this character of the “Other One” with the great Jewish thinkers that shaped the world: Spinoza, Marx, Heine, Rosa Luxemburg, Walter Benjamin, Freud, Arendt, and so on. The genesis of Jewish greatness, Deutscher concludes, is the product of the exilic position:

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<sup>159</sup> Deutscher, Isaac, and Tamara Deutscher. 1968. *The Non-Jewish Jew and Other Essays*. London: Oxford U.P. Page 26.

I do not believe in the exclusive genius of any race. Yet I think that in some ways they were very Jewish indeed. They had in themselves something of the quintessence of Jewish life and of the Jewish intellect. They were a priori exceptional in that as Jews they dwelt on the borderlines of various civilizations, religions and national cultures. They were born and brought up on the borderlines of various epochs. Their mind matured where the most diverse cultural influences crossed and fertilized each other. They lived on the margins and nooks of respective nations. Each of them was in society and yet not in it, of it and yet not of it. It was this that enabled them to rise in thought above their societies, above their nations, above their times and their generations, and to strike out mentally into wide new horizons and far into the future.<sup>160</sup>

Like Said claims about exile, the Jewish genius is essentially musical. They create harmonies between disparate times and places, peoples and cultures. From this thesis, Deutscher makes two claims: these harmonies are always revolutionary, and therefore always despised by those invested in power, and that this means that the Jew must embrace their exilic character to serve as a permanently revolutionary figure working toward universal human emancipation. The history of the Jew becomes the history of the heretic, with all the lack of protection, scapegoating, and persecution that figure entails.

Deutscher's uncompassionate, totalizing sentence that Jews must accept their duty of perennial dissent and persecution is odds with his earlier working of the non-Jewish Jew as a tradition within Judaism. Abuyah, the boundary-crossing heretic, functions within the Jewish community through his interaction with Rabbi Meir, the official, public figure. From different perspectives, the two live with one foot in heresy and one in distinct communities. On the contrary, the Jewish geniuses Deutscher describes engage in discourses with public figures analogous to Meir, but outside of the Jewish community. His vision of Jewish genius, as the embodiment of permanent revolution lacks the stability of any sort of Jewish belonging. Politically, the figure of the non-Jewish Jew

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<sup>160</sup> Ibid. Page 27.

who is at home no where and whose thought uproots the basis of reality is nearly opposite to the Zionist's New Jew, fully at home in Israel and affirming the truths of colonialism and Eurocentrism. The argument Said delivers to both Deutscher and Zionism is that there can be a society that exists between the two polar positions: to build a nation out of exile. In other words, the power of Deutscher's heretic comes from its critical vantage point, which is only partially fueled by the recognition that it is privy to persecution.

### **7.3 The Mosaic Nation**

As Jewish and non-Jewish thinkers have questioned the benefits and challenges of belonging and exile for the Jewish people, the first founding of the Jewish nation out of exiles, under Moses, has developed an eminent place as a point of reflection. First, in *Moses and Monotheism*, Sigmund Freud employs psychoanalytic theory to explore the Exodus story, in turn juxtaposing the biblical foundation of Israel to the Zionist movement, which he by and large supported. Since its publication, the archeology Freud based his analysis upon has been determined to be either partial, or false. However, as Edward Said controversially examined in *Freud and the Non-European*, the dilemmas Freud identified between the Jewish history of exile and contemporary belonging are still the most pertinent.

Freud's argument begins by asserting that Moses, the founder of Judaism and the liberator of the Jewish people was himself Egyptian and that the legal system and religion he brought to the Jewish people were derived from Egyptian monotheism. At the time of liberation, the Jewish people worshiped a variety of polytheistic deities. Moses unites the Jewish people under one universal God, who commands them, "You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God redeemed you; therefore I



command you this today. (Deut 15:15)” By introducing and enforcing Egyptian Monotheism to the Jewish exiles, Moses creates the Jewish nation out of the Jewish people and Egyptian religion. To achieve this task, Moses is forced to negate any direct experiences the Jewish people have claimed to have with their deities. As a result, Moses negates, or at least subverts, the sensual and spiritual aspects of both Jewish tradition and Egyptian religion and creates a God who is primarily experienced internally through intellectuality. This creation of an intellectual God who cannot be seen nor depicted creates the platform for modern science, reason, and ethics. Importantly, this superiority leads to local domination in Israel and the ability to dominate the indigenous Canaanite populations.

After the historical evidence emerges which disconnected Freud’s interpretation from any notion of scientific truth, Edward Said was able to treat this text as an exegesis of Jewish ingenuity and belonging. For Said, Freud’s mission is clearly to impose colonial fantasies on biblical narratives. The Exodus story becomes the creation of the Occident from the Orient. Moses’s synthesis of Judaism from the religious and legal frameworks of the Arab slaves and imperial Egypt creates the civilizational division between East and West. On one hand, the rise of modern anti-Semitism from the roots of European imperialism, “caused him [Freud] to protectively to huddle the Jews inside, so the speak, the sheltering realm of the European.”<sup>161</sup> On the other hand, his approach to Jewish identity ran against the foundational assumptions of Zionism. “Freud mobilized the non-European past in order to undermine any doctrinal attempt that might be made to put Jewish identity on a sound foundational basis, whether religious or secular.”<sup>162</sup>

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<sup>161</sup> Said, Edward W., and Jacqueline. Rose. 2003. *Freud and the Non-European*. London: Verso. Page 40.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid. Page 45.

Said connects Freud's attempt to identify the, "unhoused," powerfully creative character of the Moses with the marginalized, uprooting character of Deutscher's "non-Jewish Jew." They both place the dynamism and intersubjectivity of exile at the center of civilization and the tidal-changes in human history. Deutscher illustrates this by identifying the heretic as the generative character in much of Jewish thought. Freud highlights this by showing that the basis for Jewish civilization derives from heterogeneous, unsettled roots. Said writes:

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. Freud's symbol of those limits was that the founder of Jewish identity was himself a non-European Egyptian. In other words, identity cannot be thought or worked through itself alone; it cannot constitute or even imagine itself without that radical originary break or flaw which will not be repressed, because Moses was Egyptian, and therefore always outside the identity inside which so many have stood, and suffered – and later, perhaps, even triumphed. The strength of this thought is, I believe, that it can be articulated in and speak to other besieged identities as well – not through dispensing palliatives such as tolerance and compassion but, rather, by attending to it 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. This is a necessary psychological experience, Freud says, but the problem is that he doesn't give any indication of how long it must be tolerated or whether, properly speaking, it has a real history – history being always that which comes after and, all too often, either overrides or represses the flaw.<sup>163</sup>

Said's point is deeply Arendtean. History can rarely tell us stories with the full spectrum of intersubjective relationships. Instead, we imagine using archetypal and solid subjectivities, which, in reality, never actually exist as solid whole, are always changing,

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<sup>163</sup> Ibid. 54-55.

and always inextricable from one another. The creative, self-organizing force Arendt calls “political action,” and what Said represents in the *longue durée* as a “radical originary break or flaw,” is always obscured and rarely, if ever, able to appear in history, though it is the driving force of history.

Freud’s argument that Moses invented the Western tradition is false, but his interpretation of the Exodus story to reach the historical and political conclusion Said expanded upon still, if not more than before, ring true. The ancient land of Canaan laid at the edge of the many empires of the Fertile Crescent, most famously the Egyptian, Mesopotamian, Assyrian, and Phoenician. The hilly terrain of the land inhibited the use of the war chariot, which served as the technological basis for imperial military supremacy. As a consequence, Canaan was not only the home of indigenous tribes that resisted imperial incorporation, but also the destination of many escaped slave populations. As a result, Canaan contained the religious thought and narratives of a many of the regional powers, but distinctly interpreted from the perspective of exiled slaves. The religion Moses delivered to the Hebrews existed as fragments of these imperial religions and exilic memories, along with the indigenous religion and social structure.

Freud’s argument that a historical, Egyptian Moses did exist and did lead a group of slaves out of Egypt is true. However, the group he led formed a small component of the future Israeli polity. Instead, Moses and the group of Egyptian slaves he lead were important in confederating the local tribes and unifying their religious positions into a more centralized system. As Anthony Ceresko writes, “this group was the element around which other groups and stories could gather; its story became the appropriate vehicle for

forging and expressing their new identity and common project.”<sup>164</sup> Thus, as Freud wrote Moses is a symbol of intersubjective synthesis, but not through the internalization of religious experience. Moses fragmented and reassembled a variety of traditions and identities to create the narrative basis for the Canaanite confederation.

The Exodus period was followed by the period of Judges, marked by violent proto-genocidal tension within the federation. Within the book of Joshua, this period appears as the ethnic cleansing of the Canaanite peoples. In reality, intratextual and archeological evidence demonstrates the incorporation of different tribal groups into the confederation and changing religious and cultural practices that affirm the integration.<sup>165</sup> The first creation of Israel did not occur through exilic people entering the land and cleaning it of its past and indigenous people. Instead, it canonized fragmentary narratives to create a public space for a confederation of diverse peoples. In particular, it created this intersubjective space by creating rituals, origin stories, and legal systems “antithetical” to the empires around them.<sup>166</sup> The story of the origins of the Israeli nation was instructive to the opposing perspectives of Freud and Said. Within the story, Freud found the means to liberate Jewish identity from the attempts of antisemites, Zionists, and orthodoxy from any unambiguous history. Building on this notion, Said critiques Freud for maintaining the Orientalist grid, even in his return to ambiguity, but emphasizes how Freud’s notion of ambiguity has universal presence and power in the genesis of any “people.” Within the historical and regional lens, the origins of the Jewish people were ambiguous and, through both their ambiguity and social relation, oppositional to the

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<sup>164</sup> Ceresko, Anthony R. 1992. *Introduction to the Old Testament : A Liberation Perspective*. Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books. Page 80.

<sup>165</sup> Ibid. 97-107.

<sup>166</sup> Ibid. Page 79.

imperial forces around them. Said's comparison that exile and nationalism have a relationship analogous to the master-slave dialectic, is fully realized in the relationship between the recently liberated biblical Israelite and the surrounding empires. Like a mosaic, the Jews built a nation out of fragments and discards. Through reformulation and reorganization, distinct pieces become a new whole.

#### **7.4 Glocalization and the Crisis of the Exilic Dialectic**

This tension between the exile and nation has been intensified by the contemporary phenomena social theorist term, "glocalization." Best defined by Roland Robertson as a rejection of reckless assumptions about the teleological homogenization of the world through globalization, glocalization refers to coterminous processes of homogenization and heterogenization.<sup>167</sup> These processes are "complimentary and interpenetrative," simultaneously spreading characteristically local elements around the globe, and localizing global and impersonal imperatives. On one hand this appears as the expansion of Weber's iron cage of bureaucracy, the creation of a "McWorld" with more productive and expedited markets and more generic and universal products. On the other hand, within each locale global products, peoples, and culture heterogenize the landscape, demanding hybridization and rearticulating community inclusion and exclusion with reference to the newcomers.

As a result of glocalization, the traditional taxonomies that defined belonging are threatened, challenging persons who assumed their mode of belonging was not questionable. Meanwhile, the development of transportation and communication technologies, alongside the centralization of wealth and urbanization of the world's

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<sup>167</sup> Featherstone, Mike., Scott. Lash, and Roland. Robertson. 1995. *Global Modernities*. Theory, culture & society; Theory, culture & society (Unnumbered). London: Sage Publications. Page 40.

population, has created conditions of human migration with increasing populations that are, to some extent, exilic. While the clarity of the distinction between nation and exile have decreased in clarity, the dialectic relationship remains and the tension of the contradiction increases. The right to have rights applies to fewer people. Neoliberal political sensibilities determine that even persons with citizenship, the formal declaration of inclusion within a polity, lack belonging unless they can prove their own economic productivity.<sup>168</sup> While many people do not feel the effects of neoliberalism as a recognizable form of exile, neoliberal politics inherently weaken the bond between the individual and communal belonging, creating the pervading sense a looming potential to not belong and that their membership is precarious.<sup>169</sup> Glocalization and neoliberalization have not only reduced the right to belong, but also heterogenized the experience of not belonging.

As Enzo Traverso argues in *The End of Jewish Modernity*, these paradigmatic changes have reframed internal and external discourses on Jewish belonging. Within the last century, “the striking features of the Jewish diaspora – mobility, urbanity, textuality, extraterritoriality – have extended to the globalized world, normalizing the minority that formerly embodied them.”<sup>170</sup> Within the diasporic context, Jewishness was conceived through a Jewish relation to the state and hegemonic community. As a result, “its modalities of existence very often preserved a religious anchorage and expressed a specific demographic dynamic; they were inscribed in transnational economic networks

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<sup>168</sup> Brown, Wendy. 2015. *Undoing the Demos : Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution*. 1. ed. Near futures. New York, NY u.a.: MIT Press.

<sup>169</sup> Standing, Guy. 2011. *The Precariat : The New Dangerous Class*. London: Bloomsbury Academic.

<sup>170</sup> Traverso, Enzo, and David Fernbach. 2016. *The End of Jewish Modernity*. London: Pluto Press. Page 3.

and shared in a wide movement of European, even international, cultural transfer.”<sup>171</sup>

This system of community, survival, and hybridization achieved two results. First, it identified Jews as having a different relationship to the imagined homogeneity of the national community, which was used to depict the Jew as paradigmatically duplicitous and socially unclassifiable. Secondly, it formed the structural basis for Jewish cosmopolitanism, embodied by Deutscher’s non-Jewish Jews.

By excavating the structural connection between globalization and Jewish cosmopolitanism, Traverso argues that the Zionist worldview only became imaginable through globalization.<sup>172</sup> The “ingathering of exiles” only became a destiny once Jews throughout Europe could communicate, travel, and publish throughout continental Jewish networks, which allowed for the development of a Jewish imagined community. The argument lacks the necessary evidence to argue this conclusively. However, by viewing Zionism within Jewish history as the rejection of Jewish cosmopolitanism, Traverso can describe Jewish nationalism as a *sui generis* phenomenon while the weight of Jewish history posits a large anti-Zionist group of Jewish cosmopolitanism. In accordance, the success of Zionism not only raises the question, “what future for Palestinians?” but also, “what future for Jewish cosmopolitanism?” Simultaneously, as Traverso and Said concur, globalization pluralizes Jewish cosmopolitanism. The structural base that produced the type of thought, belief, and action that were characteristically Jewish, now include a cadre of persons from different religious and ethnic groups.

## **7.5 The Jewish-Palestinian: Global Cosmopolitan**

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<sup>171</sup> Ibid. Page 23.

<sup>172</sup> Ibid. Page 15.

The inextricable relationship between the future of Palestine and future of Jewish cosmopolitanism constitutes the most fertile place to cultivate obligations and compassion between Israeli Jews and Palestinians for a bi-national arrangement. The obstacle preventing this from taking any life of its own is the *ressentiment* between the Jew and the Arab. *Ressentiment*, as famously defined by Nietzsche, argues that the genesis of problems that prevent action and produce stasis is, “when resentment itself turns creative and gives birth to values: the *ressentiment* of those beings who, denied the proper response of action compensate for it only with imaginary revenge.”<sup>173</sup> For all his flaws, Nietzsche’s sublimation of suffering pervades the Israel-Palestine conflict. No ethos of exilic comradeship can flourish without overcoming the fear and reproducing it through forcing others to suffer. Contrapuntally, no just future can be reached without reviving the right to remember a communal and distinct past.

Nietzsche offers half a solution to this dual problem that the stasis can only be solved through both remembering and forgetting:

Everywhere that justice is practiced and maintained, the stronger power can be seen looking for means of putting an end to the senseless ravages of *ressentiment* amongst those inferior to it (whether groups of individuals), partly by lifting the object of *ressentiment* out of the hands of revenge, partly by substituting, for revenge, a struggle against the enemies of peace and order, partly by working out compensation, suggesting, sometimes enforcing it, and partly by promoting certain equivalences for wrongs into a norm which *ressentiment*, from now on, has to take into account.<sup>174</sup>

The suffering of Palestinians and Jews does not need to be forgotten. It needs to be reevaluated from positions of mutuality and affinity that do not exist yet, but which can be found in the history of Jewish cosmopolitanism, Arab anti-Eurocentrism, and exile.

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<sup>173</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and Carol Diethe. 2007. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 20.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid. Page 49.



In practice, this Nietzschean idea appears as a “politics of becoming” As Connolly writes, “to attend to the politics of becoming is to modify the cultural balance between being and becoming without attempting the impossible, self-defeating task of dissolving solid formations altogether.”<sup>175</sup> To create an intersubjective sphere where Jews and Palestinians, not only have access to the means of narration, but also engage to create new and vital relationships, both groups must understand that “Jew” and “Palestinian” are ambiguous and overlapping identity. The need to cohabitate means that the intersecting perspective must be adopted. Again, following Nietzsche, this is achieved through a mutual reading of suffering. “Indeed, becoming often proceeds from inchoate suffering and hopes that are not crisply defined until a new identity has been forged though which to measure those injuries retrospectively.”<sup>176</sup> The Holocaust, the Nakba, and the suffering of settler colonialism and its resistance must be understood through a shared lens. This lens must be forged to illuminate the place of these two people in the, “struggle against the enemies of peace and order.”<sup>177</sup>

When Gil Z. Hochberg decided to commemorate the late Edward Said, he turned to an interview with Ari Shavit in Haaretz. Famously, Said concluded:

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.

The comment synthesized Said’s uncompromising commitment to Palestinian liberation with his compassion and sorrow for the Jewish people. Yet if the category of “Jewish-

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<sup>175</sup> Connolly, William E. 1999. *Why I Am Not a Secularist*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. Page 57.

<sup>176</sup> Ibid.

<sup>177</sup> Nietzsche, Friedrich Wilhelm, Keith Ansell-Pearson, and Carol Diethe. 2007. *On the Genealogy of Morality*. Cambridge texts in the history of political thought. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. Page 49.

Palestinian” became the tool to amalgamate and compile a history of the two people, one would find Said in grand company with world historic achievements in their résumé. This category, in Said’s use synonymous with a “non-Jewish Jew,” must become the historical organization of two peoples for Israel to return to politics. Jews and Palestinians must remember their forgotten mutual history. The two groups demand the use of land as their means of narration. To share it, they must recognize that the same moments, inseparable from the land and a sense of place, belong to one another. As Hochberg’s testimony concluded, in a paragraph that could have come from Arendt’s reflection on the life of Walter Benjamin:

If memory is never fully or only one’s own, for it always necessitates others...we can better understand Said’s insistence on memory as the site of ethics and politics: a means for rethinking identity in terms of an encounter with alterity, a reminder of the presence of the other *within* the self. To continue to speak about the rivalry between the Israeli Jews and the Palestinians in terms of a battle of memories between the two enclosed, antagonistic, and independent narratives of loss is to overlook or forget the central role the other plays (as a psychic factor) in the becoming of the self. It is against this forgetting that Said repeatedly attempts to open the political discourse to include not only the current reality in which the two people already appear and function as two radically separate historical entities with opposed political interests but also the “forgotten memory of their becoming by means of repressed identification and enforced separation.”<sup>178</sup>

Just as politics implies the inescapability of the other, cohabitation demands the intersecting narratives of sameness and difference. Israeli and Palestinian identities, forged from the necessities and contradictions of the present are made from shared historical material. Different present necessities demand the reinterpretation of these identities. The revolutionary project of Palestinian liberation and non-Jewish Judaism

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<sup>178</sup> Hochberg, G. Z. 2006. "Edward Said: "The Last Jewish Intellectual": On Identity, Alterity, and the Politics of Memory." *SOCIAL TEXT* 87: 59.

entail the forceful admission of the Jewish-Palestinian into the Israeli sphere of appearance.

## **7.6 Jewish Zen: The Conscious Pariah in the Age of Globalization**

Unlike the principle of mutual exclusion, which Fanon places at the center of the relationship between colonized and colonizer, Jews and Palestinians can occupy a single intersubjective space. If one were to remove Zionist colonial ambition and the disambiguating mandates of European nationalism, Jewish immigration to Palestine would not be left without reason, but would appear like a refugee movement. Jewish marginality within Europe became untenable, either temporarily or permanently, for many Jews and they needed to find a place for sustainable belonging. Meanwhile, Palestinians also suffer the consequences of marginality and an inability to lodge their intersecting narratives within a global public. While the majority of Palestinian marginality comes from Jewish domination, Arabs across the globe are marginalized. Zionism itself is inextricable from marginalization of Arabs through colonialism, world capitalism, and Orientalism.

Through their destructive relation to each other, Israelis and Palestinians share similar relations to world systems that produce each group's historical superfluity. Returning to Arendt's placement of the Jew, the exile, and the refugee between the character of the Pariah and Parvenu, Zionism has chosen the strict path of the Parvenu, fighting to become included in the acknowledged order. Israel can develop inclusive stability by embracing the Jewish history of exclusion and marginality. However, following Arendt's response to Gershom Scholem, if the Jew understands their relation as a product of their beliefs, not by virtue of birth, the Pariah community can extend beyond

the ethnic identity. When Bernard Lazare, the first to use the term, insisted that Jews understand the world around them through the lens of the conscious pariah, he referred to their local European communities in which the Jew epitomized the face of the other. Now that the basis for Jewish exceptionalism are less founded, as antisemitism has decreased in the major global powers, the perspective of the conscious pariah become universal and global. The Zionist project's insistence that the Jews need a place to have the right to have rights now extends to the global community of refugees, dissenters, and exiles.

To venture toward more concrete terms, this would be conceived as Israel using its settlement building and military strength to house persons confronted with placelessness in the global system. Not only would this mean offering Palestinians a place in the system, it would also include extending the protections the Jews lacked so recently lacked to dispossessed persons at a regional level, and becoming a center for exilic thinking around the globe. This seems like an Israel that could not be further from the contemporary state. Confronted with the Syrian civil war, one of the bloodiest and merciless wars of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, Israel refused to accept any refugees. In the rise of the far right, antisemitic groups celebrate Zionism and Israeli militarism for their acceptance of xenophobia in military and social institutions.

However unimaginable, this vision of Israel as the global center of exilic culture is neither utopian nor arbitrary. In modernity, Jews have been confronted with their own ambiguity. Zionism has been a project of rejecting that ambiguity by hiding it in the forests of the JNF and the memorials of the Holocaust. This image of exilic Israel embodies the embrace of this ambiguity as opposed to its rejection. It is the bringing of the “forgotten memories” of both Jewishness and Palestinianness into the public. Equally,

if not more true than the Zionist solution, the embrace of exile is the alternative and the undoing of Zionism. By offering Jews the freedom to not refine every action into an unequivocal affirmation of recognizable place in the world, it brings to light the contradictions of the Zionist project. Without a serious reevaluation of Zionism to address these failures, not only will the project become unsustainable, but it will internally splinter and alienate global Jewry, and create new bases for anti-Jewish movements. Crisis is coming for Zionism. If the Jewish people do not take into account the moments we shunned alternatives to our contemporary untenable position, the result will be the self-destructive xenophobia that served as the onus for the project itself.

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