

I hereby declare that the work presented in this thesis is my own.

Lisa Vinebaum

**Body of the Nation – Corporeality, Territory, Performance:  
Palestine and Israel**

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Submitted for the PhD in Art

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## **Abstract**

The thesis is rooted in the study of the complicated relationships between the body and territory – and by extension, the body and the nation – in Palestine and Israel. This framework allows me to elaborate a more detailed study of the Palestinian suicide bomber, considered in relation to the occupation of Palestinian-inhabited territory in the West Bank and Gaza. I draw on examples from visual culture in which the deceased suicide bomber is commemorated as a martyr, in this way presenting an idealized image of the Palestinian nation. I argue that there is a relationship between territory, the "body" of the nation, and the body of the suicide bomber/martyr, and one in which ideals of self-sacrifice and resistance are performed by the martyr. In so doing I theorize the performance of martyrdom, the staging of the self as a martyr by the suicide bomber to be, as a type of subject formation under occupation, and as the enactment of a resistant subjectivity. This study asserts that the actions of the Palestinian suicide bomber are intentional and linked to territorial encroachment on Palestinian lands. In so doing it positions itself in opposition to a majority of the research literature on the subject. This research makes an innovative contribution to the study of Palestinian martyrdom by removing the suicide bomber from its primary field of study in the West, terrorism and security studies, and situating it within the realm of performance studies. It proposes new understandings of the Palestinian suicide bomber, considered in terms of corporeality, performance, intentionality and subjectivity.

Additionally the thesis considers performance as a research methodology. The elaboration of my theoretical propositions emerged in part through performance, the staging of myself in a mimetic attempt to put myself in the place of the Palestinian martyr. Through performance I "act out" material under consideration in the thesis while also positioning myself in relation to it. In this way I insert myself into the thesis as a critical and positioned subject.

The notion of the positioned subject is also central to the practice element, where I use performance to position myself outside of mainstream North American Jewish identity. I perform various Others of my own Jewish identity, in this way asserting a resistant subjectivity.

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## **Introduction**

This research is centrally concerned with relationships between the body and territory – and by extension, the body and the nation – in Palestine and Israel. It is also centrally concerned with the phenomenon of the Palestinian suicide bomber, and it uses a study of the relationships between the body and territory in Palestine and Israel as a larger theoretical framework of analysis within which to consider the Palestinian suicide bomber.

In the case of the latter nation, Israel, "The national territory becomes equivalent to the personal body" (Weiss 2002-b p.38). The Jewish national territory – the state of Israel – and the Jewish personal body evolved and continue to evolve in a mutually constitutive relationship: the Zionist settlers to Palestine reconfigured the body of the European Diaspora Jew as a rooted, healthy, strong and powerful body, in Palestine. And they simultaneously reconfigured "empty" land (Troen 2003, Alon 1971, Shulman 1979, Avneri 1984) in Palestine into Jewish land – land that in 1948 became the state of Israel.

The former nation, Palestine, has not yet succeeded in creating a national territory in internationally recognized terms, that is, of the nation state. What's more, much of the land that might constitute a Palestinian state now belongs to or is occupied by another nation, Israel. Consequently, the Palestinian national territory cannot be said to be equivalent to the personal body. Nonetheless, relationships between the Palestinian body and territory may be established. Notably, the Palestinian body has been invoked

as a metaphor, in cultural representations and political discourse, for the Palestinian nation; for the Palestinian homeland lost in 1948 with the creation of Israel; and for a desired Palestinian state. The body has also been central to Palestinian resistance to Jewish territorial encroachment (that is, by Jews onto Palestinian lands) and occupation<sup>1</sup>. This study considers the Palestinian body in a relationship to Jewish encroachment onto Palestinian territory, and as a locus of resistance in the struggle to reclaim this land as national territory for a sovereign Palestinian state.

Because territory in historic Palestine lies at the center of two competing claims to it as national territory, it may be considered *contested* territory. Since the turn of the 20th century, and since 1948 in particular, only one nation – Israel – has succeeded in asserting control over this territory. Accordingly, this research pays particular attention to the spatial practices – notably settlement construction – used by the Zionist settlers to Palestine, and after 1948 by Israelis, to assert control over land in Palestine and to wrest it away from Palestinians. The thesis also considers Palestinian resistance to these practices, from the early part of the 20th century to the present. In particular, it connects Israeli spatial practices in the West Bank and Gaza to the exploding body of the Palestinian suicide bomber, deployed as a weapon of resistance since 1993.

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<sup>1</sup> The problematics of the term "Jewish" in this context are discussed on page 50.

The latter half of the thesis focuses on the Palestinian suicide bomber or *istishhadi*, one who sacrifices her or his life in an act of suicide bombing or martyrdom operation. I do not in any way condone Palestinian acts of suicide bombing. However I do seek to theorize them differently than a majority of the research literature consulted. The present study proposes new understandings of the *istishhadi*, considered in terms of corporeality, performance, intentionality and subjectivity – and in a relationship to a history of Jewish control asserted over Palestinian inhabited territory extending back to the arrival of the first Zionist settlers to Palestine in the 1880s.

Chapter 1 explores relationships – some metaphorical and some not – between the Palestinian body and territory in historic Palestine between approximately 1920 and 1993. It examines the body as a metaphor for the loss of the homeland after 1948. It also considers the body as a locus of Palestinian resistance going back to the 1920s. This chapter examines male bodies associated with Palestinian resistance but also, self-sacrifice for the land and for the nation of Palestine: the martyr of the 1920s and 1930s, the *fida'i* (guerilla fighter) of the 1960s and 1970s, and the *shab* (young man) of the first intifada from 1987 to 1993. This chapter sets the stage for my analysis of the *istishhadi* in the latter half of the thesis, for it locates the Palestinian suicide bomber within a larger historical trajectory of Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice in response to Jewish encroachment onto Palestinian lands.

Chapter 2 focuses on the reinvention of the European Jewish body in historic Palestine and by extension, in a

relationship to control asserted by Jews over territory there. This chapter weaves together scholarship from two separate but highly theorized fields: investigations into the Jewish body, and the study of Jewish spatial practices in historic Palestine – later Israel and the occupied West Bank and Gaza. It examines notions of the ideal (strong and powerful) Jewish body together with notions of the ideal (uniquely Jewish) Jewish land at various points since the 1880s. It connects both of these ideals to spatial practices, notably the construction of separate and exclusively Jewish settlements, used to assert Jewish control over territory – practices that have also resulted in the deterritorialization and spatial containment of Palestinians (Weizman 2007, Massad 2006, Pappé 2002-a, 2002-b, Masalha 1992).

In Chapter 3, I turn my attention to the Palestinian suicide bomber, considered in terms of corporeality and representation in visual culture. This chapter identifies some of the effects of the Israeli occupation on the Palestinian body – what I term corporeal effects. Notably, Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement across territory serve to spatially confine and contain the Palestinian body, and in so doing they subject the body to a lack of adequate health care and sustenance, to violence, and increasingly, to death. This chapter considers the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber as a weapon of resistance deployed against the Israeli occupation and against Israel. It examines commemorative visual imagery of the *istishhadi* created and disseminated by the deploying organizations, images that serve as a reminder of the body's destructive potential. In the absence and ongoing deferral of Palestinian statehood,

these images also provide an idealized image of the Palestinian nation as a strong and powerful one, the same as Israel.

The focus of Chapter 4 is on performance, intentionality, and subjectivity. Contra much of the research literature, this chapter asserts that *istishhadi's* act of self-sacrifice is intentional and inextricably linked to Israel's occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. And, following the work of Farhad Khosrokhavar (2005), it considers the *istishhadi's* self-sacrifice as being linked to subject formation. First, Palestinian subjectivity in the West Bank and Gaza is considered in a relationship to the harsh restrictions on Palestinian movement imposed by Israel since the start of the second *intifada* in 2000. These are so severe that they wrest control over daily life away from Palestinians under occupation, subjecting them to Israeli sovereign power (Mbembe 2003), the power over life and death. This impacts Palestinian subjectivity to such an extent that it produces Palestinians as non-subjects (Butler 1993, Collin 2004). This chapter theorizes the performance of Palestinian martyrdom – the martyr's staging of self as a martyr prior to being deployed and with a view to creating commemorative visual imagery – as a response to Israeli constraints on Palestinian subjectivity in the Occupied Territories. The *istishhadi's* performance constitutes a type of subject formation: through performance the martyr enacts a subjectivity denied by the brutality of the Occupation, the status of the subject itself. Through performance, the martyr also enacts a resistant subjectivity, and one that refuses the status of the non-subject.

## **Methodology**

The complexities of naming underscore the contested nature of the subject matter under study: to decide what to call the individual who dies while exploding her or his own body, involves an act of authorial positioning. To use the term suicide bomber rather than suicide terrorist, to use the term *istishhadi* rather than homicide killer, to use the term martyrdom rather than suicide, reveals something about the author's position not only in relation to the subject matter but also, to the research literature on the subject.

Much of the literature about Palestinian suicide bombers is generated within the field of security and terrorism studies (Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center and 2006, Israel Information Center 2004, Bukay 2008, Berko 2007, Shay 2004, Bloom 2003, 2004 and 2005, Kimhi and Even 2003, Davis 2002, Esposito 2002, Ganor 2000, and Paz 2000), and it seeks to explain the actions of the Palestinian suicide bomber within the context of global terrorism and the prevention thereof. This material proposes various religious, organizational, personal and psychological motivations for Palestinian acts of suicide bombing, often focusing on religious motivations as the primary impetus for such acts. In so doing the literature downplays or outright denies much in the way of intentionality on the part of the *istishhadi*. Much of this literature fails to adequately – if at all – consider the Israeli occupation as a primary motivating factor for Palestinian suicide bombers. Nor does it acknowledge the profound attachment of Palestinians to the land of Palestine.

What's more, this literature generally fails to understand the suicide bomber's actions as being linked to a history of increasing Jewish control asserted over Palestinian land since the late 19th century, and particularly so since 1967 (Abufarha 2009, Slater 2009, Whitehead and Abufarha 2008, Asad 2007, Allen 2006-c, Hasso 2005, Hage 2003, Mbembe 2003). In line with the work of these scholars, the present study considers the *istishhadi*'s actions to be intentional acts of resistance primarily and inextricably linked to a history of Jewish encroachment on, and occupation of, Palestinian lands.

In focusing on territorial control in Palestine and Israel, the thesis cites investigations by Palestinian and Israeli historians and scholars and in particular, those who are unflinchingly critical of the spatial objectives and practices of the Zionist movement in historic Palestine, and of subsequent Israeli governments after 1948. In addition to those cited in the paragraph above, scholarly studies by historians Nur Masalha, Ilan Pappé, Samih Farsoun and Naseer Hasan Aruri, Rashid Khalidi, Walid Khalidi, Sami Hadawi, and Idith Zertel and Akiva Eldar have informed this research, as have those of political theorist Joseph Massad, architect Eyal Weizman and geographer Oren Yiftachel.

The primary objective of this study is to generate a new understanding of the Palestinian suicide bomber. A secondary goal of this research is to engage in a substantial critique of Jewish spatial practices in historic Palestine, later the state of Israel and the West Bank and Gaza. It is my long-held belief that the spatial reconfiguration and occupation of Palestinian land, by Jews, was one of the cruelest travesties of the 20th century and now, the 21st. However it

was not until I was completing the very final revisions to the thesis that I realized that the thesis is motivated in part by a personal desire to engage a different history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict over contested territory than the one I had been taught growing up, and this history is discussed in Chapter 2: the arrival of the Zionist settlers to an empty land awaiting their return from *galut* or exile, and the miraculous transformation of a backward and barren land into a lush and modern Jewish homeland. This account elides Palestinians and it fails to acknowledge the impact of the Jewish nation building project on the Palestinian nation.

The thesis seeks to foreground a connection between acts of Palestinian suicide bombing and Jewish spatial practices in Palestine. It also seeks to theorize acts of suicide bombing using a framework that considers corporeality, performance, intentionality and subjectivity. In so doing this study removes the Palestinian suicide bomber from its primary field of investigation in the West, terrorism and security studies – and situates it within the realms of performance studies and contemporary philosophy. Accordingly it draws importantly upon scholarship in these two disciplines, and in particular, on the work of Marvin Carlson, Amelia Jones, Judith Butler, Michel Foucault, and Elizabeth Grosz. Attempting to theorize the Palestinian suicide bomber outside of conventional scholarship on the subject necessitated an interdisciplinary approach. As such, this research also draws upon scholarship in sociology and anthropology, visual cultures, literary criticism, and art history. It draws importantly on scholarly investigations by theorists Nasser Abufarha, Farhad

Khosrokhavar, Amal Amireh, Tina Sherwell, and Mahmoud Abu Hashhash.

Attempting to arrive at a new understanding of the Palestinian suicide bomber also required the elaboration of an innovative research framework. My methodology fuses academic research with studio investigations in the form of performance. The path through the material that comprises the thesis emerged through a rigorous yet open-ended process guided by the demands and findings of my own performance practice.

Accordingly, this research uses performance as a research methodology. For a period of over two years, from June 2004 to June 2006, I staged myself in response to some of the material under study, and the commemorative posters of the *istishhadi* in particular, as described in the final chapter, dealing with my performance practice. I turned to performance early on in my doctoral project, at a time when there were few scholarly alternatives to the research literature in the field of terrorism studies, and when I was profoundly uncertain as to how to decipher material under study in the thesis. The focus of my investigations at the time was motive, and I turned to performance in the hopes that I could gain new insight into why someone would possibly blow themselves up. I turned to performance in a mimetic attempt to act out material in the written element, and in an effort to put myself in the place of the Palestinian suicide bomber.

Performance required me to *physically* position myself in relation to my subject matter. The act of deliberate and intentional corporeal positioning required by performance

unexpectedly led me to consider the *istishhadi's* actions to be deliberate and intentional, and this was later substantiated by scholarly investigations (Khosrokhavar 2005, Abufarha 2009, Hafez 2006-a, Pedahzur 2005, Juergensmeyer 2003, Bloom 2003 and 2005), as explored in Chapter 4.

As well, it was through this process of performance that I came to understand the *istishhadi's* staging of her/his self, prior to deployment, *as performance*. This development led me to elaborate a theory of the performance of Palestinian martyrdom, and to use performance and performance theory as a theoretical framework in the thesis.

As well, the act of corporeal positioning required by my performance spurred me to focus my investigations more closely on the body. Together with theoretical readings that examined a relationship between the body and territory more globally (Foucault 1977, 1978, Grosz 1998, 1995), and in Palestine and Israel more specifically (Amireh 2003, Sherwell 2001, 2003, Weiss 2002-a and 2002-b), performance spurred me to focus my framework of investigation in the written element on the relationship between the body and territory.

Performance unexpectedly prompted me to position myself more assertively in relation to the material under consideration in the thesis. It also helped me to position myself more critically in relation to the research literature consulted for the thesis. Performance inspired me to insert myself into the thesis as a positioned subject, to loosely invoke Lorraine Code (1991).

Performance is also central to my studio practice. There, I use performance to position myself outside of mainstream

North American Jewish identity. I perform Others of my own Jewish identity: an Islamic suicide bomber/martyr, a Christian fundamentalist cheerleader, neo-Nazis. I perform these Others to position myself in opposition to the modes of Jewish identity formation I experienced growing up. In so doing I assert my stance as a positioned subject with respect to my own Jewish identity, and I also assert a resistant type of subjectivity.

My performance functions as a sort of bridge, between personal experience, and the subject matter of the thesis. Performance can provide a means of asserting oneself in response to forces that contour or impact one's subjectivity. This observation applies to my own performance, and it applies to the *istishhadi's* performance as I understand it. Performance provides a point of connection to the subject matter of the thesis, and it enabled me to come to a new understanding of the subject matter of the thesis, the Palestinian suicide bomber. The thesis could not have been written as it was, if not for my own performance practice.

## Chapter 1

### **The Palestinian body and Palestinian land: resistance and self-sacrifice, for Palestine – the *istishhadi* in context**

This chapter sets the stage for my analysis, in Chapters 3 and 4, of the Palestinian suicide bomber – the *istishhadi* – one who sacrifices her/himself in an act of suicide bombing<sup>1</sup>. As explored in greater detail in the latter half of the thesis, the suicide bomber's actions are linked not only to martyrdom and self-sacrifice, but also, to Palestinian resistance and to national liberation objectives.

Also in Chapters 3 and 4, the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber is considered a weapon of resistance deployed against the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza and against Israel. This chapter seeks to situate the actions of the Palestinian suicide bomber within a larger trajectory of Palestinian resistance to Jewish colonial expansion in Palestine: to Zionist (prior to 1948) and Israeli state (after 1948) encroachment onto Palestinian lands<sup>2</sup>.

The present chapter locates the Palestinian suicide bomber or *istishhadi* within a larger trajectory of Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice prior to 1993 – the date when the first Palestinian suicide bomber was deployed – going back to the 1920s. In so doing this chapter considers prior

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<sup>1</sup> While I use the terms Palestinian suicide bomber and *istishhadi* more or less interchangeably in this chapter, there are differences between them, that I explain in Chapter 3. The term *istishhadi* is used to distinguish the Palestinian suicide bomber from earlier instances of the Palestinian martyr considered in this chapter.

<sup>2</sup> Abufarha (2009) refers to the latter as Israeli state expansionism.

instances of Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice, as embodied by the martyr of the 1920s and 1930s, the guerilla fighter or *fida'i* of the 1960s and 1970s, and the young man or *shab* of the first intifada (1987 to 1993).

Chapter 2 explores a mutually constitutive relationship between the Jewish body and control asserted by Jews, over territory in historic Palestine. In contrast, the relationship between the Palestinian body and territory is not a mutually constitutive one. Rather, relationships between the Palestinian body and territory have been contoured by Jewish control asserted over Palestinian lands in historic Palestine.

The present chapter considers relationships between the Palestinian body and territory in Palestine, from the turn of the 20th century until approximately 1993. At times these relationships are metaphorical, and at times they are not. For example, the Palestinian body has been used as a metaphor for the Palestinian homeland, as well as for territorial dispossession and the loss of the homeland following the creation of the state of Israel in 1948<sup>3</sup>. The Palestinian body – and the male body in particular – has also been associated with Palestinian resistance. And while women have participated in Palestinian national resistance, the martyr, the *fida'i* and the *shab* discussed in this chapter are all

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<sup>3</sup> Whereas I outline my understanding of the body in detail in the following chapter, it would be useful to cite Elizabeth Grosz, who defines the body as "a concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles and skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organization only through their psychical and social inscription" (1998 p.43).

male<sup>4</sup>. Accordingly this chapter focuses on the Palestinian male body.

This research cites examples from Palestinian literature and material produced by Palestinian political organizations, notably the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO), as observed primarily in the investigations of key scholars Sheila Katz (1996-a and 1996-b), Amal Amireh (2003), Tina Sherwell (2001 and 2003), Joseph Massad (2006), and Laleh Khalili (2007)<sup>5</sup>.

Before proceeding, it is important to define key terminology as central to this writing.

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<sup>4</sup> For a concise overview of women's participation in the Palestinian national movement dating from 1919 through to the early part of the first intifada, see Jad 1999. For a study of the birth of a Palestinian women's movement prior to 1948, see Fleischmann 2003.

<sup>5</sup> Ami Elad-Bouskila defines modern Palestinian literature (that written from 1870 onward), as "a literature written by Palestinians" (1999 p.9) regardless of their geographical location. For a comprehensive overview of modern Palestinian literature, see in particular Jayyusi 1992. An earlier version of this chapter also included examples from Palestinian painting, however, with a shift in focus to the *male* Palestinian body, these examples became less relevant. For a comprehensive study of Palestinian art, see in particular Boullata 2009; see also Sherwell 2001, 2003, and 2006, and Ben Zvi 2006. It is somewhat disappointing to me that this thesis devotes so little attention to Palestinian art and to contemporary Palestinian art in particular. The demanding nature of the focus of my investigation – the Palestinian suicide bomber read in large part through histories of territorial occupation and domination – left little room for an in-depth engagement with Palestinian art. Instead I hope to take up this subject at a postdoctoral level, where I wish to investigate relationships between the body, territory and subjectivity in Palestinian and Israeli performance art, respectively.

## **Land in Palestine and Palestinian land**

Whereas the term territory is used in much of the thesis, the term *land* used in this chapter derives from its citation in the research literature consulted. The very term "land" in the context of Palestine is a polyvalent one.

The term land can refer to the land of *historic Palestine*. Palestinian historian Sami Hadawi (1989) observes that historic Palestine comprised 10,163 square miles, and was made up of four main areas: The coastal plains, the hill region, the Jordan Valley, and the Southern Desert or Negev. Historic Palestine was ruled by the Ottoman Empire until the end of World War I, at which time the League of Nations provided Great Britain with a mandate to administer what then became known as Mandatory Palestine, a territory that in 1948 became the State of Israel, the Kingdom of Jordan (including the Jordanian West Bank), the Gaza Strip, and a part of the Golan Heights<sup>6</sup>.

As well, the term land or Palestinian land is used to describe land upon which Palestinians once lived, in what is now the state of Israel. It may also refer to land upon which Palestinians continue to live, in the Occupied West Bank and Gaza. Because Palestinians do not actually control land, either in the state of Israel or the Occupied Territories, "land" in this chapter is often associated with being reclaimed or redeemed from foreign occupation. In using the

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<sup>6</sup> This research cannot adequately consider the events leading to the granting of the Mandate; see in particular pp.9-18 in Hadawi 1989; see also Khalidi 2006. I discuss some of the events surrounding 1948 in the following chapter.

term control in relation to territory, I refer to Israeli sociologist Baruch Kimmerling's study (1983) in which he defines control of territory as being contingent on establishing a presence on, ownership of, and sovereignty over the territory in question. While Palestinians may have a presence on land, they do not otherwise control it.

As well, the term Palestinian *homeland* is also used, to describe the land of historic Palestine as the Palestinian homeland, lost in 1948. It is the homeland to which Palestinians hope to return to, and so the Palestinian homeland is be associated with the creation of a future national homeland or nation-state.

### **The modern nation and the Palestinian nation**

The modern nation emerged in the mid-nineteenth century in Europe, as explored in detail in Gellner (1983) and Hobsbawm (1990)<sup>7</sup>. Yet as Zubaida (1978) observes, there is no systematic or scientific way of designating what a nation is. The nation is often conflated with the sovereign nation-state and with having fixed territorial boundaries and delimitations<sup>8</sup>. However, Ernst Renan, writing in 1882, conceived of the modern nation as a psychic and not

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<sup>7</sup> Etienne Balibar (1991) observes that the emergence of a system of sovereign nation-states corresponded to the development of market structures and modern capitalism at this time.

<sup>8</sup> Floya Anthias and Nira Yuval-Davis define the nation-state as "a body of institutions which are centrally organized around the intentionality of control with a given apparatus of enforcement (juridical and repressive) at its command" (1989, p.5). It is this definition which informs my understanding of the nation-state.

exclusively a geographical or territorial formation. The nation, for Renan, is "a large-scale solidarity" (1882 p.19).

From this derives the idea of a nation as a people: a community that fosters a sense of belonging, self-identification and membership (Layoun 1992). Thus it may also be said that a nation exists when a significant number of people consider themselves to form a nation (Anderson 1991). Benedict Anderson's seminal treatise (1991) considers the nation to be an imagined political community. The nation is imagined because "the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members" (Anderson 1991 p.6). It is imagined as a community because "the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship" (Anderson 1991 p.7). It is this conception of the nation, as a community whose members understand themselves as belonging to the nation, that frames my understanding of the Palestinian nation.

Nonetheless, concepts of sovereignty and the nation-state cannot be ignored in a discussion of the Palestinian nation. In Anderson's conception of nation as an imagined community, the nation is also imagined as *sovereign*, for "nations dream of being free... The gauge and emblem of this freedom is the sovereign state" (1991 p.7). The Palestinian nation has no fixed territorial borders and none of the internationally recognized markers of the nation in terms that would constitute a sovereign nation-state. This is because parts of the very territory that could constitute a sovereign Palestinian nation-state now belong to, or (in the West Bank and Gaza) are occupied by another nation, Israel. Palestinians not only conceive of themselves as a nation

considered in terms of a community (as in Layoun 1992, or a "comradeship" as in Anderson 1991), but they also share a desire to become a *sovereign nation* considered in terms of the nation-state.

The nation is also linked to concepts of the homeland. As scholars Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling observe, "Home and homeland are powerful spatial imaginaries that also articulate contemporary ideas about the nation" (2006 p.167). Further, the homeland, "whether remembered from the past, existing in the present, or yet to be created – is mapped onto national space" (Blunt and Dowling 2006 p.159). This relationship is particularly relevant to an understanding of the Palestinian nation, because the homeland of the past, and the national space of the future are one and the same: it is on at least part of the territory that once constituted the Palestinian homeland (historic Palestine) that a future Palestinian national space will occupy.

### **Nationalism and Palestinian nationalism**

For Calhoun (1997), nationalism has three dimensions, two of which are relevant to my understanding of Palestinian nationalism. For Calhoun (1997), nationalism is a discourse through which national identities are established and reinforced. As a discourse, nationalism can be considered as "a cultural understanding and rhetoric which leads people throughout the world to think and frame their aspirations in terms of the idea of nation and national identity" (1997

p.6)<sup>9</sup>. Nationalism is also defined as a project through which people attempt to advance the interests of the nation, by "pursuing in some combination (or in a historical progression) increased participation in an existing nation-state, national autonomy, independence and self-determination..." (Calhoun 1997 p.6)<sup>10</sup>.

This study is especially interested in Palestinian nationalism as a project (Calhoun 1997), understood as the pursuit of national self-determination or sovereignty, and culminating in the creation of a Palestinian nation-state.

As Palestinian scholar Rashid Khalidi (1997) asserts, Palestinian nationalism was documented as early as 1701. It first manifested as a profound attachment to Palestine as a sacred if not yet a national space, by the local Muslim population (Khalidi 1997). Under Ottoman rule beginning around 1850, an attachment to Palestine as a *territorial entity* began to develop as a result of the Ottoman empire's creation of administrative entities, of which Palestine or *filistin* was one<sup>11</sup>.

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<sup>9</sup> An extended discussion of Palestinian identity lies outside the scope of this research; see in particular Rashid Khalidi's important study (1997) on Palestinian national identity.

<sup>10</sup> Calhoun's third dimension of nationalism is evaluation, a claim to superiority for a specific nation; this aspect is not relevant to my study of Palestinian nationalism.

<sup>11</sup> For Khalidi (1997), Palestinian nationalism first manifested as a connection to Palestine as a sacred space, the "al-ard al-muqudasi" in the Koran, and to holy sites such as Jerusalem, Jericho, Nablus, Safad, Acre and Gaza. It also manifested as a fear of external encroachment on the holy or sacred land. On Palestinian nationalism under Ottoman rule and up to 1920, see also Muslih 1988.

Palestinian nationalism has been contoured by many factors, not the least of which is *Jewish nationalism* and the arrival of the Zionist settlers to historic Palestine in the 1880s. Palestinian nationalism was profoundly affected by the loss of the homeland in 1948, a date that marked the successful culmination of Jewish nationalism – also considered as a project in Calhoun's terms – in historic Palestine.

Importantly, Palestinian nationalism differs significantly from many other kinds of nationalism because it is

fundamentally informed by the desire for the lost object: the homeland. This desire is compounded by the fact that the particular nationalist landscape is not simply a space of longing, but that it once in recent history was a space in which Palestinians lived, which is now inhabited by another people (Sherwell, 2003, p.131).

### **The Palestinian nation and Palestinian self-representation**

George Mosse (1985) observes that when the modern nation emerged at the beginning of the 19th century, nations sought to provide symbols with which its people could identify. These included national flags, anthems, and national monuments. These were central to fostering a sense of collective identification with the nation.

In addition to national symbols, representational practices also perform a central role in fostering a sense of identification with the nation, "the representation of the

homeland and the people of the nation is central to national formations" (Sherwell 2003 p.130). The nation may therefore be linked to representational practices such as art and literature. For Sherwell (2003), these representational practices serve to foster a sense of membership in the nation, and they also enable individuals to imagine themselves as part of the nation. "The representations that individuals and communities create of themselves, their past and their homeland are contoured by numerous factors, in particular by the desire of how they wish to see themselves" (Sherwell, 2003 p.125-126). However, Sherwell draws our attention to the fact that, "representational practices of Palestinian nationalist discourse have not grown out of the stability of a nation, but emerge from the desire for a nation state" (Sherwell, 2003, p.131)<sup>12</sup>. In the absence of a nation-state, art and literature play a central role in fostering a connection to the Palestinian homeland, and this connection is often articulated using men's and women's bodies as central tropes in Palestinian cultural production and political discourse. For example, the Palestinian homeland is metaphorized as a woman, and the Palestinian man as her lover. The wedding is a prominent theme, with the groom being wed to his bride, the land of Palestine. The groom is often a martyr who sacrifices himself to his bride, Palestine. These metaphors in are explored beginning with the section below.

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<sup>12</sup> While my concern is not with Palestinian identity, it is worth mentioning that Palestinian national *identity* has also been forged not by the stability of the nation, but out of a collective longing for a nation-state (Sherwell 2003).

### **The Palestinian body as a metaphor for land before 1948**

Sheila Katz (1996-a, 1996-b) observes that men's and women's bodies were used as metaphors for the land that was the object of both early Zionist and Palestinian nationalisms, respectively, prior to the year 1950<sup>13</sup>. Katz (1996-a, 1996-b) notes that both nationalisms were preoccupied with ideals of manliness and with the achievement of manhood: these were contingent on the possession and defense of land in Palestine. Ideals of manhood were not unique to Jewish and Palestinian nationalism: they emerged in Europe at the turn of the 19th century when, as Mosse (1985) observes, ideals of manliness came to symbolize the health and strength of the nation<sup>14</sup>.

In both early Zionist and Palestinian nationalist discourses, the land was represented as weak, feminine and barren. And in both early Zionist and Palestinian nationalist discourses, men played a prominent role in rescuing, reviving, and fertilizing the female land, and in so doing they also asserted their manhood. Thus the female land would be rescued and defended by "real men" (Katz 1996-a p.89). Katz (1996-a and 1996-b) observes that in Zionist nationalist discourse, the new man of Zionism would return to the biblical homeland where he would revive the land and make it fertile again. In

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<sup>13</sup> Katz's observations are based on a study of political tracts, literary writings, biographies, newspaper articles and interviews.

<sup>14</sup> Mosse's study (1985) focuses on Germany and England in particular. He further observes that ideals of manliness drew upon the ideal of courage in knighthood, as well as on Greek revivalist ideals of male beauty. Manliness was also linked to manners and morals.

so doing he would reverse 2000 years of Jewish exile and landlessness, fertilizing the land with the sweat of his labor and producing a new nation, and I discuss the Jewish body in greater detail in the following chapter.

In contrast in Palestinian nationalist discourse, the land is depicted as a woman weakened by foreign (Ottoman and later British) rule and by Zionist settlement, and is revived and nursed back to health by Palestinian men (Katz, 1996-a, 1996-b). Care of the land by Palestinian men would infuse her (Palestine) with strength and health.

Jewish and Palestinian ideals of manhood were also linked to exile and dispossession: "men could not live a normal life if they were not sovereign over their own land... exile was a weapon aimed at peoplehood and manhood" (Katz 1996-b p.85). The Jewish man sought to end his exile by possessing land in Palestine. The Palestinian man sought to *prevent* dispossession and exile, increasingly so in response to the arrival of Zionist settlers in Palestine (Katz 1996-b). The Palestinian man would even die fighting to preserve his land from encroachment by the Zionist settlers.

Katz (1996-b) notes that themes of martyrdom and self-sacrifice became prevalent in Palestinian nationalism during the 1920s and 1930s<sup>15</sup>. In Palestinian poetry in particular, the Palestinian man is described as a martyr who sacrifices himself to his land, Palestine. For example, the poem titled

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<sup>15</sup> Interestingly, Katz uses the term "culture of martyrdom" (1996-a p.88); so too do many Israeli writers writing about Palestinian martyrdom today. I deal with the problematics of this and similar terms in Chapter 3.

*Kul Shabab* by Ajaj Nuwiyhid, uses the metaphor of a wedding between the martyr and his bride, Palestine, "We have asked to become engaged to a girl / Her bride price is very expensive / But she deserves it / Here is our answer: / We will fight for the sake of your eyes / Death is our aim" (in Katz 1996-a p.90). The land is metaphorized as the bride, for whom the groom – the martyr – makes the ultimate sacrifice, his life. The martyr's sacrifice is the result of a struggle, described in the poem above as "we will fight". The martyr sacrifices his life – and by extension, his mortal body – to the land, to *Palestine*.

Katz also cites a poem titled *Al-Shahid* (the martyr), by Abd al-Rahim Mahmud in 1936. He writes, "A man should live with honor and dignity / otherwise he should die gloriously... *The only desire I have is to fall defending my usurped rights, and my country*" (in Katz 1996-b p.87)[italics added]<sup>16</sup>. Here too, there are direct references to sacrifice ("to die gloriously"), for Palestine ("my country"), as well as to Palestinian struggle ("to fall defending"). This poem was written during the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939 in Palestine. While Katz notes that al-Rahim Mahmud was active in the Revolt, she does not discuss these events any further.

The Palestinian martyr in the examples from Palestinian literature of the 1930s may be linked to real-life Palestinian martyrs who lost their lives in the struggle to defend their lands from increasing land acquisitions by the Zionist settlers. The martyr in literature also reflects a

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<sup>16</sup> Jayyusi (1992) informs us that the poet went on to become a martyr: he was killed in battle in 1948.

turn toward Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice in response to events on the ground in Palestine, so to speak.

Historians Ilan Pappé (2006-a) and Samih Farsoun and Naseer Hasan Aruri (2006) note outbreaks of Palestinian violence that followed periods of increased Zionist land acquisition and the expulsion of Palestinian farmers from their lands during the 1920s and 1930s, and culminating in the Arab Revolt of 1936-1939, a series of organized strikes and armed insurrection directed against the British authorities in Palestine<sup>17</sup>.

The Arab Revolt was preceded by increased Palestinian activism and the formation of Palestinian resistance groups during the early 1930s. For example, Sheik 'Izz ed-Din al-Qassam organized a group of armed guerillas in the Palestinian countryside. In 1935 al-Qassam was killed by British troops. Following his death large numbers of Palestinian youth organized themselves under the name *Ikhwan*

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<sup>17</sup> I deal with the matter of Zionist land acquisitions and the expulsion of Palestinians in the following chapter. The Revolt was predated by violent outbreaks in Jerusalem and Jaffa in 1920 and 1921, precipitated by the expulsion of Palestinian farmers from their lands by Zionist settlers. As well, in 1929, riots erupted in response to an incident involving prayer arrangements at the Wailing Wall (Pappé 2006-a) and spread to several cities, culminating in clashes between Palestinian and Jewish mobs that left 133 Jews and 116 Arabs dead (Farsoun and Aruri 2006). It is interesting to note that the current al-Aqsa intifada was also sparked by a conflict at the same site. On the Arab Revolt see Kayyali 1978. Muslih (1988) traces Palestinian resistance to Zionist territorial encroachment back to 1886. He notes that the first instances of Palestinian violence occurred when Jewish settlers at *Petah Tikvah* denied grazing access to farmers of a nearby Muslim village. He also notes Palestinian violence as the result of dispossession by the Zionist settlers to Palestine prior to the 1920s.

*al-Qassam*, or Brothers of al-Qassam (Farsoun and Aruri 2006). These and other groups were at the forefront of armed Palestinian resistance during the Arab Revolt, which sought to pressure the British authorities to halt the expulsions of Palestinians from their lands purchased by the Zionist settlers (Farsoun and Aruri 2006). On the one hand, the Arab Revolt was characterized by a new and organized type of Palestinian resistance: armed insurrection and guerilla warfare. On the other hand, al-Qassam's death provided a model for a new type of Palestinian resistance: martyrdom (Pappe 2006-a), "His martyrdom, self-sacrifice, and commitment to the national cause offered Palestinian Arabs a more honorable and popular model of struggle" (Farsoun and Aruri 2006 p.91)<sup>18</sup>.

Armed resistance brought with it the very real possibility of loss of life: the Arab Revolt left 5,000 Palestinians dead, and 10,000 wounded (Massad 2006, Khalidi 2001). Losing one's life in defense of the land constituted an act of self-sacrifice. The martyr in Palestinian literature sacrifices his life for his bride, Palestine. Similarly, historical martyrs such as al-Qassam and those who died in the Arab Revolt, also sacrificed their lives in defense of Palestinian land. In both instances, self-sacrifice occurs for Palestine.

The *istishhadi* or suicide bomber in Palestine today may be connected back to Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice in defense of the land during the 1920s and 1930s. Like the

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<sup>18</sup> Al-Qassam's legacy as a martyr is also evident in the name chosen by Hamas for its military wing responsible for deploying suicide bombers, the Ezzedeem al-Qassam Brigades.

martyr, the *istishhadi* sacrifices her/himself for Palestine in an act of resistance. After 1948 however, the martyr would temporarily disappear.

### **1948: the Palestinian catastrophe**

The state of Israel proclaimed its independence on May 15th, 1948. By the time the Israeli government signed its final armistice agreement, with Syria in July 1949, over 18 million *dunams* of a total of 26 million *dunams* of land in what had been Mandate Palestine shifted from Palestinian Arab to Jewish-Israeli control (Khalidi 2001). Under armistice agreements signed in 1949 between the Israeli government and those of Jordan and Egypt, respectively, Jordan assumed control of those areas of Palestine located west of the Jordan River, and Egypt took control of the Gaza strip. As Palestinian historian Rashid Khalidi asserts, Arab Palestine ceased to exist (2006).

By January 1949, approximately 750,000 Palestinians – over half of the 1.4 million Palestinian Arabs in Mandatory Palestine – had fled or were driven from their lands<sup>19</sup>. Most fled to the Gaza Strip and the Jordanian West Bank, both of which, as Farsoun and Aruri (2006) observe, comprised part of historic Palestine. By 1949, a majority of Palestinians found themselves displaced from their land, dispossessed of most of their property, and living under foreign rule. The loss of

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<sup>19</sup> This is detailed in several sources and in Pappé 2006-b, Masalha 1992 and Farsoun and Aruri 2006 in particular. I deal with these expulsions in greater detail in the following chapter.

the Palestinian homeland is described using the Arabic term *al-Nakba*, the disaster or catastrophe<sup>20</sup>.

As Heidi Nast and Steve Pile observe, "Bodies and places are woven together through intricate webs of social and spatial relations" (1998 p.4). The events of 1948 forever altered the spatial relationship between Palestinian bodies and the land of Palestine<sup>21</sup>. *Al-Nakba* resulted in the massive uprooting of Palestinian bodies from the land of Palestine, and this transformed the rooted Palestinian body into a displaced body, a refugee body.

#### **The Palestinian body as a metaphor for the loss of the Palestinian homeland**

In the aftermath of *al-Nakba*, the infertile Palestinian body is used as a metaphor for the loss of the homeland and for Palestinian exile and deterritorialization. The infertile

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<sup>20</sup> Said (1974) and Khalidi (1993) note the term's use in Syrian scholar Constantine Zurayk's 1948 book titled *Ma'na al-nakba* (the meaning of the disaster), later published in its English translation under that title. Writing about the impact of 1948 on the Middle East more generally, Rogan and Shlaim (2001) observe that no other event has marked Arab politics in the twentieth century as profoundly as the establishment of the state of Israel. The authors note that the war of 1948 between Israel and Egypt, Syria, Lebanon, Transjordan and Iraq resulted in major military defeats for all of these nations, with the exception of Iraq; and that within three years following the 1949 Armistice agreements signed between Israel and the Arab states, the prime ministers of Egypt and Lebanon were assassinated, as was the king of Jordan, and the president of Syria and the king of Egypt overthrown by military coups.

<sup>21</sup> As well, thousands of Palestinians who remained within Israel and became citizens of Israel were forced off of their lands after 1948; see the collected essays in Masalha 2005.

bodies of both men and women became metaphors for the loss of the land, and for displacement and exile<sup>22</sup>. This research focuses specifically on the infertile Palestinian male body as a metaphor for the loss of the Palestinian homeland, as depicted in literature of the time.

Katz observes that Palestinian manhood was defined by a man's ability to provide for his family, to protect his land, and to rule himself on his own land rather than be ruled by others (1996-b). Exile and displacement from one's land were signs of diminished manhood. After 1948, the Palestinian man faced a crisis. As a refugee displaced from his land and therefore from his source of sustenance, he could no longer provide for his family nor offer them protection from foreign rule.

Amireh (2003) observes that no one has expressed the loss of male virility as a metaphor for the loss of the homeland more forcefully than Ghassan Kanafani did, in his novella *Men in the Sun* (*Rijal fil-shams*). Therefore I focus my investigation into the depiction of the infertile male body as a metaphor for the loss of the Palestinian homeland in 1948, on *Men in the Sun*. Published in 1963 but set ten years after *Al-Nakba*, in 1958, *Men in the Sun* is the story of three Palestinian refugees who make a desperate attempt to cross the Iraqi border into Kuwait in an effort to find work, having lost

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<sup>22</sup> Rape is also used as a metaphor for the lost Palestinian homeland. Palestine is metaphorized as a woman, and the female land is possessed by another. The loss of the Palestinian homeland is expressed metaphorically on the one hand as the loss of female virginity or honor, and as the loss of male virility on the other. Massad (2006) observes that the rape of Palestine is also included in the introduction to the 1968 Palestinian Nationalist Charter.

their ability to work their own land in Palestine. The fourth Palestinian protagonist, Abu-Khaizuran, drives a truck for a rich Kuwaiti businessman. He offers to smuggle the three refugees across the border into Kuwait. However he is delayed by Kuwaiti border officials on the crossing from Basra, and the three refugees suffocate to death in his truck. Exile is equated with death: there can be no future for the Palestinian refugees – not in the novella, nor in reality – without a national homeland.

In the novella, the ultimate symbol of the loss of the Palestinian homeland is the castrated male body. Abu-Khaizuran was castrated after stepping on a landmine in 1948. The castrated male body is a metaphor for the lost Palestinian homeland under foreign control. As Amireh observes, "national defeat is experienced as castration" (2003, p.753)<sup>23</sup>. Yet Cleary cautions against a simplistic reading of the castrated body as a metaphor for the loss of the homeland. Rather, castration "implies that without a territory there can be no real future for Palestinians as a *nation*" (Cleary 2002 p.218)[italics added].

Further, the novella confronts the reader with the possibility of the complete erasure of the Palestinian nation (Cleary 2002). *Men in the Sun* can be read as a story of Palestinian hopelessness and despair: written at a time when there was no official Palestinian resistance movement, and when the pan-Arabist project was on the brink of failure, it

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<sup>23</sup> For a more general discussion of the emasculated or castrated male as a trope for powerlessness in nationalist discourses, see Cleary's reading of Kaja Silverman (2002 pp.212-216).

points to the possibility that no one, not the Palestinians themselves nor the Arab states, was able to rescue or reclaim the Palestinian homeland (Cleary 2002)<sup>24</sup>.

Massad (2006) observes that for over a decade following *al-Nakba*, the Palestinian people remained without a national leadership, and Palestinians looked to Arab governments to help them free their land from Zionist occupation and to return them from exile. However, no such development occurred. For him, *Men in the Sun* serves as a warning to Palestinians that they will continue to face a bleak future – much like the characters in the novella – should they choose to rely on others for national redemption.

But *Men in the Sun* may also be read as a *call to arms*. For Kanafani, who later became a prominent leader in the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine, only armed resistance would enable Palestinians to reclaim their land (Amireh 2003). As such, Kanafani's *Men in the Sun* is not so much a pessimistic premonition of the disappearance of the Palestinian nation altogether, but rather, a call to arms for Palestinian self-reliance and resistance.

While the infertile body – and the infertile male body in particular – was invoked as a metaphor for the loss of the Palestinian homeland in the decade following *al-Nakba*, this relationship should not in any way be interpreted as representing the *relinquishment* of a connection to the homeland. As Palestinian writer Salma Khandra Jayyusi (1992)

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<sup>24</sup> Cleary (2002) further notes that when the novella was published its bleakness generated a great deal of outrage among Arab readers.

observes, it might have been thought that Palestinians in exile would gradually relinquish their claim to the land of Palestine over time. To the contrary, Palestinians displaced from their lands in historic Palestine, and even their descendants born in exile, continue to maintain a strong connection to the land (Jayyusi 1992). Writing about Palestinian identity, Khalidi (1997) asserts that if not for a very strong sense of connection to the land of Palestine forged well before 1948, exiled Palestinians may well have been fully absorbed into the Arab countries where they found themselves living<sup>25</sup>.

### **The Palestinian resistance movement, guerilla warfare and the male body**

The emergence of a Palestinian resistance movement in the 1960s brought with it the possibility of liberating Palestinian lands from foreign (Israeli) control. The Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) was created in 1964,

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<sup>25</sup> Tina Sherwell (2001, 2003) observes that after 1948, women's bodies and the figure of the peasant woman in particular are used as metaphors for an ongoing Palestinian connection to the land, and she explores this relationship in Palestinian painting. Figuration that uses the peasant woman and the traditional rural landscape is not unique to Palestinian art, but has recurred in different national contexts over time, because "these are some of the most effective representations used in cultivating a sense of belonging to a designated terrain" (2003 p.131). Jayyusi (1992) notes the nostalgic figure of the woman who often appears in Palestinian poetry at this time. Palestinian art historian Kamal Boullata (2009) observes that for two decades after 1948, art created by Palestinians living inside what had been historic Palestine was largely figurative and often featured landscape scenes, while art produced by Palestinian artists living further away tended to be more abstract.

and it marked the emergence of a Palestinian resistance movement dedicated to Palestinian national liberation<sup>26</sup>. With the rise of the PLO, the male guerilla fighter or *fida'i* emerged as a symbol of Palestinian national resistance and Palestinian national liberation (Khalili 2007)<sup>27</sup>.

Palestinian national liberation would be achieved by way of armed struggle, and this objective is outlined in Article 9 of the 1968 Palestinian National Charter, which asserts that, "Armed struggle is the only way to liberate Palestine"<sup>28</sup>.

*Fida'i* means redeemer (Khalili 2007). Through guerilla warfare, the *fida'i* would redeem the land of Palestine from foreign occupation and return it to its rightful owners, the Palestinian people.

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<sup>26</sup> The PLO was officially created in January 1964 during the First Arab Summit, organized by Egyptian president Gamal Nasser and attended by 13 Arab heads of state. It was created as an organization for Palestinian national liberation under the auspices of Arab governments. However in 1968 Yasser Arafat won a struggle for the leadership of the PLO, and brought it under Palestinian control. By 1970, the PLO united all of the various Palestinian resistance groups and served as an umbrella organization for the Palestinian national liberation movement. In 1974 the Arab League recognized the PLO as the sole representative of the Palestinian people. For a detailed history of the PLO see Cobban 1984. The group's relationship to other Palestinian groups and to Arab governments, lie outside the scope of this study. For a concise analysis of the PLO's successes and failures to approximately 2005, see Khalidi 2006 pp.140-181.

<sup>27</sup> Amireh (2003) notes that while women participated in the national struggle, their involvement was limited and the *fida'i* as a national symbol was male and masculine.

<sup>28</sup> See

<<http://electronicintifada.net/bytopic/historicaldocuments/44.shtml>> [Accessed November 12, 2009]. This Charter was one of two documents issued by the PLO in 1968. The other was the Palestinian Nationalist Charter. Together "they functioned as a sort of constitution defining Palestinian political goals, Palestinian rights, indeed Palestinianness itself" (Massad 2006 p.43).

The emergence of the *fida'i* as a symbol of Palestinian national resistance represents a substantial shift after 1948, from the use of the Palestinian male body as a metaphor, in literature, for deterritorialization and exile, to the male body *as a locus of Palestinian resistance*.

The creation of the PLO brought with it not only the promise of territorial reclamation but also, a renewed emphasis on manhood and masculinity<sup>29</sup>. Khalili (2007) observes that, "The celebration of violent struggle contains within it not only the promise of liberation, but also the making of the new man" (2007 p.18). Khalili (2007) further notes that the theme of a new and masculine man was characteristic of national liberationist discourses more generally during the 1960s and 1970s, and she situates the Palestinian movement for national liberation within a larger global context of similar movements in Asia, Africa and Latin America.

Armed struggle would redeem the land of Palestine, and it would also, as Amireh (2003) observes, allow Palestinian men to reclaim their manhood lost as the result of *al-Nakba*. For Khalili (2007), armed struggle would produce the new Palestinian man as a masculine man, characterized by his

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<sup>29</sup> In situating my understanding of the term masculinity I cite George Mosse's definition thereof as "the way men assert what they believe to be their manhood" (1996 p.3). Massad (2006) notes that notions of masculinity were central to modern European nationalist discourse. Despite constituting themselves in opposition to European nationalism, Palestinian nationalism and other anti-colonial nationalisms have nonetheless been influenced by European nationalist discourses and their emphasis on masculinity. For Massad, "the masculine still reigns supreme in Palestinian nationalist thought" (2006 p.53). For a study of manhood and nationalism in Europe in the 18th and 19th centuries see Mosse 1985.

courage, his ability to deploy political violence, and his willingness to sacrifice himself for the Palestinian nation, and I return to this point very shortly.

These developments in Palestinian politics were also reflected in Palestinian literature. Amireh notes a focus on the remasculinization of the Palestinian man in literary works in the 1960s, which came to emphasize male virility, "The Palestinian male is now virile and as a result of his remasculinization, the land of Palestine is fertile again" (2003 p.755)<sup>30</sup>. For example, in his poem *Days in the Life of a Palestinian Boy*, Waleed al Halees writes, "Hoping for continuance, my father joyfully cast his seed / into my mother's womb... / dreaming he'd have a boy, / ... chanting even in his sleep / 'I'll beget a male child. / The future ongoing, a boy!'" (cited in Amireh 2003 p.755)<sup>31</sup>.

Amireh also notes the re-appearance of the martyr in Palestinian poetry written during the 1960s and 1970s. As in the poetry of the 1930s, the martyr is a groom. Here,

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<sup>30</sup> With the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement in the 1960s, the metaphor of the impotence and infertility was used to describe those Palestinians who do not participate in the national struggle (Amireh 2003). More generally, Palestinian literature written during the 1960s and 70s was a "literature of resistance" (*adab al-muqawama*), a term first used by the author Ghassan Kanafani (Elad-Bouskila 2002 p.11). Jayyusi (1992) observes that during the 1970s, resistance became *the* major theme in Palestinian poetry.

<sup>31</sup> Amireh (2003) further observes that male virility is written into the 1964 PLO Charter. Its Article 4 states that "the Palestinian character is an essential and undying feature that is passed from fathers to sons" (2003 p.754). Article 5 defines Palestinians as "everyone who is born to an Arab Palestinian father after this date [1947] inside Palestine or outside it" (2003 p.754); also cited in Massad 2006 p.44. For an interesting discussion of fathers as reproducers of the nation, see Massad 2006.

however, in addition to dying for his bride, Palestine, the martyr also *fertilizes* her. The martyr's sacrifice produces the next generation of Palestinians: his fertility "engenders a whole nation" (Amireh 2003 p.755).

### **The *fida'i* and self-sacrifice for Palestine**

The *fida'i* is not a martyr *per se*: he is a guerilla fighter, a resistance fighter. However, guerilla warfare and armed resistance carry with them the very real possibility of death (Khalili 2007), and I remind the reader of the connection between Palestinian resistance and the risk of losing one's life, discussed in the context of the Arab Revolt and the martyr of the 1920s and 1930s. Similarly, the *fida'i* had to be prepared to lose his life in undertaking acts of resistance.

The *fida'i* of the 1960s and 1970s may be connected back to the Palestinian martyr of the 1920s and 1930s<sup>32</sup>. The martyr of the 1920s and 1930s sacrificed his life in the struggle to defend his land against foreign encroachment; the *fida'i* risks sacrificing his life in the struggle to redeem the land from foreign occupation. Similarly, the *istishhadi* is also linked to resistance and self-sacrifice, for Palestine, and to the struggle to redeem the land from foreign occupation.

More generally, self-sacrifice is a feature of the modern nation. For Anderson (1991), the nation inspires patriotism –

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<sup>32</sup> Khalili (2007) connects the *fida'i* of the 1960s to the martyr of the 1930s, however she notes that some scholars do not, instead considering the *fida'i* as a new identity rather than a continuation of a historic one.

love for the fatherland – and this love has, in the last two centuries, made it possible for millions to be willing to die for their nations. Dying for one's country is considered an honorable death in the service of the nation. Self-sacrifice for the nation, what Zerubavel terms "patriotic sacrifice" (2006 p.73) is generally considered to be a positive act<sup>33</sup>. Self-sacrifice for the nation normally occurs in the context of soldiering and defense of the nation, yet, as Khalili (2007) observes, self-sacrifice for the nation also occurs in the context of resistance in anti-colonial and national liberation struggles. The guerilla fighter, like the soldier, is prepared to sacrifice his life for the nation, and like the soldier's, his death is transformed into an honorable death for the nation.

Self-sacrifice is written into the 1968 Palestinian National Charter, "He must be prepared for the armed struggle and ready to sacrifice his wealth and his life in order to win back his homeland and bring about its liberation" (in Massad 2006 p.49)<sup>34</sup>. Self-sacrifice occurs *for Palestine*.

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<sup>33</sup> Self-sacrifice for the nation may also be traced back to ancient religious notions of sacrifice. Juergensmeyer (2003) notes that the term sacrifice hails from the Latin *sacrificium*, to make holy, and that religious concepts of sacrifice can be found in all major religions: ancient religious sacrifice (for example the killing of an animal or other human being) was transformed into something positive by virtue of the fact that it was undertaken in the name of religion. Contemporary notions of self-sacrifice have been influenced by this transformative conception of giving up one's life as a positive act if performed for a sacred or higher cause, such as one's religious beliefs, or one's nation.

<sup>34</sup> "He" in the Charter, refers to the Palestinian individual, also defined in the same document.

The expulsion of the PLO from Lebanon in 1982 led to the demise of the *fida'i* as the symbol of Palestinian resistance (Khalili 2007)<sup>35</sup>. However a new symbol of Palestinian resistance would emerge a few years later during the first intifada: that of the *shab* or young man.

**The *shab* of the first intifada, the male body, resistance and self-sacrifice**

The *shab* or young man was at the forefront of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation during the first intifada, which began in 1987 and ended in 1993<sup>36</sup>. Intifada is the Arabic word for shaking off, in this instance, the shaking off of the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza. Julie Peteet (2000) notes that the intifada also represented a massive generational shake-up in Palestinian society, putting young men (*shabab*) at the center of the Palestinian national struggle, in leadership roles previously reserved for older men<sup>37</sup>. During the intifada the *shabab* –

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<sup>35</sup> The years between 1982 and 1987 represented a short period of defeat for the Palestinian resistance movement, owing to the PLO's expulsion from Lebanon in 1982 by the Israeli army and its Lebanese allies; see Khalili 2007.

<sup>36</sup> The *intifada* ended with the signing of the Declaration of Principles On Interim Self-Government Arrangements, also known as Oslo peace agreement, in 1993. Khalili (2007) notes a decisive shift during the intifada, away from the PLO's strategy of armed resistance, to an emphasis on mass mobilization as the primary strategy of Palestinian resistance.

<sup>37</sup> For a study of the young man in Palestinian literature during the early part of the first intifada, see Elad-Bouskila 1999. As the intifada progressed, women and girls took a more active role in confrontations with Israeli soldiers, participating in demonstrations, throwing stones, and intervening to prevent the arrest and harassment of the *shabab*. On women's involvement in the first *intifada* see Strum 1992 and Holt 1996.

their heads wrapped in the white and black *keffiyeh*, defiantly throwing stones at Israeli soldiers and tanks – became the primary symbol of Palestinian resistance to the occupation.

Peteet (2000) observes that during the intifada the body – and the male body of the *shab* in particular – came to symbolize Palestinian resistance. Violence was directed against the Palestinian male body by the Israeli security forces, in an effort to subdue the *shabab* (plural for *shab*) and quash the uprising. As Peteet (2002) observes, Israeli soldiers would attempt to subjugate the *shabab* through beatings, torture and imprisonment<sup>38</sup>. However the opposite occurred: Israeli violence inflicted on the Palestinian male body was transformed into a symbol of resistance and endurance, masculinity and heroism. The battered male body was recast as defiant and powerful, and became a symbol of Palestinian resistance. The male body also served to symbolize Palestinian manhood and masculinity, played out as bravery and fearlessness from the Israeli army<sup>39</sup>. For Peteet, Israeli violence inflicted on individual male bodies also resonates collectively, for the Israeli state's use of violence against the Palestinian body is a testament to Palestinian endurance and steadfastness,

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<sup>38</sup> Peteet cites these beatings and periods of imprisonment as masculine rites of passage into adulthood for Palestinian males. Kaplan (2000) cites military duty as the Israeli equivalent to a masculine rite of passage for Israeli men.

<sup>39</sup> Peteet (2000) and Amireh (2003) also describe Palestinian masculinity in terms of body control to which control of one's sexuality is central. This lies outside my area of focus.

The pre-given defining power of the collective Palestinian body, which requires a violently negating intervention [Israeli violence], lies precisely in its assertive national identity (Peteeet, 2000 p.106)[My addition to the text].

Further, Massad (2006) asserts that during the intifada the Palestinian male body became *the* crucial instrument in confronting the Israeli occupation<sup>40</sup>. The *shab*'s body is a locus of Palestinian resistance.

Because the *shabab* were active in clashes with the Israeli security forces, they were likely to suffer injury and even death at the hands of the Israeli army. Here too, Palestinian resistance is linked to the possibility of self-sacrifice. As well, because they risked losing their lives in confrontations with the Israeli army, the *shabab* are often referred to as *shahids* or martyrs<sup>41</sup>. Like the martyr and the *fida'i* before him, the *shab* risks losing his life in the context of Palestinian resistance. And like the martyr and the *fida'i* before him, the *shab*'s self-sacrifice also occurs for Palestine. So too, the does the *istishhadi*'s.

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<sup>40</sup> He also notes that references to women's bodies during the intifada tended to focus on their reproductive capacities and their roles as mothers (2006).

<sup>41</sup> During the intifada all those killed by the Israeli army whether *shabab* or innocent civilians came to be referred to as martyrs or *shahids*. I discuss this in more detail in Chapter 3.

### **A trajectory of Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice**

The martyr of the 1920s and 1930s, the *fida'i* and the *shab* are all associated with Palestinian resistance and the struggle to defend or redeem land in Palestine from foreign occupation. So too, is the Palestinian *istishhadi*. These three figures are also associated with self-sacrifice, for Palestine. So too, is the Palestinian *istishhadi*. While it is not until Chapter 3 that I discuss notions of self-sacrifice and martyrdom in Palestine today, the *istishhadi's* self-sacrifice may be linked to these earlier instances of self-sacrifice, for Palestine. As Abufarha (2009) asserts, the object of the *istishhadi's* self-sacrifice is the land and the nation of Palestine.

This chapter considered relationships between the male Palestinian body and Palestinian land, from the 1920s through the end of the first intifada in 1993. It explored a metaphorical relationship between the Palestinian male body and the loss of the homeland in 1948. The Palestinian male body, in the wake of *al-Nakba*, was depicted in literature as castrated, infertile and lacking virility, as a metaphor for the loss of the homeland and for Palestinian deterritorialization and exile. With the rise of the Palestinian resistance movement in the 1960s, the male body became a locus of Palestinian resistance and the redemption of the homeland. This represents a shift, from the use of men's bodies as metaphors for loss and exile, to the male body itself as a locus of Palestinian resistance<sup>42</sup>. With the

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<sup>42</sup> Women's bodies, to the contrary, were used primarily to metaphorize an idealized and at times nostalgic connection to the

emergence of the Palestinian suicide bomber at the end of the first intifada, the Palestinian body becomes a *weapon of resistance*, and I return to this point in Chapter 3.

By considering historical notions of resistance and self-sacrifice, this writing locates the Palestinian *istishhadi* within a larger trajectory of Palestinian resistance and self-sacrifice prior to 1993. And by considering relationships between the body and territory in Palestine, this chapter sets the stage for Chapters 3 and 4, which focus even more closely on the Palestinian body in a relationship to Israeli occupied, Palestinian-inhabited territory in the West Bank and Gaza, and on the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber or *istishhadi* in a relationship to occupied territory there.

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homeland. Women's depictions in literature and painting continued to be cast in more traditional gender roles such as lovers, virgins, mothers, and nurturers (Sherwell 2003).

## Chapter Two

### **The ideal Jewish body and the ideal Jewish land: Jewish spatial practices and territorial control in Palestine and Israel**

As noted in the thesis introduction, Israeli sociologist Meira Weiss asserts that in Israel, "The national territory becomes equivalent to the personal body" (2002-b p.38). This chapter uses her observation as a point of departure from which to consider mutually constitutive relationships between the Jewish body and territory in historic Palestine and later the state of Israel, from the late 19th century to today.

The Zionist movement sought to create a Jewish national homeland in historic Palestine. It also sought to reinvent the European-Jewish body there. As such, the Zionist movement aimed to simultaneously transform both the land and the body, in Palestine: Palestinian inhabited land would be transformed into Jewish land, and the European Jewish body would be transformed into a strong and healthy body rooted to the land in Palestine. This chapter considers relationships between the body and land during precise moments in the Jewish nationalist/national<sup>1</sup> project, from the late 19th century to the present. The pursuit of a Jewish national homeland in historic Palestine falls within Calhoun's definition of nationalism (1997), outlined on page 25, as a project, the pursuit of independence and self-determination.

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<sup>1</sup> This distinction is in keeping with Roshwald's assertion (2004) that Zionism was a nationalist movement until the state of Israel was founded in 1948, at which point Zionism became a national movement.

This chapter proposes the notion of the ideal Jewish body, as embodied at various points in history by the *chalutz* (Zionist pioneer), the *Sabra* (native-born Israeli) and the Israeli soldier, to be discussed in detail beginning on pages 62, 80, and 88, respectively<sup>2</sup>. It also proposes the notion of the ideal Jewish land in Palestine (later the state of Israel), as land settled and controlled exclusively by Jews.

Consequently this chapter examines the spatial practices used by Jews to assert control over territory in Palestine, notably the construction of Jewish settlements, from the arrival of the first Zionist settlers in the 1880s, until

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<sup>2</sup> In using the term "Jewish body" I do not wish to imply a monolithic or archetypal notion of the Jewish body that refers to all Jewish bodies. Rather, I use this term with some hesitation and for a lack of a better one, to describe the Jewish body in historic Palestine and after 1948, in the state of Israel. I use the term "Zionist body" to refer to the Jewish body in Palestine prior to the year 1948. And I use the term "Israeli body" (or Jewish-Israeli body) to refer to the Jewish body in the state of Israel after its creation in 1948. On the Jewish body more broadly considered, see in particular Gilman 1991; see also Konner 2009. Similarly, the terms "Jewish", "Zionist" and "Israeli" with reference to spatial practices also pose problems. I use the term "Zionist" to refer to the period that preceded the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and beginning in the 1880s. I use the term "Israeli" to refer to the period after 1948. I use the term "Jewish" to refer to and include both of the previous periods. Similarly, I use the term "Zionist spatial practices" when referring to spatial practices used by the Zionist settlers to Palestine prior to 1948, and I use the term "Israeli spatial practices" to refer to Israeli spatial practices after 1948. I also use the term "Jewish spatial practices" to reference practices used by Jews in historic Palestine that span both, the period of Zionist settlement in historic Palestine prior to the creation of the state of Israel in 1948, and the period following its creation. None of the terms above are ideal, and I use them primarily to make temporal (before and after 1948) and geographical (historic Palestine or the state of Israel) distinctions in the text, and to firmly locate the body and land ideals discussed as being specifically *Jewish* ones, that is, as being created and implemented by Jews.

today. I refer again to Kimmerling's study (1983) in which he defines control of territory as being contingent on establishing a presence on, ownership of, and sovereignty over the territory in question.

The spatial practices discussed in this chapter resulted in the displacement and deterritorialization of Palestinians from their lands. As such Jewish spatial practices are also connected to the production of Palestinians as inferior Others to Jews, beginning in the late 19th century with the arrival of the first European Zionist settlers to Palestine and continuing today in the Occupied Territories.

### **The ideal body explained**

For Meira Weiss, Israeli national identity is linked to what she terms the chosen body, "an ideal type by which concrete Israeli bodies are screened and molded from their birth to their death" (2002-a pp.4-5). Weiss explores how notions of the chosen body shape Israeli national identity. For her, Israeli identity is embodied.

The chosen body in Israeli society, for Weiss (2002-a), is that of the *T'zahal* or Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) soldier<sup>3</sup>. This chosen body is healthy, able-bodied, strong and fit for military service in the IDF. Weiss asserts that Israelis are not only socialized from a young age to prepare for military service, but that Israeli bodies are conceived, screened, and

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<sup>3</sup> *Tzahal* is the Hebrew acronym for *Tzva Hagana Leyisrael*, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF).

raised to be fit for soldiering. As such, Weiss contends, Israelis aim to conceive, produce and raise healthy bodies destined for military service<sup>4</sup>.

Weiss (2002-a) also links the chosen Israeli body to territory. For her, body boundaries in Israel are linked to territorial boundaries, and by extension, to concepts of inclusion and exclusion, to who belongs to the nation and who does not. The chosen body of the IDF soldier may be linked to notions of inclusion and exclusion because it includes Jewish Israelis, but excludes non-Jewish Israelis, and especially Palestinian Arabs (Weiss 2002-a). Thus for Weiss, the chosen body of the IDF soldier is also an *exclusionary* body, a point I return to when discussing the IDF soldier later on in the chapter.

Weiss' study of the chosen body in Israel (2002-a) prompted me to explore the notion of Jewish body ideals at various points in the Jewish nation-building project. By Jewish body ideals, I mean, first, a healthy, strong and powerful body as the ideal corporeality to which the Zionist settlers to Palestine and later Israeli Jews should aspire: the *chalutz*, the *Sabra* and the IDF soldier are all strong, healthy and powerful bodies. By body ideals I also refer to the embodiment of certain traits and characteristics by the

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<sup>4</sup> Weiss (2002-a) examines the various ways in which Israelis attempt to ensure the birth of a healthy child fit for military service, such as fertility treatments and genetic testing that promote the conception and development of healthy fetuses, and screening for factors that may impede the birth of a healthy baby. According to Weiss, Israel has the highest rate of prenatal practices in the world. She also discusses the stigma and exclusion experienced by physically disabled Israelis, owing to the fact that they are not able to serve in the IDF.

*chalutz*, the *Sabra* and the IDF soldier – notably, a desire to settle and defend territory.

My assertions in this chapter follow on from Weiss' investigations into the chosen body (2002-a). I explore notions of the ideal Jewish body, and I elaborate relationships between the ideal Jewish body, and the ideal Jewish land in Palestine, that is, land settled and controlled exclusively by Jews. First I outline a relationship between the body and territory more generally.

### **The body and the produced body**

My understanding of the body relies on its definition by cultural theorist Elizabeth Grosz, as a biologically incomplete, socially and culturally constituted entity, and as the product of the interaction of the natural and the cultural:

By *body* I understand a concrete, material, animate organization of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles and skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organization only through their psychical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality (1998 p.43) [Italics in the original].

Further, my understanding of the body in the context of this research is informed by theoretical propositions by Grosz (1998 and 1994) and Michel Foucault (1977 and 1978), who

consider the body to be *produced*<sup>5</sup>. For Grosz, the body is produced by the social, cultural, socio-economic, spatial, and discursive contexts in which it exists, and as such it is always produced as a body of a particular type, notably, as a raced, classed, sexed and/or gendered body (1998, 1994).

For Foucault, the body is produced by power, which manifests as an omnipresent network, "as the multiplicity of force relations immanent in the sphere in which they operate" (1978 p.92)<sup>6</sup>. I am particularly concerned with Foucault's theory of spatial discipline (1977) as constituting a specific type of power that produces the body, and discussed in the following section.

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<sup>5</sup> Other theoretical approaches considered in the context of this research include: Alfonso Lingis' notion of the body as a surface of inscription, see Lingis 1984; Maurice Merleau-Ponty's concept of flesh, see Merleau-Ponty 1968 and Leder 1999; and Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's notion of the body without organs, see Deleuze and Guattari 1987 and Olkowski 1999. While relevant to my overall understanding of the body these theoretical frameworks did not adequately address my specific interests in the relationship between the body and territory.

<sup>6</sup> Foucault provides an extended definition of power in Foucault 1978 pp.92-95. The impact of power on the individual and social body alike is one of the central themes in Foucault's extensive oeuvre, an analysis of which lies outside the scope of this research, which is specifically concerned with the concept of discipline as a type of power that targets the body, and as theorized in Foucault 1977. On power in Foucault see Foucault 1972 and 1978; Foucault in Burchell, Gordon and Miller 1991; and in Faubion 1994 pp.201-222. Some scholars have criticized Foucault's conception of power as a passive one in which the body is theorized as the object of power with no power of its own; see for example Lash 1991, Butler 1999, and Dudrick 2005.

### **The produced body and territory/space**

For Grosz, the body and territory are mutually produced. The built environment produces the bodies of its inhabitants as particular types, "as bodies with particular physiologies, affective lives, and concrete behaviors" (1998 p.48). The body, in turn, produces its surrounding environment according to its own demographic, economic, and psychological needs (Grosz 1998).

For Foucault (1977) the body is produced by power in the form of spatial discipline, the arrangement of bodies in space<sup>7</sup>. The spatial segregation of bodies separates healthy or productive bodies from unhealthy or unproductive ones, creating what Foucault terms "functional sites" (1977 p.143) or "useful space" (1977 p.144). Healthy bodies are spatially segregated and distributed within these useful spaces – army barracks, schools and factories for example – and this spatial arrangement serves to maximize the body's productivity, for example, economic productivity (the factory worker) or military might (the soldier).

### **The body and territory in Israel and Palestine**

Foucault's investigations, above, informed this research into the relationship between the Jewish body and territory in Palestine and in Israel. I define my understanding of territory by turning again to Foucault, who notes that,

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<sup>7</sup> For Foucault, discipline also consists in the regulation and organization of time; regulation of the body's activities; training; and surveillance. For a discussion of temporal and physical discipline see pp.141-169, and of surveillance see pp.195-228, in Foucault 1977.

*"Territory* is no doubt a geographical notion, but it's first of all a juridico-political one: the area controlled by a certain kind of power" (in Gordon 1980 p.68) [Italics in original]. Foucault's conception of territory and control complements that cited earlier by Kimmerling (1983), for both scholars cite the importance of control wielded over territory. In Israel and Palestine, territory lies at the center of two competing claims for control, therefore, it is also contested<sup>8</sup>.

Foucault's notion of the spatial segregation of productive and unproductive bodies (1977) provides a framework within which to consider the relationship between the Jewish body and Jewish spatial practices in Palestine and Israel. The Jewish nation-building project, from the time of the arrival of the first Zionist settlers to Palestine in 1882, and continuing today, has been characterized by a desire to assert control over territory there, notably by building settlements on it.

Early Zionist spatial practices in Palestine from the turn of the 20th century consisted in building uniquely Jewish settlements, separate from the native Palestinian population. As Troen (2003) notes, the Zionist settlers perceived themselves to be separate from the surrounding Palestinian population, and they established their communities accordingly, as separate ones. Returning to Foucault's theories of spatial arrangement (1977), the deliberate spatial separation of Jews from Palestinians (and by

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<sup>8</sup> Peleg (1994) notes that the conflict over territory has also been characterized by a tendency by both Israelis and Palestinians to negate the other's claims to territory.

extension, of Jewish and Palestinian bodies) by the Zionist settlers constitutes the arrangement of territory into useful (Jewish) and less useful (Palestinian) spaces – functional sites – practices that continue to this day in the West Bank and Gaza.

### **Jewish spatial practices and Palestinian otherness**

Further, one of the primary objectives of settlement construction has been to assert Jewish control over as much Palestinian inhabited territory as possible. Because territory in Palestine was already inhabited by Palestinian Arabs in the early 1880s when the first Jewish settlers arrived from Europe, attempts by the Zionist settlers to control larger amounts of territory became increasingly contingent on displacing Palestinians from their lands. The loss of Palestinian control over territory and the displacement of Palestinians from their lands, by Jews in Palestine, produced them as Others to the Zionist settlers, and, after 1948, to Jewish Israelis.

For the purposes of this writing I am interested in the Other as the product of imperialism and colonialism, of “the exclusionary imperialist ideologies of self and other” (Bhabha 1994 p.29). Colonial subjects, constructed as Other by the West, are perceived to be inferior by and to the dominant colonial power (Hall 1990). Through this process of othering, individuals or groups are treated as irreconcilable from the dominant group and negative qualities are projected

onto them (Peleg 1994)<sup>9</sup>. Following the observations of scholars Joseph Massad (2006) and Ilan Pappé (2006-a) in particular, I consider the Zionist nation-building project in Palestine to be a colonial one, and more specifically, a settler-colonial one<sup>10</sup>,

Peleg observes that, "Most often, those who are seen as Others in society occupy a low status" (1994 p.265). For him, Palestinians are considered to be inferior Others by Israeli Jews, and this has provided the justification for Israel to occupy and seize Palestinian inhabited territory in the West Bank and Gaza after 1967. However Peleg's remarks are also relevant to Jewish attitudes toward Palestinians prior to 1967. The Zionist settlers to Palestine considered the indigenous Palestinians to be Others of a low or inferior status (Pappé 2006-a), and this facilitated the encroachment of Zionist settlers on Palestinian territory, often resulting in the dislocation of Palestinians from their lands. Further, since the 1880s, Palestinians have been produced as inferior

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<sup>9</sup> My understanding of alterity in colonial situations has also been influenced by the work of Fanon 1963, Trinh 1989, and Bannerji 2002.

<sup>10</sup> The question of whether the Zionist project in Palestine was a colonial one or not is a matter of much disagreement in the research literature consulted. Many Jewish and Israeli scholars bristle at the suggestion that the Jewish nation-building project was a colonial one, preferring to see it exclusively as a response to anti-Semitism and Jewish persecution in Europe; see in particular Dershowitz 2003 and Laquer 1972. For Troen, the Zionist project in historic Palestine differed from other colonial projects because it involved a return to an "ancient homeland" (2003 p.xiv). In contrast, for Israeli historian Ilan Pappé, "Zionism began as a European national movement but turned into a colonialist one once its leaders decided to implement their vision of national revival in the land of Palestine" (2006-a p.35), because it was home to a substantial Palestinian population. On Zionist colonialism see also Khalidi 1992 and Kimmerling 1983.

Others owing to their displacement from and loss of control over territory, and this in contrast to Jews who progressively succeeded in asserting more and more control over increasing amounts of territory in Palestine<sup>11</sup>.

### **The new Jewish body: the Zionist body**

Modern political Zionism emerged in Europe during the late 19th century as a nationalist movement that sought to establish a Jewish national homeland (Laquer 1972)<sup>12</sup>. However, the emergence of Zionism may be linked not only to territorial ideals, but also, corporeal ones, for Zionism also aimed to transform the European Jewish body<sup>13</sup>.

Early on, the Zionist leaders believed that life in the Diaspora in Europe had produced the Jewish body as weak and

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<sup>11</sup> Without wanting to conflate the terms territory and place, I find it useful to cite Grundberg (2007) who notes that displacement is the Other of emplacement, defined as the connection to and sense of belonging associated with place.

<sup>12</sup> Laquer (1972) observes that modern, political Zionism emerged with the publication of Theodor Herzl's *Judenstaat* in 1896. Jewish settlement to Palestine by European-Zionist pioneers predated Herzl's essay by approximately 15 years. While European Zionists began sporadically arriving in Palestine during the 1870s, the first official, organized *aliya* to Palestine (literally, "going up") took place in 1882. Avnieri (1981) notes that modern Zionism was distinct from religious manifestations of Zionism that had existed since the destruction of the second Temple in 70 AD, that established a connection between the Jewish people and the Land of Israel, as well as their return there, predicated on the arrival of the Messiah. For a comprehensive overview of modern Zionism see Laquer 1972.

<sup>13</sup> Eilberg-Schwartz (1992) and Konner (2009) both cite a long history of Jewish preoccupation with the body, expressed primarily in religious texts. These texts were concerned with a range of corporeal matters and bodily processes, notably, sexual intercourse and procreation, menstruation, circumcision, urination and defecation, and caring for the bodies of the dead.

unhealthy<sup>14</sup>. For them, only a healthy national life in a Jewish homeland would restore the health and strength the Jewish body, thereby linking territory to strong, healthy bodies<sup>15</sup>. Central to early Zionist thinking about the body, were the writings of physician Max Nordau who called for a new Jewish body – for *Muskeljuden*, Jews with muscles – as the antidote to the weak and unhealthy body of the Diaspora Jew<sup>16</sup>.

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<sup>14</sup> By early on, I am referring to Zionism in Europe during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. For Stratton (2000) the notion of Diaspora underwent a massive transformation with the rise of the modern Zionism, from a religious conception of exile and return to the Land of Israel predicated on the arrival of the Messiah, to a spatial or geographical one predicated on one's location outside the Land of Israel.

<sup>15</sup> The Zionist preoccupation with the health and strength of the Jewish body may be understood as the product of European gentile stereotypes of the Jew's body as a weak and unhealthy one; but also, to ideas internalized by European Jews themselves about the Jewish body being different and inferior, weak and unhealthy. In his seminal work, cultural and literary historian Sander Gilman (1991, 1996) observes that the body of the Jew – the Jew's nose, feet, voice, circumcised penis and darker skin, for example – had all been invoked by European gentiles as markers of Jewish otherness and difference. Further, for Gilman (1991), the Jew's body was considered by European gentiles as an inferior body: as weak, diseased and unhealthy; as a savage body; as too dark, too loud, or too pungent. European gentiles often depicted the Jewish *male* body as effeminate or feminized, weak and unmanly – as a sort of woman (Boyarin 1997). Yet as Gilman also observes (1991), negative stereotypes of the Jewish body were also internalized by Jews themselves. On the Jewish nose as a marker of Jewish otherness see also Geller 1992.

<sup>16</sup> Nordau's observations were originally published in German as "Muskeljuden" in *Juedische Turnzeitung* in June 1903; I rely on their translation into English by J. Hessing in Mendes-Flohr and Reinhartz (1980). For a more detailed account of Nordau's philosophical thought and his contributions to the early Zionist movement see Avnieri 1981 pp.101-111. Nordau was a proponent of exercise and gymnastics and his writings were initially aimed at Jews in Europe and in Austria and Germany in particular. Nordau helped found gymnastics clubs for Jewish youth in Europe – named Bar Kochba clubs after the ancient Jewish warrior – and his

For Nordau and other early Zionist leaders the new Jewish body – what they also called the Zionist body – was specifically male and masculine. As such, modern Zionism sought to transform the Jewish *male* body in particular (Gilman 1991, Biale 1992, Eilberg-Schwartz 1992, Boyarin 1997, Massad 2006)<sup>17</sup>. My interest is not in gender or masculinity *per se*, however, it is impossible to explore the notion of the new Jewish body without acknowledging that this body was male and masculine<sup>18</sup>.

Early Zionist thinkers emphasized the importance of physical labor, settling and working the land in Palestine, for these activities would develop the land and the body alike. In this way the new Jewish body and the new Jewish homeland would produce each other, in reference to Grosz's observations about the mutual production of the body and space. As well, settling and cultivating land would produce the Jewish body in Palestine as a strong and healthy one, and this body in turn (and with reference to Foucault), would discipline territory by producing it as useful – Jewish – space. This new, strong and healthy Jewish body would be produced in a mutually constitutive relationship to territory, and so the

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writings inspired the creation of the Maccabiah Games in 1932 (Konner 2009).

<sup>17</sup> Biale (1992) explores the ways in which leftist Zionists also sought to remake the Jewish sexual body in Palestine, by attempting to liberalize attitudes to sex and increasing Jewish virility.

<sup>18</sup> I reiterate Mosse's definition of masculinity as "the way men assert what they believe to be their manhood" (1996 p.3). Massad (2006) provides an interesting reading of the transformation of the European Jew's body into a masculine and militarized Zionist body through a reading of the circumcised Jewish penis, kept hidden in Europe but proudly exposed in Palestine and later in Israel.

transformation of the Jewish body in Palestine was contingent on controlling land there.

### **Early Zionist settlement in Palestine and the *chalutz*/pioneer**

The new Jewish body – the Zionist body – provided an ideal that the Zionist settlers to Palestine could aspire to becoming. It was embodied in the ideal of the *chalutz* or pioneer, a healthy, strong, and muscular man who would settle and build the new Jewish homeland<sup>19</sup>. The *chalutz* would emigrate to Palestine, where he would build and populate the newly established rural and agricultural Jewish settlements. Here I remind the reader of Katz's assertions (1996-a and 1996-b) in the previous chapter, that the new man of Zionism would return to the ancient biblical homeland in Palestine where he would revive the land and build a new Jewish nation.

The *chalutz* braved the harsh elements and dedicated himself to building the new Jewish homeland most notably by tilling and cultivating the land, "During the early years of the Zionist movement nationalistic aspirations revolved around a return to the soil, the creation of Hebrew villages and the

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<sup>19</sup> Women were also pioneers, however the *chalutz* ideal was male. The *chalutz* ideal was promoted most notably in visual culture, produced primarily by European Zionist groups (and later, American ones) with a view to attracting Jewish settlers to Palestine, as well as financial support for their endeavors. Images of the *chalutzim* working the land were produced and disseminated in the form of photographs, postcards and posters. As Scholar Michael Berkowitz observes, "Zionism was born into a highly visual age, when advances in graphic technology, coupled with the rise of the popular press, made possible a profusion of photographic and artistic representations" (1990 p.9). On early Zionist visual culture see Berkowitz 1990; on the Zionist postcards see Moors and Wachlin 1995. A selection of Zionist posters and postcards can be found in Arbel c.1996.

molding of an archetypal rural Jew who sustains himself by tilling his own fields" (Ben-Artzi 1990 p.133)<sup>20</sup>. The *chalutz* would transform Palestine into a fertile Jewish homeland, through physical labor, notably agriculture and farming. Here the ideal body of the *chalutz*, and the notion of the ideal land – a proliferation of autonomous and exclusively Jewish farming communities – are inextricably linked, and I reiterate yet again Grosz's framework of the body and territory producing each other. Meira Weiss observes that at this time, "nation-building practices such as the conquest of land... became interwoven with pioneering and the making of a *chosen body fit for a chosen people*" (2002-a p.17)[Italics added]. The *chalutzim* were not only concerned with the notion of the chosen body – or the ideal body, in my terms – but also, with the notion of the chosen or *ideal land* fit for the chosen people, the Jewish people<sup>21</sup>.

In keeping with Zionist perceptions at the time, the *chalutz* was also modern and advanced, particularly in contrast to the local Palestinian Arab population, whom the Zionist settlers (and many Zionist leaders) considered to be backward and primitive, even dirty and uncivilized<sup>22</sup>. Elon notes the pioneers' shock and disgust upon their arrival in Palestine,

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<sup>20</sup> Ben-Artzi (1990) notes that ideals of rural settlement and labor held sway despite the fact that the majority of Jewish settlers to Palestine gravitated to urban areas.

<sup>21</sup> My use of the term "people" above is consistent with Layoun's (1992) and Anderson's (1991) conception of the people as a nation.

<sup>22</sup> The Hebrew word *chalutz* means vanguard (Elon 1971), a term associated with being at the forefront or on the cutting edge, innovation and progress and therefore with being modern. In this section of writing I use the term Palestinian Arab(s) as well as the term Palestinians as this reflects the terminology used in the research literature; note that many Jewish and Israeli writers use the term "Arab" and not "Palestinian".

at "the Oriental confusion, the noise, the squalor of Jaffa, its filthy bazaars... its swarms of sore-eyed children, moneychangers, beggars, flies and lepers..." (1971 p.83)<sup>23</sup>. The strong and modern *chalutz*, described in Zionist texts at the time in opposition to the backward Palestinian peasant, also served to distinguish Jews in Palestine from Palestinian Arabs there<sup>24</sup>.

Life in Palestine at the turn of the 20th century proved to be much more difficult than the European Zionist leaders had initially envisaged. Living conditions were extremely harsh and the settlers – many of whom eventually returned to Europe – had to cope with disease, heat, a lack of farming expertise and inadequate funding for their endeavors. Nonetheless the vision of a Jewish homeland comprised of Jewish agricultural settlements built by the *chalutzim's* hard labor continued to serve as early Zionism's ideal.

**The ideal land: *Eretz Yisrael* and the Palestinian *terra nullus***

Despite the fact that Zionism emerged as a secular, political movement, the privileged site for Jewish settlement was determined on the basis of a longstanding spiritual and

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<sup>23</sup> Similar descriptions can also be found in Shulman 1979 and Avneri 1984.

<sup>24</sup> Biale (1992) observes that as clashes over land between Jewish settlers and the local Palestinian population became more heated, characteristics of the Diaspora Jew came to be projected onto Palestinians by the Zionist settlers, who perceived them to be effeminate – a quality that had previously been attributed to Jews by European gentiles.

religious connection to *Eretz Yisrael* (the Land of Israel)<sup>25</sup>. Early on, the Zionist movement adopted the Jewish biblical homeland – located in historic Palestine – as the target location for a modern Jewish national homeland, framing settlement in Palestine as a *return*, albeit not necessarily a messianic or religious one (Troen 2003)<sup>26</sup>.

What's more, Zionist settlement in Palestine was conceived as “a people without a land *returning* to a land without a people” (Zangwill in Kimmerling 1983 p.9)[italics added]. Jews were not only returning to their homeland; they were returning to a land without a people, an *uninhabited* land, a “*terra nullus* – an empty land awaiting its Jewish redemption after centuries of neglect” (Yiftachel 2006 p.54)<sup>27</sup>.

In reality however, Palestine was not an uninhabited or empty *terra nullus* but was densely populated by Palestinian Arabs. Writing about the dispossession of aboriginal peoples from their lands in Australia and the Americas, Blunt and Dowling observe that, “dispossession often resulted from a fiction of

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<sup>25</sup> *Eretz Yisrael* (also called Zion) is the biblical Jewish homeland to which Jews are destined to return following the arrival of the Messiah.

<sup>26</sup> Palestine was officially adopted as the privileged site for Jewish settlement at the Sixth Zionist Congress, in 1906. Other possible locations for the Jewish homeland considered by the Zionist movement included locations in South America and Africa. Kimmerling (1983) notes that while other territorial options such as Uganda or Argentina would have been easier to obtain and settle, they did not maintain as much interest, “Zionism without Palestine was evidently doomed to failure as a nationalist movement” (p.9). Yiftachel (2006), Troen (2003) and Elon (1971) note a continuous albeit small Jewish presence in Palestine since biblical times. As well, Jews in the Diaspora maintained a spiritual connection to *Eretz Yisrael* notably through religious rituals (Shulman 1979).

<sup>27</sup> Shulman describes the arrival of the first Russian Jews to Palestine in 1882, They “didn’t simply go to Palestine, but they *returned to Zion*”(1979 p.8)[Italics added].

a 'terra nullus' (land unoccupied), whereby indigenous occupation and ownership was unrecognized in the face of settler repossession" (2006 p.178), and this is also true of Zionist settlement in Palestine, which resulted in the widespread dislocation of Palestinians from their lands, to be discussed.

A proliferation of texts written at the turn of the century attest to an awareness by the Zionist leaders and *chalutzim*, of a substantial Palestinian Arab population in Palestine, as well as a range of debate about them (Elon 1971, Shulman 1979, Avneri 1984, Troen 2003, Yiftachel 2006, and Pappé 2006-a). These views about the indigenous Palestinian population ranged from that of "indifference and disregard to patronizing superiority" (Masalha 1992 p.7); to perceiving Palestinian Arabs as potential allies; and to considering them a potential threat. While at times acknowledging that Jewish settlement might cause tensions with the native Palestinian population, Zionist leaders generally tended to downplay potential Palestinian Arab opposition to Jewish settlement in Palestine. Some believed that Palestinians would eventually accept a territorial transfer to other Arab territories outside Palestine; others felt that Palestinians would trade nationalism for an improvement in their standard brought about by Zionist settlement (Shulman 1979).

Palestinian historian Nur Masalha (1992) observes that in so doing, the Zionist leaders downplayed or denied Palestinian nationalism, together with Palestinian claims to territory. As such, they also severely downplayed the indigenous Palestinian population's longstanding attachment to the land

of Palestine<sup>28</sup>. For Masalha (1992), it was not that the Zionist leaders or settlers to Palestine did not to see the indigenous Palestinians, rather, they considered them not worth seeing, and in so doing, they idealized Palestine as an empty land. Thus the Zionist ideal of *Eretz Yisrael* as an empty land also reflected a belief that the native Palestinian population would – or should – make way for the *chalutzim*. Further, the conviction that Palestinians would willingly cede territory to the Jewish nation-building project constitutes a form of othering whereby, as Pappé (2006-a) notes, the *chalutzim* set themselves above the native Palestinian population, perceiving them as inferior Others whose claims to territory would be superseded by the their own.

Much as early Zionists often considered Palestinians to be non-modern (Alon 1971, Shulman 1979, Avneri 1984), they also considered the *land* in Palestine to be non-modern, backward and primitive (Pappé 2006-a, Troen 2003). Palestine was considered by the *chalutzim* to be uncivilized and undeveloped, in desperate need of improvement and modernization by the Jewish settlers, “the land [Palestine] was also in need of experienced farmers who knew how to plow and plant; the wild stretches of land needed hands to cut roads; the country needed bricklayers, masons, locksmiths, and carpenters” (Shulman 1979 p.40)[my addition]<sup>29</sup>. In

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<sup>28</sup> This attachment is discussed in detail in Khalidi 1997.

<sup>29</sup> Alon (1971) notes that many early Zionists regarded Jewish settlement in Palestine as a sort of civilizing mission that would benefit the local Arab population; in reality, however, few technological or agricultural advances were ever shared with them by the *chalutzim*. Pappé (2006-a) observes that the *chalutzim* also sought to reform the indigenous Jewish population, whom they

contrast to these perceptions, Palestine at the turn of the 20th century had a burgeoning economy driven by agricultural production and industry (the manufacture of soap, tobacco and dry goods, among others), and was experiencing modernization as the result of growing trade relations with Europe<sup>30</sup>. Despite this reality, the perceived backwardness of Palestine and its indigenous Palestinian Arab population helped justify Zionist encroachment on Palestinian-inhabited territory. Here I reiterate Peleg's earlier point (1994) about how conceptions of Palestinians as inferior Others may provide a rationale for taking their lands away from them.

### **The *chalutz* ideal and exclusively Jewish land in Palestine**

The *chalutz* ideal may also be linked to Zionist ideals of separate and exclusively Jewish territory in Palestine. From 1905 onward the *chalutzim* began to establish completely separate and uniquely Jewish settlements that were self-sufficient and forbade the use of Arab labor. Beginning in

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regarded as backward, and this also led to tensions. Some historians write celebratory accounts of the glorious transformation of "backward" Palestine into modern *Eretz Yisrael*, describing the heroism of the *chalutzim* and their miraculous accomplishments in transforming a primitive land into a lush, modern nation; see in particular Shulman 1979 and Avneri 1984.

<sup>30</sup> For details see Khalidi 1984, Khalidi 2006, Pappé 2006-a, and Farsoun and Aruri 2006. Khalidi (1984) also describes a variety of cultural, educational, political, religious and athletic organizations and activities in Palestine at this time, and depicted in a vast range of photographs collected in his study. In contrast Zionist visual culture at the time tended to depict exclusively rural scenes of Palestinians in peasant dress; many of these images are also reproduced in the historical research literature, for example, in Elon (1971).

the 1920s, these ideals of Jewish exclusivity and separation came to be implemented at a structural level: in addition to establishing separate and exclusively Jewish settlements, the *chalutzim* also began to create an entirely separate Jewish infrastructure (Pappe 2006-a, Troen 2003)<sup>31</sup>. They did so with a view to establishing a future Jewish state, inspired by the 1917 Balfour Declaration that promised British support for the creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine<sup>32</sup>. This new infrastructure was comprised of separate and exclusively Jewish educational, health and legal systems, together with the foundations for a separate Jewish economy. It constituted what Yiftachel calls a "dual society" (2006 p.58) in Palestine<sup>33</sup>.

Zakim (2006) observes that at this time territory also came to be seen as being linked to the infrastructure that would eventually support a Jewish state. Most lands settled by the *chalutzim* prior to 1948 were legally purchased from Arab absentee landlords<sup>34</sup>. Around this time, however, lands

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<sup>31</sup> These authors both describe this process in detail, though from different perspectives: Troen praises, and Pappe harshly criticizes, these endeavors.

<sup>32</sup> In 1917, British Foreign Secretary James Balfour urged the British government to support the eventual creation of a Jewish national homeland in Palestine, in a letter that came to be known as the Balfour Declaration. As Palestinian historian Sami Hadawi observes (1989), in 1917, Palestinian Arabs constituted 92 per cent of the population in Mandate Palestine and Jews, less than 10 per cent. Nonetheless, Britain recognized the rights of another people to establish a homeland there. After the defeat of the Ottoman Empire in 1917, Great Britain was granted a Mandate to administer Palestine. The Mandate period lasted from 1917 to 1948.

<sup>33</sup> For a detailed discussion of the discrepancies between Jewish and Palestinian society during the Mandate period, see pp.9-21 in Khalidi 2006.

<sup>34</sup> A meticulously detailed account of Jewish land acquisitions from 1878-1948 can be found in Avneri 1984.

purchased and owned by Jews came to be consolidated under the ownership of Jewish and Zionist organizations, notably the Jewish National Fund<sup>35</sup>. Jewish lands in Palestine thus came to be owned not by individuals, but collectively, by Jewish organizations, and this in turn ensured that Jewish land in Palestine would be "reserved exclusively for Jewish use" (Farsoun and Aruri 2006 p.69).

The 1920s also saw a dramatic increase in the numbers of Palestinian Arab farmers displaced from their lands by the *chalutzim* after their purchase by Jewish organizations. The Zionist strategy was to buy lands from absentee landlords, but also, to evict the Palestinian tenant farmers who worked and inhabited them. This resulted in widespread Arab poverty, as well as hostility and violence directed against the Jewish settlers and settlements (Pappe 2006-a, Farsoun and Aruri 2006)<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>35</sup> For a detailed study of the history of the Jewish National Fund up to 1948 see Lehn 1974.

<sup>36</sup> This reiterates the point about Palestinian resistance made on page 31 of the previous chapter, which linked resistance to territorial encroachment by the Zionist settlers to Palestine. Some writers tend to downplay or deny the displacement of Palestinian farmers; see in particular Avneri 1984. Farsoun and Aruri (2006) observe that Palestinian discontent and violence against Jewish settlers were highest after periods of intensive land transfers, periods that were also accompanied by increased Jewish immigration to Palestine. Many Jewish and Israeli writers in contrast, characterize Palestinian resistance as an unfounded and violent rejection of legitimate Zionist objectives, rather than as a response to Jewish encroachment on their lands; see for example Troen 2003, Avneri 1984, Gelber 2001, and Dershowitz 2003. Hadawi (1989) notes three major periods of violent Palestinian resistance: 1920 and 1921; 1929; and the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt.

### **Toward the Jewish national body: the *Homa Umigdal* settlements**

The 1930s marked a dramatic shift in Zionist settlement and spatial practices in Palestine. This shift was characterized by a more strategic settlement approach, evidenced by the *Homa Umigdal* (Wall and Tower, also called Stockade and Tower) settlements, beginning in 1936. Conceived in the wake of escalating Palestinian Arab violence, each of these individual settlements could be assembled in a single day from prefabricated parts, contained an observation tower, and was surrounded by walls – hence the name wall and tower – to protect their inhabitants from potential Arab attacks. Eighty such settlements were established between 1936 and 1939, and another 80 between 1943 and 1948 (Troen 2003)<sup>37</sup>.

Conceived in part as defensive settlements, the *Homa Umigdal* settlements also played a strategic role in occupying and controlling territory. Rotbard notes that the *Homa Umigdal* settlements constituted “a system of settlement seemingly defensive but essentially of offensive form” (2003 p.42) because they were used to strategically assert Jewish control over territory. Located primarily on hilltops, clusters of settlements were strategically built to occupy a large, N-shaped swath of land across Palestine; see Figure 1 on page 74. As Troen (2003) observes, it was no longer enough for Jews in Palestine to purchase and own land; they had to populate it in order to fully control it. As Kimmerling

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<sup>37</sup> For a detailed analysis of *Homa Umigdal* see pp.62-84 in Troen 2003; see also Rotbard 2003. Troen’s is a more celebratory account that links the settlements to the progress of the Jewish nation-building project, whereas Rotbard’s critical analysis situates the *Homa Umigdal* settlements within the larger context of Zionist and later Israeli spatial practices that use settlement construction to assert Jewish control over Palestinian lands.

(1983) has noted, control of territory requires a physical presence on it. The strategic location of the *Homa Umigdal* settlements enabled the *chalutzim* to control a substantial amount of territory, with a small number of inhabitants.

The *Homa Umigdal* project was also influenced by the 1937 Peel Commission report that recommended the abolition of the British Mandate in Palestine, and which set the stage for the creation of a Jewish state there<sup>38</sup>. The settlements were used to control territory that could be incorporated into a future Jewish state. Here again, *Homa Umigdal* represented a profound shift in Zionist spatial practices, from establishing individual settlements, to building strategic groupings of settlements that might begin to delineate the borders of a future Jewish state. As Moshe Shertok (later Sharett), one of the leaders of the Zionist community in Palestine (*Yishuv*) observed, "From the political point of view, I know of no more pressing tasks, no more effective weapon, than founding settlements in [border] areas, and therefore creating facts"

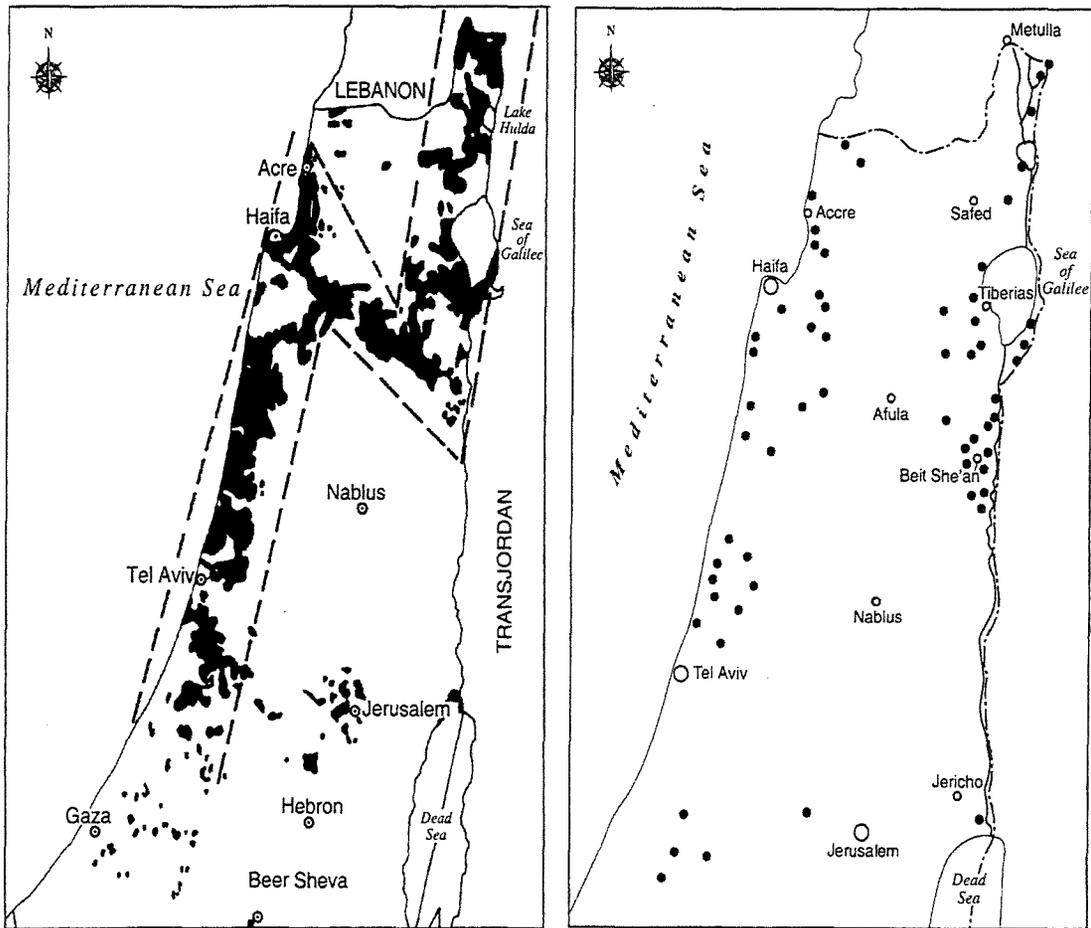
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<sup>38</sup> The report recommended the annexation of most of Palestine to Transjordan, with a small area of land set aside for a Jewish state (Pappe 2006-a). The report was rejected by Palestinian leaders. A British White Paper adopted in 1939 tried to accommodate Palestinian demands by placing limits on Zionist immigration to Palestine as well as on land purchases there; it was unanimously rejected by Zionist leaders (Pappe 2002-a, Hadawi 1989). For Palestinian historian Rashid Khalidi (2006), these concessions came far too late. He asserts most importantly that Great Britain and the international community (the League of Nations and later the United Nations) had since 1917 consistently privileged the interests of the Zionist settlers over those of the indigenous Palestinian population, showing virtually no commitment to Palestinian self-determination while embracing the Zionist vision of a Jewish homeland in Palestine. For a detailed study of the political dynamics between Palestinians and the British authorities during the Mandate period, see Khalidi 2006.

(in Troen 2003 p.69)<sup>39</sup>. The *Homa Umigdal* settlements may be linked to the borders of a future Jewish state – borders that would serve to include Jews but to exclude Palestinians. As such they may also be linked to a more definitive territorial separation between Jews and Palestinians.

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<sup>39</sup> The strategy of creating facts has also been a feature of Israeli settlement policy in the Occupied Territories, a point I return to later in this chapter. As Rotbard notes, "It [Homa Umigdal] is the metaphor of the Israeli practice of *fait accompli*" (2003 p.46).



**Figure 1 The Homa Umigdal settlements and their locations**

The graphic on the left shows the “N” of Jewish settlement; the shaded areas represent land purchased or settled by Jews prior to 1948 (Troen 2003). The graphic on the right shows 60 new *Homa Umigdal* settlements established between 1936 and 1939. Note the location of the settlements in an “N” shape across territory, as well as their location along what would later become the borders of the state of Israel.

Source: Troen 2003 p.71 and p.72.

**Toward the ideal Jewish land: the deterritorialization of Palestinians from historic Palestine**

The Zionist movement, from early on in its inception, envisaged a Jewish national homeland in Palestine. All of its

activities there – the purchase and settlement of land and later the creation of a Jewish socio-economic infrastructure, what Pappe (2006-b p.17) calls the “Zionization” of Palestine – were carried with in the goal of eventually creating a Jewish state there. Jewish spatial practices prior to 1947 consisted primarily in legally purchasing land and establishing separate and exclusively Jewish settlements. However by 1947 only a small portion of territory in Palestine – approximately six percent of its total area and less than ten percent of cultivable land – was controlled by Jews. In November 1947, the United Nations adopted Resolution 181 recommending the end of the British Mandate in Palestine and the partitioning of Mandatory Palestine into two independent states, one Jewish and one Palestinian. The Zionist movement's dream of a Jewish state in historic Palestine was on the verge of being realized.

When the British Mandate for Palestine expired on May 14 1948, the Jewish Agency (which administered the Jewish community in Palestine and served as its unofficial government) declared the creation of the state of Israel. However the events surrounding Israel's creation, from the passing of Resolution 181 in November 1947, to the signing of Israel's final armistice agreement, with Syria, in July 1949, are highly contested. These events are known in the Arab world as the War for Palestine or the 1948 War, and in Israel, the War of Independence (Rogon and Shlaim 2001, Masalha 1992).

Of particular relevance to this research are the expulsions, between December 1947 and January 1949, of approximately 750,000 Palestinians – 80 per cent of the Arab inhabitants of

what became the state of Israel – from their lands by Zionist forces in Palestine and, after 1948, the Israeli Defense Forces (Masalha 1992, Pappé 2006-b, Farsoun and Aruri 2006, Morris 2004). These expulsions were the result of attempts by these groups to ensure the creation of a Jewish *majority* state with the smallest possible Palestinian population (Hadawi 1989, Masalha 1992, Khalidi 1988 and 1992, Pappé 2006-b).

The circumstances surrounding the 1948 War – and the range of disagreement about them – cannot be adequately explored in the context of this writing, which is primarily concerned with the deterritorialization of Palestinians in 1947-1949. What may be agreed on, is that UN Resolution 181 provoked new levels of violence between the *chalutzim* and Palestinians; that the state of Israel was created in 1948, and a Palestinian Arab one was not; and that the Arab armies that went to war against the new state of Israel experienced a resounding defeat<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>40</sup> The official Israeli government account of the events following Israel's declaration of independence, is of the invasion of the new state of Israel less than 24 hours after it declared its independence, by Egypt, Jordan, Syria, Lebanon, and Iraq, followed by a miraculous Jewish victory against these invading Arab armies in the War of Independence, which lasted for 15 months; see <[www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/The+Arab-Israeli+Wars.htm#1948](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/History/Modern+History/Centenary+of+Zionism/The+Arab-Israeli+Wars.htm#1948)>; see also Gelber 2001 and Kurzman 1970. For a critical account of the 1948 War by Israeli historians, see in particular the essays in Rogon and Shlaim 2001, Pappé 2006-a, Flapan 1987 and Shlaim 1999. Hadawi 1989, Farsoun and Aruri 2006, and Pappé 2006-a emphasize escalating Zionist aggression against Palestinians beginning in 1947, with a total disregard for plans to establish an independent Palestinian state. Khalidi (2001), focusing on events in Arab Palestine itself, examines some of the reasons why Palestine was lost in 1948, citing for example, structural imbalances of the British Mandate which favored the

While acknowledging increased Palestinian Arab attacks on the *chalutzim*, my focus is on the deliberate and strategic expulsion of Palestinians from their lands by the Haganah, beginning in November 1947 in the wake of Resolution 181, and culminating in July 1949.

By the time the state of Israel declared its independence on May 14, 1948, Zionist forces had already expelled approximately 250,000 Palestinians from Mandate Palestine (Pappe 2006-b). Khalidi (2001) observes that the creation of the state of Israel in May 1948 marked the halfway point in the expulsion of Palestinians from their lands. In the months following the creation of the state of Israel, hundreds of thousands of Palestinians continued to be systematically expelled by Israeli forces. By January 1949 a total of approximately 750,000 Palestinians – had fled Palestine, most of them forcibly<sup>41</sup>. Only 140,000 to 150,000 Palestinians remained inside the state of Israel, representing a Palestinian Arab minority of 17 percent (Pappe 2006-b). Further, the state of Israel controlled 77 percent of the territory of what had been Mandatory Palestine (Khalidi 2001). For Farsoun and Aruri (2006) and for Khalidi (2006), Arab Palestine had ceased to exist.

The question of what happened to the expelled Palestinians in 1947-1949 is a matter of much contention and disagreement. As Avi Shlaim (1999) notes, the official Israeli government account is of the mass flight of Palestinians on the orders

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Zionists; a lack of Palestinian political cohesion and leadership, and the failure of the 1936-1939 Arab Revolt.

<sup>41</sup> Masalha (1992) places this figure at 804,000; and Pappe (2006-b) at 800,000; Farsoun and Aruri (2006) at between 750-800,000; and Morris (2004) at approximately 700,000.

of Arab leaders. This view is echoed by many Israeli historians, notably Gelber (2001) and Kurzman (1970), as well as by many non-Israeli Jewish writers most notably Dershowitz (2003)<sup>42</sup>.

Beginning in the late 1980s, and following the declassification of documents in Israeli government archives, some Israeli historians began to publish research confirming that approximately 700,000 Palestinians had indeed been expelled by Zionist/Israeli forces in 1947-1949 (Flapan 1987, Pappe 1992, Shlaim 1999, Morris 1987 and 2004). However they argued that these expulsions were not the outcome of an official strategy or plan, but rather, the result of the circumstances of war<sup>43</sup>.

In contrast many (primarily) Palestinian scholars – working not only with declassified Israeli documents but also, Palestinian oral history – have concluded that the expulsions of Palestinians were deliberate and systematic (Khalidi 1988, Masalha 1992, Farsoun and Aruri 2006, Pappe 2006-b, Massad 2006). These scholars assert that the expulsions were premeditated and deliberately and meticulously planned, in a series of four successive plans adopted by the Jewish High Command in Palestine between 1945 and 1947, Plans A (Aleph) through D (Dalet). They note that the final plan for the expulsions was elaborated in Plan D, adopted by the Jewish High Command in 1947 (Khalidi 1988, Masalha 1992, Farsoun and

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<sup>42</sup> Khalidi's study (1959) of BBC and other Arab-language radio broadcasts at the time disproves the theory of Arab evacuation orders.

<sup>43</sup> Note a substantial shift in Morris' views in Morris (2004), to one that acknowledges the mass expulsions but that also justifies them as an apt response to Palestinian violence.

Aruri 2006, Pappe 2006-b, Massad 2006)<sup>44</sup>. Pappe's recent study (2006-b) supports the assertions about Plan D by other scholars, and he provides a meticulously researched, minutely detailed account of the systematic expulsion of almost 800,000 Palestinians, first from urban centers and then from rural/village areas<sup>45</sup>. Most importantly for the purposes of this research, he locates the expulsions as the outcome of a Zionist ideology that sought to create not only a Jewish state in Palestine, but an *exclusively Jewish* state. So too, do Hadawi (1989), Khalidi (1988), Masalha (1992), Farsoun and Aruri (2006) and Massad (2006), who all observe that the expulsions were the product of a Zionist ideology that had aggressively pursued the creation of a Jewish state in an area populated by another people<sup>46</sup>.

The massive uprooting of Palestinians in 1947-1949, marked a shift in Zionist spatial practices, from the methodical but gradual purchase and settlement of territory, to the mass deterritorialization of Palestinians. Strictly speaking these expulsions did not constitute a type of *spatial* practice.

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<sup>44</sup> Khalidi (1988) provides a detailed analysis of Plan Dalet, its objectives and history. Khalidi (1988) also provides an English translation of the Plan from its original Hebrew version (in Slutsky, Y. Ed. 1972. *Sefer Toldot Hahaganah* [History of the Haganah] Vol. 3. Tel Aviv: Zionist Library, Appendix 39, pp.1939-1943); see pp.24-33 in Khalidi 1988. Pappe (2006-b) and Khalidi (1988) criticize the British government and the UN for not doing enough to protect Palestinians after the British Mandate officially ended in May 1948.

<sup>45</sup> Pappe's analysis (2006-b) uses a framework of ethnic cleansing. Note a radical shift in his views from those published in 1992.

<sup>46</sup> Masalha (1992) examines the concept of transfer – the transfer of Palestinians out of Palestine – in Zionist thought, and studies the various strategies elaborated by the Zionist leaders to rid Palestine of its Palestinian Arab population, at various points between from 1882 through 1948.

However they are inextricably connected to previously discussed ideals that motivated Zionist spatial practices in Palestine prior to 1947: the creation of separate and exclusively Jewish space, and the assertion of exclusive Jewish control over as much territory as possible.

The observations of the scholars cited on the previous link back to the notion of the Palestinian *terra nullus* or empty land, introduced on page 64. Despite its majority Arab population, Zionist leaders idealized Palestine as a *terra nullus*. Between 1947 and 1949 Palestine was largely emptied of its Palestinian Arab population and the Zionist ideal of an empty land – a land devoid of Palestinians – had become a reality. This laid the foundation for the official consolidation of land in the newly created state of Israel, under exclusively Jewish ownership and control.

### **The Sabra ideal and exclusively Jewish land in Israel after 1948**

This section explores the *Sabra* as the ideal Israeli body, supplanting the *chalutz*, beginning in 1948 with the creation of the state of Israel. My specific interest is in exploring a relationship between the *Sabra* ideal and spatial policy in the nascent Jewish state, specifically, the consolidation of land ownership under exclusively Jewish control during the state's early years, from 1948 through the 1950s. The observations in this section of writing owe a great deal to the investigations of Israeli scholar Oren Yiftachel (1998, 2002, 2006).

The term *Sabra* is derived from *tsabar*, the prickly pear cactus which is native to the land. Like the plant after which it is named, the term *Sabra* is associated with being native to the land, and it came to designate the first generation of native-born Israelis<sup>47</sup>. For Israeli sociologist Oz Almog (2000) the *Sabra* generation spans the years 1930 to 1970, and coincided with the formative years of Israeli society. However, as Almog (2000) observes, while the number of actual *Sabras* born *in* Israel was at first relatively small – about 20,000 people – the influence of the *Sabra* as the model (or ideal, in terms used throughout this chapter) that an entire generation of Israelis should emulate and aspire to, was enormous<sup>48</sup>.

Like the *tsabar*, the *Sabra* was said to be tough and prickly on the outside but soft on the inside. And as the ideal Israeli, the *Sabra* was male, muscular, fit and strong, tanned and often blonde; he was tough, a soldier, a farmer and *kibbutz*nik; was confident and assertive; spoke Hebrew as a

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<sup>47</sup> As a native Israeli, the *Sabra* is also linked to ideals of a continuous Jewish presence in Eretz Yisrael going back to biblical times, "The *Sabra*, then, is not something new under the sun. In a sense, he is three thousand years old. He is the Hebrew in his own land, reborn" (Russcol and Banai 1970 p.13). The *tsabar* cactus is called the *sabr* in Arabic, highlighting the irony of the term's appropriation, in Hebrew, to describe "native" Israelis, who became native only by virtue of expelling the indigenous Palestinians.

<sup>48</sup> Almog's excellent study of *Sabra* identity details the various social, cultural, and educational mechanisms through which Israelis were socialized into the *Sabra* ideal. Note that the scholars cited in this section on the *Sabra* (notably Almog and later Rubinstein) are concerned with the *Sabra* ideal shaping Israeli *identity*, whereas my concern is with the *Sabra* ideal and its relationship to territory.

first language and talked in a direct manner (Almog 2000)<sup>49</sup>. As a soldier and *kibbutznik*, he embodied ideals of settlement and defense of his country; of self-sacrifice for the Jewish nation; and of *re'ut* – kinship and collectivity. The *Sabra* shared many of these traits with the *chalutz*, for both represented the new Zionist Jew as the antidote to the Diaspora Jew. But whereas the *chalutz* was European in his origins, the *Sabra* was native Israeli. Of particular concern is the fact that the *Sabra* was not only Israeli but also *Jewish-Israeli*. Like the IDF soldier (and with reference to Weiss 2002-a), the *Sabra* ideal is an exclusionary one, because it includes Jewish Israelis but excludes Palestinians.

Yiftachel (2006) notes that in its Declaration of Independence, the state of Israel declared itself to be a specifically *Jewish* state, and in its early years it formally enshrined the specifically *Jewish* nature of the state in law<sup>50</sup>. This process included the enactment of laws that would guarantee exclusive Jewish control over land in Israel. The

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<sup>49</sup> Many women were *Sabras*, however the *Sabra* ideal was male and masculine (Almog 2000).

<sup>50</sup> Further, for Yiftachel (2006, 1998), the state of Israel is an ethnocratic one (what he also terms an ethnocracy) because it promotes the interests of the dominant ethnic group (Jews) over those of its Arab and ethnic minority citizens. This has resulted in profound inequalities between Israeli Jews and non-Jews, because rights (for example, citizenship rights and the right to own land) are granted based on one's being Jewish, and not necessarily, Israeli. See Yiftachel 2006 pp.11-47 for a discussion of political ethnocracy; and chapters 4, 5 and 6 in Yiftachel 2006 for an analysis of ethnocracy in Israel considered in terms of political democracy and unequal voting rights, unequal citizenship rights, and unequal land rights. On unequal citizenship rights in Israel see also Yiftachel 2002. As Massad importantly observes, "Israel was designated the state of Jews worldwide and not of its citizens" (2006 p.19).

*Sabra's* specifically *Jewish-Israeliness* may be linked to the ideal of Israeli land as being *exclusively Jewish* land, that is, land owned and controlled exclusively by Jewish Israelis. The deracination of the majority of Palestinians from their lands in 1947-1949 produced land in the new state of Israel as a sort of territorial *tabula rasa*, a clean slate upon which exclusive Jewish control over territory – what Yiftachel (1998, 2002, 2006) calls spatial Judaization – could be asserted<sup>51</sup>. He observes that policies of spatial Judaization served to "legally and institutionally" (2006 p.136) consolidate land ownership in Jewish hands and Jewish hands alone.

Spatial Judaization was contingent first and foremost on preventing the displaced Palestinian refugees from returning to their lands, and this was accomplished through the adoption of legal measures that forbade their return to lands located inside the state of Israel (Yiftachel 2006)<sup>52</sup>. As well, after 1948 over 400 Palestinian villages and towns inside Israel were systematically destroyed, and Jewish settlements and development towns built in their place (Massad 2006, Khalidi 1992); see Figure 2, on the following page<sup>53</sup>. What's more, thousands of Palestinian citizens of the

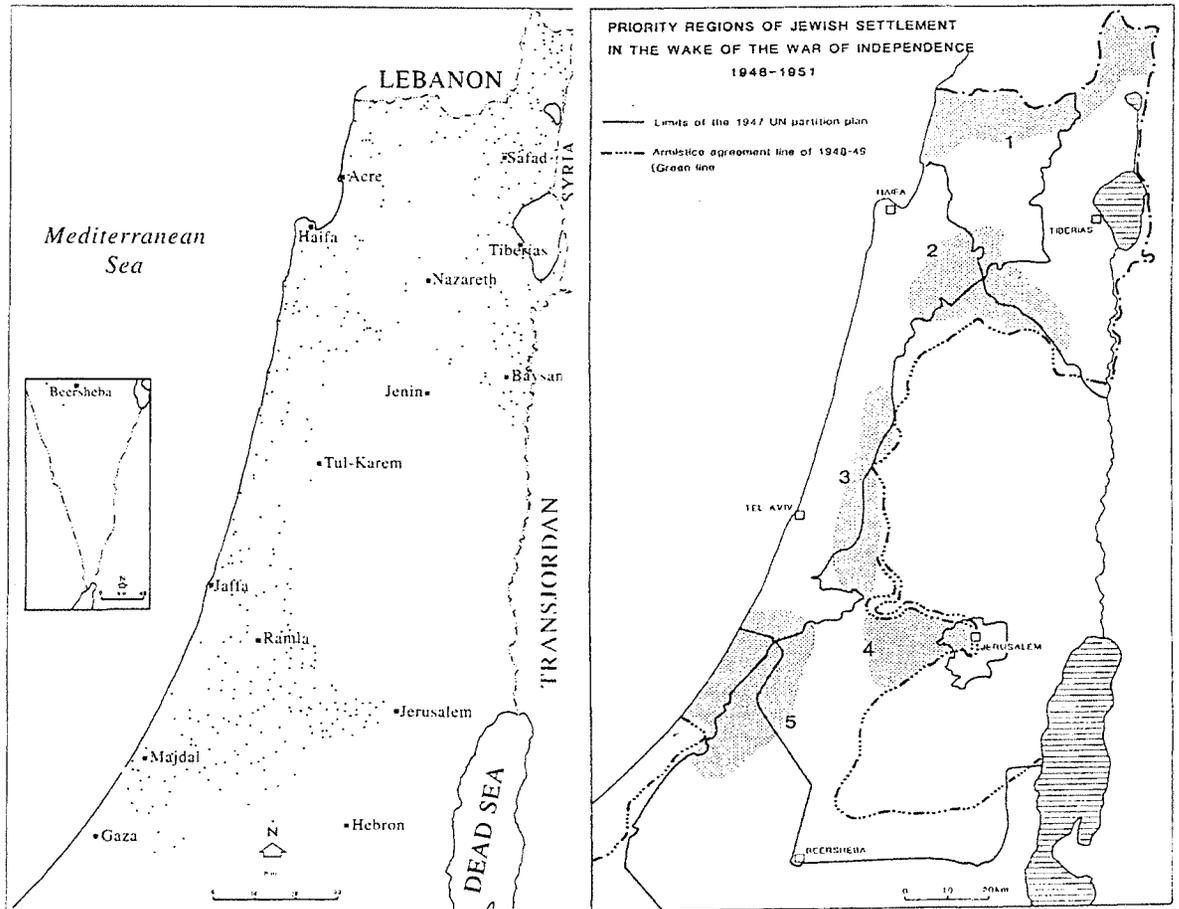
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<sup>51</sup> Yiftachel (2006) further notes that while most of the legal measures to Judaize territory were enacted during the early years of the Israeli state, they served to shape the character of the Israeli lands system through the 1990s.

<sup>52</sup> Even Israeli scholars who deny the mass expulsions of Palestinians (Reichman 1990, Gelber 2001) or who justify them on the basis of self-defense (Morris 2004) agree that blocking the refugees' return constituted official Israeli policy.

<sup>53</sup> The destruction of 418 Palestinian villages in 1948 is meticulously detailed in Khalidi (1992). The villages were also renamed in Hebrew; see Massad 2006 and Pappé 2006-b. The Israeli

new state of Israel were internally – and often forcibly – displaced from their towns and villages after 1948 in order to make way for the new Israeli settlements and towns (Farsoun and Aruri 2006, Yiftachel 2006, Masalha 1992).



**Figure 2** Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel and priority areas for new Jewish settlements

The map on the left shows the location of Palestinian villages destroyed by Israel in 1948. The map on the right shows the priority areas where new Jewish settlements were to be built. Note the substantial overlap of new Jewish settlements over areas that had previously been inhabited by Palestinians.

Source: Pappé 2006-b p.294 (left); Reichmann 1990 p.329 (right).

organization Zochrot (remembrance) raises awareness about the villages and offers an extensive database of information about them (in Hebrew and Arabic) on its website, <[www.zochrot.org](http://www.zochrot.org)>.

Yiftachel (2006) observes that in May 1948, the Israeli government controlled approximately 78 per cent of the territory in what had been Mandate Palestine, however, only 8.5 per cent of Israel's land was actually *owned* by Jews. During the early 1950s, the Israeli government enacted a series of legal measures that would consolidate land ownership in Israel under exclusive Jewish control. Having already denied the expelled Palestinian refugees the right to return to their lands, the Israeli government moved to expropriate the lands that had been forcibly abandoned by the refugees, and to transfer them to Israeli state ownership. Next, it passed measures to confiscate private lands from Palestinian citizens of Israel, also transferring these to state ownership.

All told, the Israeli government transferred approximately 80 percent of the country's lands, including those seized from Palestinians, to state ownership, officially categorizing them as state lands. Next, it granted exclusive responsibility and control of state lands to Jewish institutions such as the Jewish National Fund and later the Israeli Lands Authority, thus ensuring that only Jews could own or control the great majority of territory in Israel. What's more, the new laws prohibited the sale, leasing and sub-leasing of state lands to non-Jews, effectively restricting not only the ownership, but also the use of state lands *exclusively* to Jewish Israelis<sup>54</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> A detailed account of all of these measures can be found in Yiftachel 2006 and in Chapter 6 in particular, pp.131-156. Writing

With the enactment of these legal measures, control of the majority of territory in Israel was consolidated under exclusively Jewish ownership and control. As Weiss (2002-a) has noted, body boundaries in Israel are linked to territorial boundaries by virtue of the fact that they serve to include Jews but to exclude non-Jews. The *Sabra* ideal, like that of the IDF soldier cited by Weiss, may also be linked to the inclusion of Jews and the exclusion of non-Jews, for the *Sabra* was specifically *Jewish-Israeli*.

The *Sabra* is also specifically Ashkenazi Jewish (Almog 2000), that is, of eastern or northern European ancestry. As such the *Sabra* ideal may also be linked to the spatial segregation of non-Ashkenazi Jewish Israelis.

Policies of spatial Judaization also involved efforts to fill the country's newly Judaized lands with Jewish immigrants and refugees from Europe, Africa and the Arab world (Yiftachel 1998). The Israeli government promoted and facilitated Jewish immigration to Israel. Between 1948 and 1951 over 550,000 Jewish immigrants came to Israel (Segev 1998)<sup>55</sup>. Israeli immigration policy also had a spatial dimension: the spatial settlement and distribution of the country's new immigrants was dictated by centralized state planning policies that specified where the new immigrants may or may not settle.

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in 1998, he observed that Palestinian Arabs comprised 16 per cent of Israel's population but owned only three per cent of the country's land (Yiftachel 1998).

<sup>55</sup> See Segev (1998) for a detailed analysis of Israeli immigration policy at this time. The 1950 Law of Return granted Israeli citizenship to any Jew. This connects back to Yiftachel's analysis (2006, 1998) of unequal citizenship rights for non-Jews.

Of note, was the 1950 Sharon Plan, a master plan adopted by the government that outlined the types and locations of Israel's new settlements, as well as the spatial distribution of the country's population<sup>56</sup>. According to this Plan, new immigrants to Israel were to be settled primarily in newly created development towns and in areas with the most dangerous locations and the least arable land. During the 1950s for example, the majority of Oriental and African Jewish immigrants were settled, often forcibly, in border areas most vulnerable to attack by Arabs (Yiftachel 1998, Segev 1998)<sup>57</sup>. These planning policies created hierarchies among Jewish Israelis, with Ashkenazi Jews settling in the most arable and desirable areas, and non-Ashkenazi Jews relegated to less desirable and more dangerous locations<sup>58</sup>.

And while the new Jewish immigrants to Israel were socialized into the *Sabra* ideal, the *Sabra* himself, as noted by Almog (2000), was Ashkenazi. Therefore, the *Sabra* may also be linked to the ideal of specifically *Ashkenazi Jewish land* in Israel, that is, of territory controlled by Israeli Jews of

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<sup>56</sup> For a detailed account of the Plan see Chapter 9 in Troen 2003; for a critical analysis of the Plan see Efrat 2003.

<sup>57</sup> Yiftachel (2001) provides a detailed analysis of Mizrahi settlement. He further notes that massive settlement construction to accommodate the new immigrants resulted in the surrounding and containment of Arab villages by the new Jewish settlements (Yiftachel 2006), a practice later undertaken in the West Bank. Massad (2006) notes that the majority of *Mizrahi* immigrants who settled in urban centers resided in slum areas.

<sup>58</sup> See Chapters 5 and 6 in Segev 1998 for a comprehensive analysis of the negative perceptions and racism directed at Jewish immigrants by Ashkenazi Israeli Jews. See also Massad 2006 pp.55-76. Rubinstein (2000) observes that the contradictions inherent in the *Sabra* ideal – a veneer of inclusivity that masked the exclusion of large numbers of Israeli Jews – were the primary reason for its demise in the 1970s.

European ancestry, and organized according to spatial hierarchies for Israeli Jews and non-Jews alike. Land in Israel was consolidated not only under Jewish ownership and control, but under Ashkenazi Jewish control, because the Israeli government and its land institutions were controlled primarily by Ashkenazi Jews, many of whom had been leaders in the pre-state Zionist movement.

Accordingly, the vast majority of territory in Israel would be controlled exclusively by Ashkenazi Jews. Palestinian refugees, having been deracinated from the Jewish state, were forbidden from returning there. Non-Jewish citizens of Israel were forbidden from owning land in over 80 per cent of the country. Finally, Oriental and African Israeli Jews were spatially segregated from Ashkenazi Israeli Jews<sup>59</sup>. Because Ashkenazi Jews constituted Israel's ruling elite, they controlled the state's legal and planning mechanisms. Consequently, they also directed the country's settlement practices, as well as the spatial distribution of all Israelis, be they Jewish or not.

### **Military occupation of territory and the soldier ideal**

The *Tzahal* or IDF soldier emerged as the ideal Israeli body, replacing that of the *Sabra* beginning in 1967 with Israel's conquest of the West Bank and Gaza<sup>60</sup>. Like the *chalutz* and the *Sabra*, the IDF soldier is male, Ashkenazi, fit and strong; he

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<sup>59</sup> Despite their status as inferior Others to Ashkenazi Jews, Oriental and African Israeli Jews were of a higher status than Palestinian citizens of Israel.

<sup>60</sup> Israel also conquered East Jerusalem, the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights; see Pappe 2006-a. It immediately annexed East Jerusalem (Weizman 2007).

is non-disabled (Weiss 2002-a); and in keeping with an ideal that privileges normative masculinity, he is heterosexual (Kaplan 2002). The *Tzahal* soldier also embodies ideals of self-sacrifice, for he is willing to give up his life to defend his country<sup>61</sup>.

Like the *Sabra* before him, the soldier may also be linked to the exclusion of Palestinians as well as to hierarchies among Israeli Jews. Returning again to Weiss's comments (2002-a) about the body's links to inclusion and exclusion in Israel, the soldier, as the chosen or ideal Israeli body, may be linked to the inclusion of Jewish Israelis and to the exclusion of non-Jewish Israelis, because non-Jews generally do not serve in the IDF. The only non-Jewish Israelis to be conscripted into the Israeli army are Druze men (Klein 2000). Bedouin men may serve voluntarily, and Muslims are exempted from service (Klein 2000). Non-Jews who do choose to serve in the IDF are segregated into specific units (Kaplan 2002)<sup>62</sup>.

More than anything, the IDF soldier may be associated with the exclusion of Palestinian Arabs<sup>63</sup>. As Kanaaneh notes,

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<sup>61</sup> For a study soldiering and self-sacrifice in Israel and in the years preceding its creation, see Zerubavel 2008. While women are conscripted and serve in the IDF, the soldier ideal is male.

<sup>62</sup> Kanaaneh (2003) asserts that these divisions, deliberately outlined and institutionalized as early as 1949, were adopted in order to prevent the Arab minorities from coalescing into one group.

<sup>63</sup> Very few Palestinian citizens of Israel serve in the IDF. Kanaaneh's investigations (2003) focus on the approximately 5,000 Palestinian citizens of Israel who have chosen to serve in the IDF. He notes that while they serve out of a sense of belonging to the nation of Israel, these Palestinian soldiers are often accused of not being trustworthy by (predominantly right wing) Israeli Jews and soldiers on the one hand; and of being "traitors" by Palestinians. For details see Kanaaneh (2003). Palestinians in the Occupied Territories tend not to serve in the IDF.

"Military service has enormous symbolic significance as well as social and material benefits in Israel, and has been a key institution in the *production both of Jewish belonging and Palestinian marginalization*" (2003 p.6)[italics added].

Weiss (2002-a) notes that the IDF soldier serves as an equalizing force in Jewish-Israeli society, because all Jewish-Israelis serve in the IDF<sup>64</sup>. However she also notes the dominance of Ashkenazi Jews in the IDF leadership and in its elite units (2002-b). Thus the soldier ideal, too, may be associated with hierarchies and inequalities in Israeli society, owing, among other things, to the disproportionate number of Ashkenazis in leadership positions, the exclusion of non-Jews, the marginalization of homosexual soldiers, and the confinement of women to specific roles<sup>65</sup>.

With the conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967, the IDF soldier has been associated not only with defending the nation but also with military occupation<sup>66</sup>. While I argue that the IDF soldier constitutes the Israeli body ideal after 1967, my interest is less with the soldier ideal in and of itself, and more with its links to the military occupation of territory upon which Israeli spatial practices – notably the

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<sup>64</sup> Ultra-Orthodox Jews are exempt from military service while studying and they tend to serve in religious, non-combat units during their military service.

<sup>65</sup> For a detailed study of gender roles in the IDF see Yuval-Davis 1987. On military service and gender relations in Israel see Klein 2000. On homosexuals in the IDF see Kaplan 2002.

<sup>66</sup> Unlike East Jerusalem, Israel did not formally annex the West Bank and Gaza, for in doing so it would have to grant citizenship rights to the almost one million Palestinians who resided there. Instead, 590,000 Palestinians in the West Bank and 380,000 in Gaza, fell under Israeli military rule in 1967 (Pappe 2006-a).

construction of Jewish settlements – are contingent<sup>67</sup>. I focus on the West Bank because by the time I began writing this chapter, Israel had already dismantled its Jewish settlements in Gaza<sup>68</sup>.

In the West Bank, distinctions between spatial objectives and military ones have become increasingly blurred over time, characterized for example by the active role played by the IDF and the Israeli Ministry of Defense (MOD) in planning the locations and layouts of the Jewish settlements and blocks of settlements. Military orders are used to seize Palestinian inhabited territory on which Jewish settlements, roads and

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<sup>67</sup> While the IDF soldier remains an ideal, it has also become increasingly contested. Many Israelis oppose the occupation and a growing number of IDF soldiers refuse to serve in the Occupied Territories; see [www.yeshgvul.org](http://www.yeshgvul.org). Some Israelis are fighting to end compulsory conscription and institute a legal basis for conscientious objectors to refuse to serve altogether; see [www.newprofile.org](http://www.newprofile.org). Those who refuse to serve in the IDF and/or in the Occupied Territories are reviled and attacked by many in Israeli society and may even be accused of being anti-Semites; see Kanaanah 2003. Despite this, I use the *Tzahal* soldier as an ideal because Israeli government policy has since 1967 sanctioned the military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza.

<sup>68</sup> On Israeli settlement practices in Gaza see Falah 2005, Roy 2007 and Zertel and Eldar 2007. On Israel's dismantling of the settlements and its unilateral withdrawal from Gaza in August 2005 see Chapter 4 in Efrat 2006, pp.166-195. Despite having dismantled the settlements in Gaza, the territory remains under Israeli military control. I deal with Gaza in more detail in the following two chapters. Since 1967, Israel has also pursued an aggressive policy of settlement construction in and around East Jerusalem. A series of master plans has completely reconfigured the territory in and around Jerusalem into Greater Jerusalem, a sprawling area that reaches deep into the West Bank, cutting it in half and while also cutting Palestinians there off from their cultural center (Weizman 2007). Israeli settlement practices in East Jerusalem involve the expulsion of Palestinians from their homes and the seizure of Palestinian territory for construction purposes. A detailed study of Israeli settlement practices in East Jerusalem lies outside the scope of this research; see in particular Chapter 1 in Weizman 2007 pp.25-56, Sorkin and Vovk 2002, and Cheshin and Hutman 1999.

most recently, the Separation Barrier are built<sup>69</sup>. IDF soldiers protect and defend Jewish settlers, the settlements and the road systems that connect them. As well the MOD is charged with directing and overseeing the planning, routing and construction of the Separation Barrier.

One especially glaring connection between the military occupation of territory and settlement construction in the West Bank, is the pretext of seizing private Palestinian lands for "temporary military necessity" (Weizman 2007 p.105). Many Jewish civilian settlements were originally built as military outposts, using a rationale of temporary military necessity as a pretext for their construction (Weizman 2007, Zertel and Eldar 2007). This measure was used between 1967 and 1979 to seize Palestinian lands for settlement construction purposes, and to circumvent principles of international law (such as the Fourth Geneva Convention and the Hague Regulations) that forbid the construction of permanent facts and the transfer of populations into occupied territory, but which permit the *temporary* seizure of lands for military or security needs<sup>70</sup>.

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<sup>69</sup> On the military seizure of Palestinian territory see Lein and Weizman 2002, Weizman 2007 pp.95-115, and Etkes and Ofra 2006.

<sup>70</sup> Following a Palestinian legal challenge in 1979 the Israeli High Court ruled that temporary military necessity could no longer be used to seize Palestinian lands; for details see Weizman 2007. However this measure has been reintroduced in recent years, to seize Palestinian lands on which the roads network and the Separation Barrier are being built, see Lein 2004 and Lein and Cohen-Lifshitz 2005. Israel is a signatory to the Geneva Convention but considers the West Bank and Gaza to be disputed and not occupied territory, and therefore not subject to international humanitarian law. On Israel's obligations under international humanitarian law, and its refusal to honor them, see in particular Falk 2002 pp.22-24, Falk and Weston 1991, Etkes and Ofra 2006 and Lein and Weizman 2002.

More than 40 years after the measure of temporary military seizure was first used, the Jewish settlements built on Palestinian lands seized ostensibly for *temporary* military use remain populated by Jewish settlers, prompting questions, as Weizman (2007) rightly notes, about the very meaning of the term temporary in the context of the settlement enterprise.

After 1979, Jewish settlements were instead built primarily on private Palestinian lands seized by the Israeli government and designated as Israeli state land<sup>71</sup>. This practice resembled measures that designated land in Israel as state land during the 1950s, as discussed. However, the seizure and transfer of Palestinian territory in the West Bank was facilitated by military occupation.

The IDF soldier and the military occupation of Palestinian inhabited territory may be linked to the Israeli land ideal that emerged in 1967 with the conquest of the Occupied Territories: wholeness, the assertion of exclusive Israeli control over the *whole* of the territory there. On the one hand, wholeness is linked to the geo-political notion of

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<sup>71</sup> One of the key strategies used by successive Israeli governments was to seize vast amounts of Palestinian public land, and to designate it as Israeli state land; this land was then used for settlement construction purposes; see Weizman 2007. Pappe (2006-a) notes that by the year 2000, Israel had confiscated approximately 42 per cent of the territory in the West Bank for settlement construction. A comprehensive account of the various mechanisms used to seize Palestinian territory can be found in Lein and Weizman 2002, and in Etkes and Ofran 2006. These include the use of restrictions on movement to prevent Palestinians from registering or laying claim to their lands, and the expansion of settlements beyond their legal boundaries onto private Palestinian lands, as detailed in various human rights reports including most notably Etkes and Ofran 2006 and 2007, Lein and Weizman 2002, and Lein and Cohen-Lifshitz 2005.

whole land in Israel – the belief that the West Bank and Gaza comprise part of Greater Israel (Aronson 1990, Gorenberg 2006). On the other hand, the ideal of territorial wholeness is a religious one promoted by right wing politicians and religious settlers, who believe that God gave the whole land of *Eretz Yisrael* – Israel together with the Occupied Territories – to the Jews<sup>72</sup>. Notions of wholeness have been promulgated by secular and religious, and leftist and rightist Israelis and their leaders alike, at various points since 1967.

My interest lies specifically with the ideal of wholeness as it operates in the West Bank, where the assertion of control over all of the territory there could only be achieved by building Jewish settlements. By constructing settlements, Israel sought to “guarantee control over the whole conquered area, and create ‘irreversible’ *faits accomplis*” (Kimmerling 1993 p.218)[italics in original]. As was already discussed, Jewish attempts to control territory prior to 1948 had also been asserted by building settlements and establishing a Jewish presence on Palestinian inhabited territory. Like the earlier pre-state project of *Homa Umigdal*, settlements built in the West Bank after 1967 were used to control territory by creating permanent facts on the ground (Rotbard 2003). Unlike prior settlement initiatives in historic Palestine or inside the state of Israel prior to 1967 however, the ideal of wholeness in the West Bank would be realized in the context of the military occupation of Palestinian inhabited territory.

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<sup>72</sup> This belief is reflected in the use of the biblical terms “Judea” and “Samaria” to refer to the Occupied Territories.

Jewish settlements built in the West Bank during the first decade of the occupation were conceived as defensive ones<sup>73</sup>. Like *Homa Umigdal* these settlements were built ostensibly to protect border areas; and like *Homa Umigdal*, they were conceived as defensive but were also of a strategic, offensive nature (Rotbard 2003). Settlement construction in the West Bank between 1967 and 1977 served not only to delineate or fortify borders, but also to expand frontiers. Weizman (2007) notes that unlike borders, frontiers are elastic and allow for the constant transformation and reconfiguration of the built environment. Settlements in the West Bank were built on the other side of the Green Line (Israel's armistice border with Jordan, created in 1949), thus breaching – not defending – an internationally recognized border<sup>74</sup>. As such the settlements served not to defend an Israeli border but rather to create facts and to assert control over territory located *outside* of one of Israel's internationally recognized borders. By virtue of their location on the other side of the Green Line the settlements can be considered to be extra-territorial. Yet the Israeli government did not recognize the Green Line as a definitive national border<sup>75</sup>. As then Israeli Minister of Labor Yigal Allon stated in 1968, "The armistice lines... had

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<sup>73</sup> For a detailed account of the first decade of Israeli settlement in the West Bank see Gorenberg 2006; see also Chapters 1 through 3 in Aronson 1990, pp.9-56. For a comprehensive analysis of the entire Israeli settlement project in both the West Bank and Gaza from 1967 through 2006, see Zertel and Eldar 2007.

<sup>74</sup> For a detailed study of frontiers and Jewish territorial control see Kimmerling 1983.

<sup>75</sup> In December 1967, the Israeli government decided to erase the Green Line from all of the maps, atlases and textbooks it published (Weizman 2007).

never been secure borders, and it would be unthinkable to return to them" (in Aronson 1990 p.13).

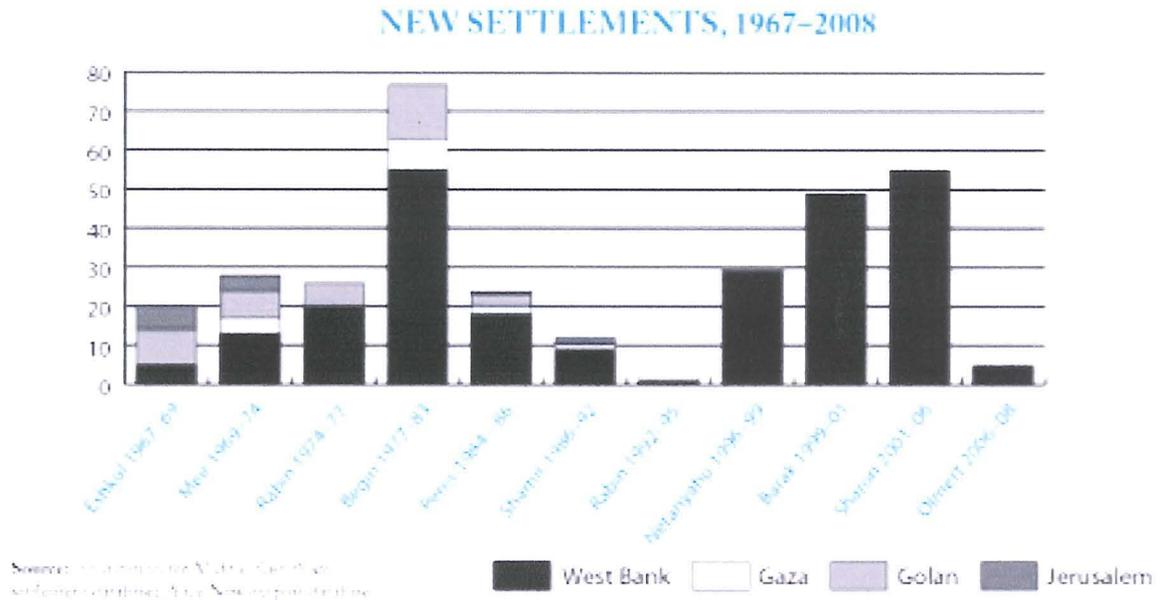
West Bank settlements built during the first decade of the occupation were concentrated in the Jordan Valley and tended to avoid proximity to Palestinian built-up areas. However in 1977 the right wing *Likud* government, in collaboration with religious settler groups, initiated a policy of settlement construction throughout the *whole* of the West Bank<sup>76</sup>. The *Likud* government began to deliberately and strategically locate settlements on hilltops and adjacent to Palestinian cities and towns, a practice that has continued ever since<sup>77</sup>. Weizman (2007) further notes that it was under *Likud* rule that the Israeli government began to formalize the settlement project under state control. The new settlement strategy adopted by the *Likud* government would enable Israel to assert *de facto* control over the whole of the West Bank via the strategic placement of settlements there. The strategic placement of the settlements to control territory is reminiscent of the *Homa Umigdal* settlements used to delineate the borders of a future Jewish state, indicated in Figure 1 on page 74. And while government policies and priorities for

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<sup>76</sup> Yiftachel (2006) notes that from the 1980s onward the settlers have been the most over-represented group in successive Israeli governments. Weizman (2007) observes that the proliferation of settlements from 1977 onward was as much the result of centralized planning as it was the result of what he terms "deliberate chaos" (2007 p. 94), the lack of clear processes and structures that enabled various governments to impose their settlement ideologies (often in collaboration with settler groups) without having to take responsibility for them. See Yaniv and Yishai 1981 for a detailed overview of the roles of state and non-state actors in influencing Israeli settlement policy from 1967 to approximately 1980.

<sup>77</sup> For an analysis of the hilltop settlements see Segal and Weizman 2003 pp.79-99; see also Weizman 2007 pp.87-100.

settlement construction have varied, "All Israeli governments have contributed to the strengthening, development and expansion of the settlements" (Lein and Weizman 2002 p.11). Figure 3 (below) shows the rates of settlement construction by the various Israeli governments between 1967 and 2008<sup>78</sup>.



**Figure 3 Settlement construction under successive Israeli governments, 1967-2008**

Source: Foundation for Middle East Peace

The settlements have enabled the state of Israel to assert control over the whole of the territory of the West Bank, not

<sup>78</sup> For additional data on settlement construction by the various Israeli governments see Reuveni 2003. As of the end of 2008 (the most recent date for which Israeli census data is available), there were 289,800 Jewish settlers residing in 121 legal settlements in the West Bank. Data from the Israeli Central Bureau of Statistics, cited by B'Tselem <[www.btselem.org](http://www.btselem.org)>. Settlers residing in the approximately 100 illegal settlements (called outposts) in the West Bank are not included in the census data.

only because of their strategic location, but also, because the settlements control vast amounts of territory within their municipal and regional boundaries, as demonstrated in Figure 4, on the following page<sup>79</sup>.

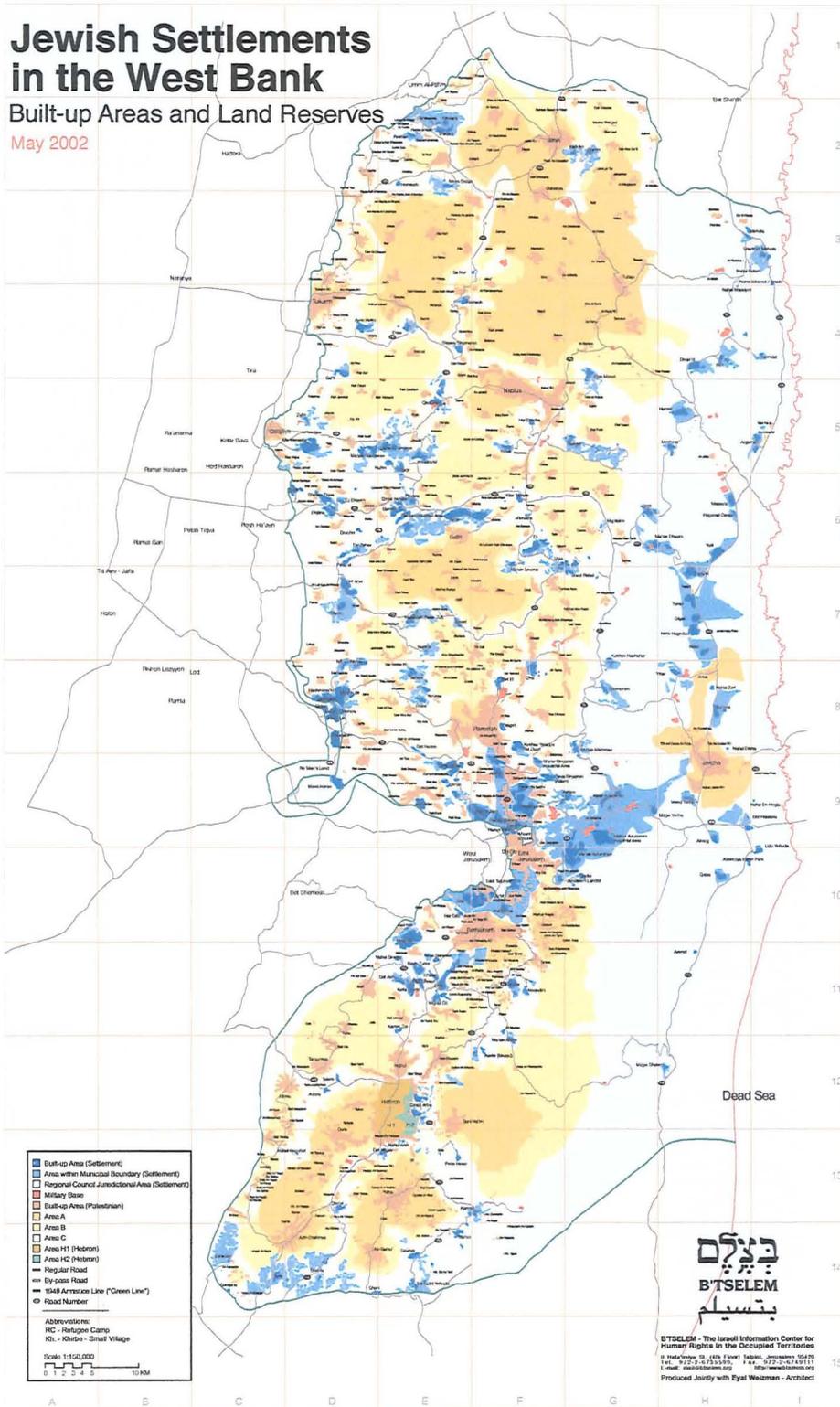
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<sup>79</sup> More recent maps of the Jewish settlements in the West Bank now include the roads network, the route of the Separation Barrier, and the location of checkpoints and barriers. I use this 2002 map in order to focus on the strategic location of the settlements and the territory included within their boundaries. Several online resources enable users to not only to locate the settlements on maps but also to access more and more information about them. See in particular Philip Weiss' Google map of the Israeli settlements (in progress), available at <<http://mondoweiss.net/2009/02/spiegel-database-of-west-bank-settlements-and-outposts-view-larger-map.html>>.

# Jewish Settlements in the West Bank

Built-up Areas and Land Reserves

May 2002



Previous page:

**Figure 4 Jewish settlements in the West Bank, 2002**

Source: B'Tselem.

**Israeli wholeness, Palestinian fragmentation**

The Israeli ideal of wholeness in the West Bank is not only contingent on asserting control over all of the territory there, but also, on the fragmentation of Palestinian inhabited territory. As Figure 4 on the previous page also demonstrates, the settlements and the territory they control have fragmented Palestinian built up areas into a series of territorial islands or enclaves surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory. In addition to asserting Israeli control over territory in the West Bank, the settlements have also served to disrupt Palestinian territorial contiguity there, "The result would be several isolated Palestinian cantons, each around a major city, with the connections controlled by Israel" (Weizman 2007 p.81).

Using the settlements, together with the road networks that connect them to each other and to Israel to prevent Palestinian territorial contiguity was first proposed in 1977 by then Agriculture Minister Ariel Sharon, who developed a strategy of deliberate and strategic settlement location in order to penetrate and disrupt contiguous Palestinian inhabited areas in the West Bank. He also advocated the arrangement of individual settlements into larger blocs adjacent to Palestinian built-up areas<sup>80</sup>. This approach was

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<sup>80</sup> Weizman devotes all of Chapter 2 in his book to a study of Ariel Sharon's settlement strategies and the impact of their

detailed in a number of plans for settlement construction in the Occupied Territories, including the 1977 Sharon Plan, and in the 1978 World Zionist Organization (WZO) Plan for settlement in the Occupied Territories (Weizman 2007, Lein and Weizman 2002, Zertal and Eldar 2006). The impact of Sharon's settlement strategies can be observed in the previous Figure 4 on page 99, which shows not only the fragmentation of Palestinian built-up areas, but also, the organization of clusters of Jewish settlements adjacent to Palestinian built-up areas: see in particular the dark blue areas on the map, together with the medium and light blue areas of land they control.

### **Oslo and the formalization of fragmentation**

Ironically perhaps, the fragmentation of Palestinian inhabited areas in the West Bank was formalized with the Oslo Accords (Rabbani 2006), a series of agreements signed between the Israel and the PLO between 1993 and 1999<sup>81</sup>. With the signing of the Declaration of Principles, Israel and the Palestine Liberation Organization agreed to recognize each other's legitimacy and negotiate a permanent peace. During these negotiations Israel would gradually transfer

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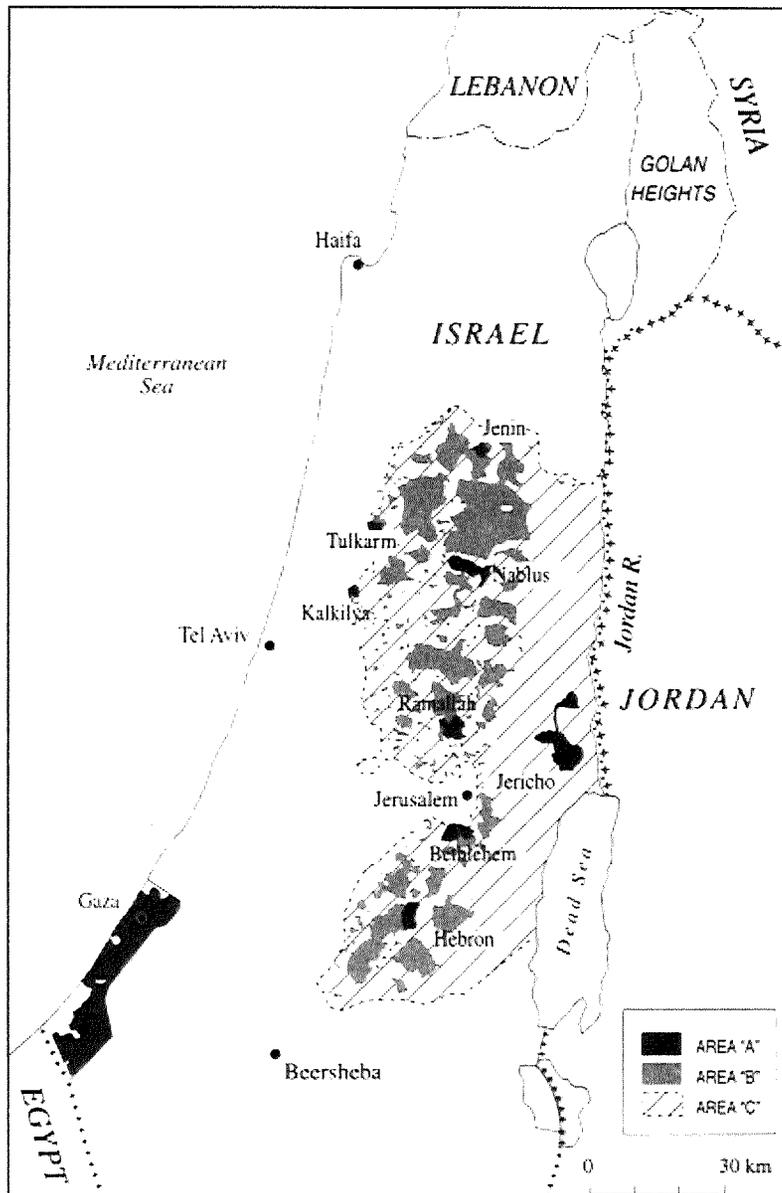
implementation, which is still felt today, see pp.57-85 in Weizman 2007.

<sup>81</sup> These agreements were comprised of the September 1993 Declaration of Principles ("Oslo"), the September 1995 Interim Agreement ("Oslo II"), the January 1997 Hebron Protocol, the October 1998 Wye Memorandum, and the September 1999 Sharm al-Shaykh Agreement (Rabbani 2001). The Accords were denounced by many Palestinians who perceived them as a means of formalizing Palestinian subordination to Israeli national interests (Cleary, 2002). For a detailed and critical analysis of the Oslo Accords, see Roy 2007, Falah 2005, Rabbani 2001 and 2006, Sontag 2001, and Zriek 2003.

responsibility for Palestinian self-governance in parts of the Occupied Territories to the newly created Palestinian Authority (Sontag 2001 p.78). The Declaration of Principles also stipulated a five-year framework for negotiating the territorial borders of a future Palestinian state.

The Accords, and especially the Oslo II agreement signed in 1995, spatially reconfigured the West Bank into three zones: Area A, to be under full control of the Palestinian Authority; Area B, to be under shared Palestinian (civil) and Israeli (military) control; and Area C, which would remain under full Israeli control. These Areas are indicated in Figure 5, on the following page.

However, instead of providing Palestinians with control over contiguous areas of land, the Accords' territorial stipulations served to formalize the fragmentation of Palestinian-inhabited areas of the West Bank. Area A, over which the Palestinian Authority (PA) was to have full control, consisted of no less than 13 separate areas scattered across the West Bank, and separated from each other by distances in miles, by Israeli settlements and by bypass roads. What's more, Palestinian controlled Areas A and B were completely surrounded by Israeli-controlled territory (Area C), and the entry and exit points to all Palestinian-controlled areas would remain under Israeli military control.



**Figure 5 Territorial divisions as per the Oslo II Agreement signed in 1995**

Area A would fall under full Palestinian civilian and security control; Area B under joint Palestinian (civilian) and Israeli (security) control; and Area C, full Israeli security and civilian control.

Source: Motro 2005.

Israeli settlement construction continued at an accelerated pace during the Oslo negotiation process between 1993 and

2000. I refer the reader back to Figure 3 on page 97, which shows that some of the highest construction rates for new settlements built in the West Bank took place during the period of 1994 to 2000, and between 1996 and 2000 in particular<sup>82</sup>. Thirty new settlements were built in the West Bank during the Oslo negotiation period (Roy 2007, Falah 2005). As well, the number of houses built within existing settlements grew dramatically, and the settler population in the West Bank more than doubled (Falah 2005)<sup>83</sup>.

Perhaps most ironically, "The peace process between Israel and the Palestinians did not lead to the dismantling of even one settlement, and the settlements even grew substantially in area and population during this period" (Lein and Weizman 2002 p.8). Nor did the Oslo process bring any real territorial gains for Palestinians. According to Palestinian

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<sup>82</sup> Note that the period under Ehud Barak extends to 2001, the year following the collapse of the negotiation framework. In 1996, the Israeli government agreed not to establish any new settlements but insisted on its right to continue construction within existing settlements. The Israeli human rights groups B'Tselem and Peace Now have reported substantial violations of this commitment, including most notably, the construction of over 100 illegal settlements (known as outposts) by mainly right wing religious settlers; the building of infrastructure such as roads and sewage treatment plants to support the settlements, and the routing of the Separation Barrier east of the Green Line to include a larger number of settlements within its path; see [www.btselem.org/english/settlements/20090227\\_settlement\\_expansion.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/settlements/20090227_settlement_expansion.asp) and

[www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=62&docid=3550&pos=4](http://www.peacenow.org.il/site/en/peace.asp?pi=62&docid=3550&pos=4).

<sup>83</sup> During this time Israel also substantially expanded its extensive roads system throughout the West Bank. Thousands of dunams of Palestinian lands were seized using military orders for the purposes of road construction. Like the settlements, the roads network that connect the settlements to each other and to Israel, also fragments Palestinian inhabited territory and prevents the contiguity of Palestinian controlled areas. For details on the roads system see Lein 2004.

legal scholar Raef Zriek (2003), the Oslo accords were inherently flawed, because they never granted any control over territory whatsoever to the Palestinian Authority (PA), "the PA has authority only over the people, not the land. Thus, under Oslo, Israel was able to build new settlements, to use water resources, and to build bypass roads all over the occupied territories, as if there were no PA at all" (Zriek 2003 p.42). And, as Rabbani (2006) observes, by the year 2000, seven years after the Declaration of Principles was signed, the Palestinian Authority controlled less than one fifth of the West Bank.

#### **From fragmentation to enclavization**

The Oslo process was abandoned by the government of Israel following the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada<sup>84</sup>. While an analysis of Oslo's failure lies outside the scope of this research, it is worth citing Israeli architects Rafi Segal and Eyal Weizman (2003), who note that perhaps Oslo was doomed to fail because, despite comprising less than two percent of the total land in the West Bank, Israeli

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<sup>84</sup> The al-Aqsa intifada (also called the second intifada) began in September 2000, when then-Likud party leader Ariel Sharon visited the *Haram Al-Sharif* (Noble Sanctuary) in Jerusalem, sparking outrage among Palestinians, many of whom perceived his visit to be antagonistic. While Sharon's visit was the catalyst for the outbreak of the intifada, it also represented a tipping point: it was a symptom of Palestinian frustration with the Oslo negotiation framework, which had failed to produce any real gains for Palestinians, and with worsening conditions in the Occupied Territories.

settlements have managed to impose complete control and fragmentation upon the entire territory there<sup>85</sup>.

Despite the abandonment of the Oslo negotiation process in 2000, the spatial configuration of the West Bank created by Oslo II, notably its divisions into Areas A, B and C, still remains in place. What's more, Israel controls all movement in and out of these Areas, enforced by the IDF and the security forces. Thus in addition to formalizing Palestinian territorial fragmentation, the Accords also served to further consolidate Israeli control over the whole of the West Bank. Since the outbreak of the second intifada in September 2000, Palestinian inhabited areas of the West Bank have become fragmented to an even greater extent, by Israeli construction projects such as settlements and roads but also, the Separation Barrier. Israel has been consolidating smaller settlements into large blocs that jut deep into the West Bank, further interrupting Palestinian territorial contiguity. It has continued to expand the road system that crisscrosses and bisects the West Bank, fragmenting Palestinian areas even further while also separating many of

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<sup>85</sup> Many scholars link settlement construction and the fragmentation of Palestinian areas to an Israeli strategy of preventing Palestinian sovereignty (Aronson 1990; Gorenberg 2006, Falah 2005, Roy 2007), or at least limiting it to a series of non-contiguous areas (Halper 2006, Weizman 2007). Matityahu Drobless, author of the 1978 WZO Plan, stated in 1980 that, "Being cut off by Jewish settlements the minority [Palestinian] population will find it difficult to form a territorial and political continuity" (in Cook and Hanieh 2006 p.342) [My addition to the text]. A strategy of fragmentation would not only disrupt Palestinian territorial contiguity; it would also serve to prevent the creation of a future viable Palestinian state, expressed in terms of a "political continuity". On the failure of Oslo see also Said 2000, Roy 2007, Falah 2005, Rabbani 2001, Sontag 2001, and Zriek 2003.

them from each other. Barriers – most notably the Separation Barrier – but also checkpoints, roadblocks and gates have splintered the West Bank into approximately 200 areas or cells around Palestinian population centers (Weizman 2007)<sup>86</sup>. Together these projects have resulted in what Falah (2005) calls the enclavization of Palestinian space – the division of Palestinian inhabited areas into smaller, separate and disconnected enclaves. For Falah (2005) the creation of Palestinian territorial enclaves reduces interflow between them and serves to heighten Israeli control over them, because the Israeli security forces control all of the entry and exit points to these Palestinian enclaves, and therefore, all movement in and out of them.

### **Palestinian enemy Others**

Palestinians in the West Bank have been living under Israeli military rule for over 40 years. Over the course of the occupation Palestinian control over territory has been drastically eroded, while Israeli control over the whole of the territory there has been consolidated. Israeli construction projects have grown almost exponentially, completely fragmenting Palestinian areas.

Palestinians living in the West Bank are subject to Israeli military rule, in contrast to the Jewish settlers who are governed by Israeli civilian laws. Palestinians may only travel between the various territorial islands or enclaves at

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<sup>86</sup> For a detailed discussion of the Separation Barrier see Weizman 2007 pp.161-184, Cook and Hanieh 2006, and Lein and Cohen-Lifshitz 2005. On checkpoints see Weizman 2007.

the discretion of the Israeli security forces, who wield ultimate control over these Palestinian inhabited areas, but also, over Palestinian movement across territory, to be discussed in the following chapter. Jewish Israelis travel on proprietary and exclusively Jewish roads, while Palestinians must use alternate routes, resulting in delays, when travel by road is permitted at all (Lein 2004). All of these measures have produced Palestinians in the West Bank as inferior Others to Jewish Israelis and to the Jewish settlers there in particular. As Hasso observes,

For Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, their spatial-racial subordination expresses itself through a variety of mechanisms: Israeli checkpoints, special roads for Jews that avoid Palestinian villages and towns, segregated marketplaces and restaurants, Jewish settlements, Palestinian refugee camps, special identification cards, colour-coded license plates... and most recently, the apartheid wall that has further segmented the West Bank and occupied Jerusalem" (2005 p.25).

Peleg (1994) observes that Israel's conquest of the West Bank and Gaza in 1967 led to a rise in the perception by many Israelis of Palestinians not only as inferior Others but as ultimate, enemy Others. These enemy Others are being spatially confined within the West Bank, by the Separation Barrier. With the construction of the Barrier, the spatial segregation and separation of Palestinian and Jewish territory – but also of Palestinian and Israeli Jewish bodies – is being implemented as never before. Here I remind the reader that the Barrier is being built under the auspices of

the Israeli Ministry of Defense, and much of it, on private Palestinian land seized ostensibly for "temporary" military necessity.

### **The elusive ideal of Israeli wholeness**

Since 1967 Israeli control over territory in the West Bank has been inextricably linked to military rule and to the military occupation of Palestinian inhabited territory. While construction projects and the Jewish settlements in particular have enabled Israel to control the whole of the *territory* in the West Bank, Israeli control is only possible if combined with military occupation and military rule imposed on Palestinians residing there.

Israel's construction projects, and the settlements in particular, have completely altered the spatial configuration of the West Bank, fragmenting a substantial amount of Palestinian inhabited territory in the process. But they have also created a series of Israeli territorial fragments, albeit ones that are better connected to Israel and to each other than Palestinian ones are (refer back to Area C in Figure 3 on page 97 and Figure 5 on page 103). What's more, the settlements, like the occupation itself, have created divisions among Jewish Israelis, many of whom believe that their government should dismantle all or at least some of the settlements. These internal divisions have resulted in a certain degree of fragmentation within Jewish Israeli society itself (Zertel and Eldar; Pappe 2006-b). The current spatial configuration in the West Bank allows Israel to assert control over the whole of the territory there, however it

also ultimately attests to the *impossibility* of the Israeli ideal of wholeness.

### Chapter 3

#### The Palestinian body, the corporeal effects of Occupation, and the body of the martyr

This chapter focuses on the Palestinian body under occupation in the West Bank and Gaza, and it identifies some of the effects of Israeli spatial practices on the Palestinian body there – what I term *corporeal* effects. Since the start of the second Palestinian *intifada* in September 2000, Israeli spatial practices in the Occupied Territories have increasingly sought to control and contain Palestinian *bodies*. They have done so primarily through the imposition of severe restrictions on Palestinian movement across territory.

This chapter also examines the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber or martyr, as a weapon of resistance deployed against the occupation and against Israel. It considers the visual depiction of the whole body of the Palestinian martyr – the *istishhadi* – in commemorative posters produced and disseminated by the Palestinian groups that deploy them<sup>1</sup>. In these posters, the body of the martyr is visually depicted as an equal to the body of the IDF soldier. The body of the martyr in these posters presents an idealized image of the Palestinian nation as a whole, strong and powerful one, the same as Israel.

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<sup>1</sup> The terms suicide bomber, martyr and *istishhadi* are elaborated on in detail beginning on page 131, page 144, and page 145.

## **Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement**

Since September 2000, Israel has imposed severe restrictions on movement on Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza. These measures have effectively halted all Palestinian passage between these two territorial entities, in and out of Gaza, and into Israel (Barsella 2007, Haas 2002), as well as between the various Palestinian inhabited enclaves in the West Bank. Measures used to restrict Palestinian movement include a network of permanent and "flying" checkpoints staffed by the IDF, gates, fences, and physical barriers – including the Separation Barrier. These enable the Israeli security forces to control all Palestinian movement across territory in the West Bank and Gaza<sup>2</sup>. In addition to these physical obstacles to freedom of movement, the Israeli security forces enforce a series of prohibitions and restrictions on movement. These include issuing – and more often, denying – permits for travel by vehicle between the various enclaves in the West Bank and into Israel; the prohibition of Palestinian travel on certain roads; and the use of closure to halt all movement in and out of enclaves in

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<sup>2</sup> As of the end of June 2009, the IDF had established 60 permanent checkpoints inside the West Bank, and 39 permanent checkpoints between the West Bank and Israel. In March 2009, there were 541 physical obstructions in the West Bank. See [www.btselem.org/English/Freedom\\_of\\_Movement/Statistics.asp](http://www.btselem.org/English/Freedom_of_Movement/Statistics.asp) [Accessed October 8, 2009]. For a detailed analysis of restrictions on Palestinian movement as the result of checkpoints see MachsomWatch 2004. On the Separation Barrier, See Lein and Cohen-Lifshitz 2005, and Cook and Hanieh 2006.

the West Bank and in Gaza, trapping Palestinians in their towns and villages for prolonged periods of time<sup>3</sup>.

Restrictions on movement have resulted in the virtual confinement of Palestinians in the West Bank to enclaves there, while for all intents and purposes trapping Palestinian residents of Gaza within one single enclave. While many of these measures have been in effect since 1991, the scope and duration of restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement since 2000 have been unprecedented (Barsella 2007, Haas 2002)<sup>4</sup>. Barsella observes that since 2000, "Palestinian freedom of movement has turned from a fundamental human right into a privilege that Israel grants or withholds as it deems fit" (2007 p.8). Several Israeli and international human rights organizations consider these restrictions on Palestinian freedom of movement to be a form

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<sup>3</sup> On the roads system and travel restrictions on vehicles see Lein 2004, and Barsella 2007. On closures see Haas 2002. Details on all of the above restrictions and prohibitions can also be found in Barsella 2007.

<sup>4</sup> Barsella (2007) notes that from 1972 until 1991, a general permit system allowed most Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories to travel freely between the West Bank and Gaza and into East Jerusalem and Israel. During the first Gulf War in 1991 Israel changed its policy, from then on requiring Palestinians to obtain travel permits to enter East Jerusalem and Israel. It also instituted checkpoints at crossings into Israel. In March 1993, Israel declared a general closure on the Occupied Territories and enshrined its policy requiring Palestinians to obtain travel permits, in law. From that time onward it issued entry permits into Israel from the Occupied Territories only sparingly, gradually imposing more and more restrictions on Palestinian movement. These measures are also detailed in Hass 2002. Barsella (2007) further notes that since the outbreak of the second *intifada* in September 2000 it has become almost impossible for Palestinians to obtain travel permits, even for travel between the various areas or enclaves in the West Bank, and that even those who do possess travel permits are often refused passage through checkpoints by the IDF.

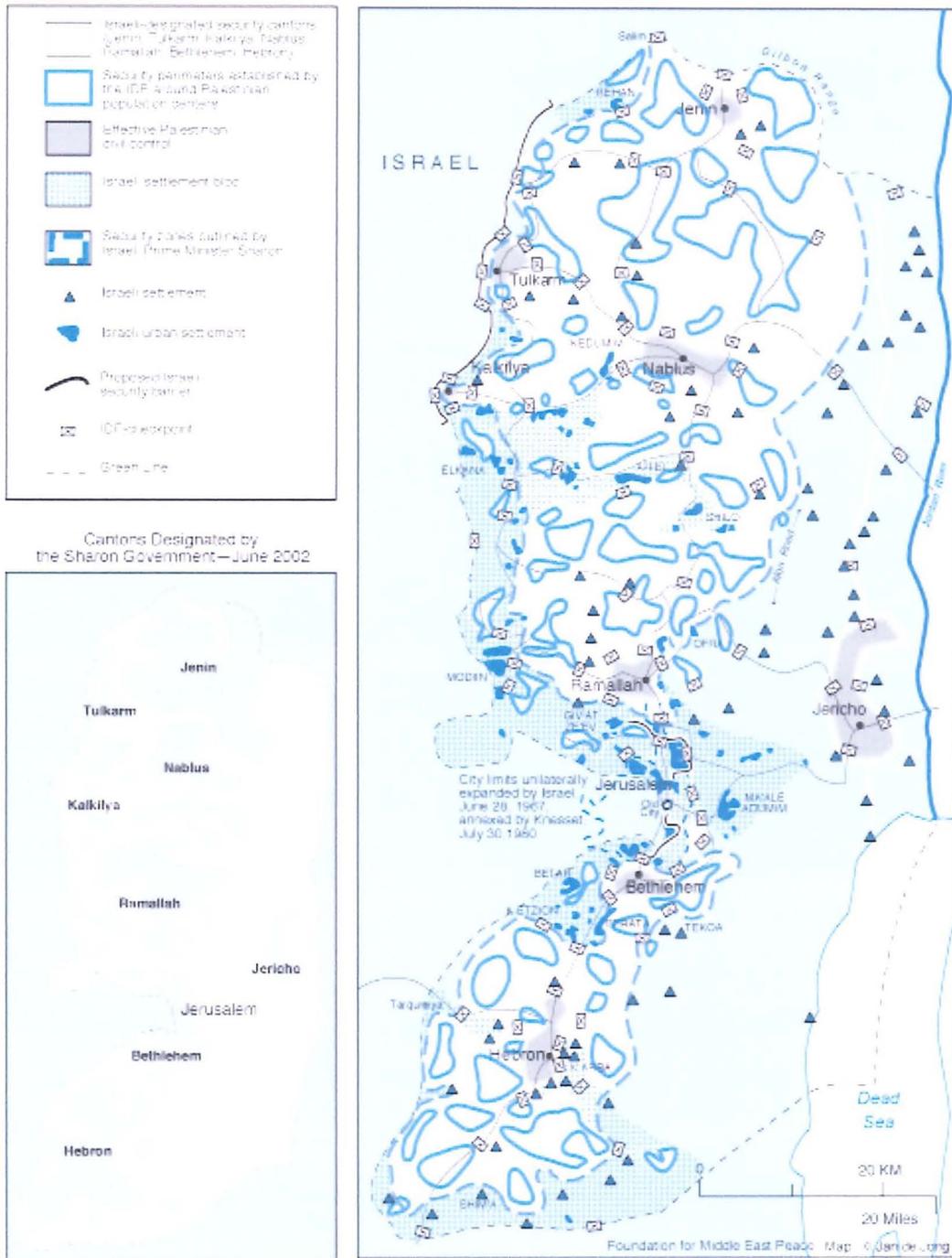
of collective punishment that contravenes international humanitarian law<sup>5</sup>. In contrast, Jewish Israelis enjoy complete freedom of movement between Israel and the West Bank, and across the West Bank, on roads systems reserved exclusively for them (Lein 2004).

Barsella (2007) observes that the various restrictions that Israel has imposed on Palestinians in the West Bank have served to fragment it into six larger enclaves, each of which has been further fragmented into smaller ones. Israel controls all movement in and out of these enclaves through the use of security perimeters and checkpoints. Figure 1 on the following page shows the division of the West Bank into enclaves ("cantons"). It also shows the security perimeters created around Palestinian built up areas by the Israeli security forces, that serve to restrict Palestinian movement in and out of these enclaves. Note in particular the blue security perimeters around Palestinian inhabited areas as indicated.

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<sup>5</sup> See for example, Oxfam et. al. 2008, MachsomWatch 2004, Chapter 5 in Lein 2005, and Chapter 4 in Barsella 2007.

**The West Bank After Oslo: Control and Separation— June 2002**



**Figure 1 The West Bank After Oslo: Separation and Control**

This graphic shows the Palestinian cantons and enclaves in the West Bank, together with the security perimeters and checkpoints used to restrict movement between them.

In 1995 Israel surrounded the Gaza Strip with a fence, making travel in and out of Gaza without Israeli permission impossible (Lein 2005). Israel asserts that its *military* occupation of Gaza ended in 2005 when it dismantled the Jewish settlements there and unilaterally removed its security forces from *within* Gaza. In reality, however, Israel continues to control the entire territory, notably, by controlling all movement in and out of Gaza. Israel controls all of the entry and exit points into and out of Gaza, including those that lead into Egypt, Gaza's ports and its only airport, its air space and territorial waters, and the movement of people and goods<sup>6</sup>. Gaza has been under closure since Hamas won a majority in the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections, and for all intents and purposes been sealed off from the outside world<sup>7</sup>. Since this time, harsh restrictions on movement have effectively halted nearly all Palestinian movement in and out of Gaza (Lein 2005, B'Tselem 2008)<sup>8</sup>. These measures have prompted Israeli human rights groups B'Tselem and HaMoked Center for the Defense of the Individual to categorize Gaza as one big prison (Lein 2005)<sup>9</sup>.

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<sup>6</sup> Even Palestinians travelling into Egypt through the Rafah crossing point require permission from Israel to do so (Lein 2005). The Gaza airport was closed by Israel in 2000 and its runways bombed in 2001, rendering it useless.

<sup>7</sup> On the Palestinian elections see Usher 2006.

<sup>8</sup> See also B'Tselem, *The Gaza Strip After Disengagement*.

<sup>9</sup> See also B'Tselem 2007.

### **Confinement to enclaves and Palestinian otherness**

The enclaves in the West Bank and Gaza to which Palestinians are confined, may be considered what philosopher Judith Butler defines as *zones of abjection*, "those 'unlivable' and 'uninhabitable' zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by those who do not enjoy the status of the subject" (1993 p.3)<sup>10</sup>.

Butler asks, "Which bodies come to matter—and why?" (1993 p.xii). She observes that some bodies matter less than others. For her, abject bodies are those that do not matter, or that matter less. Following Butler, the Palestinian body under Israeli occupation matters less than the Jewish Israeli body does, and it may therefore be considered an inferior, Other body to the Jewish Israeli body<sup>11</sup>. Unlike the Jewish

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<sup>10</sup> Notions of Palestinian subjectivity are examined more closely in the following chapter. Butler's concept of abjection (1993) emerges within a larger theoretical framework in which she examines the relationships between power, subjectivity and the sexed body. It would be impossible to write about abjection without making reference to the work of Julia Kristeva (1982) who explores abjection as a type of crisis in demarcating boundaries (notably between the self and the Other) that originates in the body's traumatic separation (exclusion) from the mother's body, at birth. For Kristeva abjection is linked to that which is expelled from the body. Butler's notion of *zones of abjection* is more relevant to the present writing, linked directly as it is to my interests in space and territory. Kristeva's writings about abjection have influenced numerous scholars, including Butler. Note that my understanding of Kristeva also owes much to Phelan (1998).

<sup>11</sup> I use the term inferior Other rather than abject because of the latter term's association with a psychoanalytic reading. As a counterpoint to the Other Palestinian body I refer the reader back to the Jewish body ideals discussed in the previous chapter as being those of health and strength, and embodied by the *chalutz*, the *Sabra* and the IDF soldier. That chapter also identified the normative Israeli Jewish body as Ashkenazi, male, able bodied and heterosexual. A discussion of Jewish Israeli bodies that may be considered Other (for example women, queers, Mizrachi and Sephardi

Israeli body, the Palestinian body is subject to Israeli-imposed restrictions on movement that serve to contain and confine it within enclaves, and this in contrast to Israeli Jewish bodies – and those of the Jewish settlers in particular – who enjoy complete freedom of movement across territory. Here I also refer back to Stuart Hall's notion (1990) of the colonized subject as one who is created by, and is considered an inferior Other to, the colonizer.

Following Butler's observations (1993), Palestinian corporeal otherness is spatially produced. The Palestinian body is produced as an inferior Other by virtue of its confinement to the zones of abjection – enclaves in the West Bank and Gaza – and this in contrast to Jewish Israelis who move freely across territory. Further, within these zones of abjection, the Palestinian body suffers the corporeal effects of spatial containment and the lack of freedom of movement: the Palestinian body becomes weak, unhealthy, and unable to sustain itself; at the extreme, the body suffers death and demise.

**The corporeal effects of spatial containment and restrictions on Palestinian movement**

Much has been written about the ways in which Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement violate Palestinian

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Jews) lies outside the scope of this research; see for example Massad 2006 pp.55-76.

human rights<sup>12</sup>. This research considers the impact of these practices on the Palestinian *body*, by focusing on three key effects – what I term *corporeal* effects – of spatial containment and a lack of freedom of movement on the Palestinian body in the Occupied Territories. First, those that result from inadequate living conditions in the enclaves or zones of abjection. Second, violence directed against the Palestinian body – including violence that occurs in the enclaves themselves as well as at the checkpoints and barriers designed to control and contain Palestinian movement between them. Third, the deadly or mortal effects that ultimately result in the body's death and demise.

#### **Confinement to uninhabitable zones**

The Israeli restrictions on movement that contain the Palestinian body within enclaves also subject it to a lack of adequate sustenance, notably the denial of food, fuel and electricity, potable water, heat, medical care and employment. In addition to restricting the movement of Palestinian bodies, Israeli spatial practices have since 2000 (and especially so since Hamas' election victory in 2006) also restricted the movement of goods in and out of Palestinian enclaves<sup>13</sup>. As a result, the confined Palestinian

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<sup>12</sup> See for example Falah 2005, Halper 2006, Segal and Weizman 2003, Weizman 2007, Barsella 2007, Lein 2005, Lein 2004, and B'Tselem 2008.

<sup>13</sup> These goods include food; raw materials required for agriculture, industry and infrastructure maintenance; fuel for heating and for generating electricity; money in the form of foreign aid destined to be administered by the Palestinian Authority as well as the salaries paid to its employees; and medical supplies. In addition

body experiences hunger and malnutrition, rendering it weak and vulnerable to disease. The lack of access to water, fuel and electricity also take their toll on the body: without them the body cannot adequately hydrate itself nor maintain a suitable level of hygiene; the body suffers the effects of the cold; without access to infrastructure such as sewage treatment facilities the body risks exposure to filth and therefore to illness and diseases.

What's more, the lack of electricity and fuel makes it impossible for medical facilities to function smoothly, and impacting the health of the Palestinian body. Israeli restrictions on movement make it almost impossible for Palestinians to travel to obtain medical care. Consequently, the body experiences illness, pain and unnecessary suffering as the result of these restrictions. For example it is not unusual for pregnant women to have no choice but to give birth under difficult conditions at checkpoints after being refused passage to hospital; for patients suffering from chronic illnesses to become sicker as the result of being denied permission to travel so as to obtain medical treatments; for the wounded to be denied access to hospitals;

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to restricting the entry of fuel into the West Bank and Gaza, Israel destroyed Gaza's only electricity generating plant in June 2006, resulting in chronic and severe electricity shortages that make it impossible to refrigerate food, sustain businesses, operate sewage treatments plants, and run hospital and health care facilities; for details see Li and Lein 2006. For details on restrictions on the movement of goods and their impact on the Palestinian economy see Roy 2006, Ajluni 2003, and Farsakh 2000. The situation is especially acute in Gaza where the economy has for all intents and purposes collapsed and over 80 per cent of the population is dependent on international humanitarian aid (Oxfam et al 2008).

and for ambulances to be prevented from reaching the sick and/or medical facilities<sup>14</sup>.

Thus the Palestinian body, confined to enclaves and deprived of that which is necessary to sustain, nurture and heal it, becomes a weak and vulnerable body, a sick and suffering body – and here again in contrast to the healthy and strong Jewish-Israeli body that enjoys complete freedom of movement as well as substantially more access to health care and other forms of sustenance.

### **Violence**

The confined Palestinian body is also subject to physical violence and abuse, inflicted most often by the Israeli security forces in the Occupied Territories, but also by Jewish settlers<sup>15</sup>. In the West Bank and in Hebron in

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<sup>14</sup> Physicians for Human Rights-Israel and B'Tselem estimate that ambulances are able to reach the sick only 30 per cent of the time. They also note that hospital births dropped from 95 per cent before the second intifada began in 2000 to less than 59 per cent in 2003; see Swisa 2003. For a detailed analysis of the impact of restrictions to Palestinian movement on Palestinian health care, see MachsomWatch 2004 pp.38-47.

<sup>15</sup> It must be also mentioned that since 2007, intra-Palestinian violence has come to target Palestinian bodies in the Occupied Territories. Organizations such as Human Rights Watch, Amnesty International, the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group and B'Tselem have reported numerous incidents of intra-Palestinian violence as the result of an ongoing conflict between Hamas and Fatah. These include incidents of beatings, politically-motivated arrests and torture by Fatah security forces in the West Bank and by Hamas security forces in Gaza. For details see Freed 2008, and B'Tselem: *Severe human rights violations in intra-Palestinian clashes* (Undated). Human Rights Watch also notes an alarming rise in Palestinian violence against women and girls including assault, rape and murder; see Deif and Mair 2006. A more detailed

particular, the Palestinian body is vulnerable to assault by Jewish settlers who throw stones, fire weapons and beat Palestinians, often with impunity<sup>16</sup>. The body may be bruised and broken by the impact of plastic bullets deployed by the Israeli security forces, notably during demonstrations. The Israeli security forces – despite a 2005 ruling to the contrary by the Israeli High Court of Justice – continue to use Palestinians, and children especially, as human shields when entering areas they consider to be hostile and/or when attempting to arrest suspected militants; these actions often result in damage to the Palestinian body, not that of the Israeli soldier<sup>17</sup>.

The contained Palestinian body is also subject to violence at checkpoints and crossings: The body wilts in the heat as it is made to wait for hours on end, often without food or water; it is subject to searches by IDF soldiers; it is crushed against other bodies as dozens of them at a time are crammed into turnstiles at crossing points. There the body may also be subject to beatings by the Israeli Border Police. Palestinians are often subject to arrest at crossings, and when this occurs the body is bound with handcuffs and

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examination of intra-Palestinian violence lies outside the scope of this research.

<sup>16</sup> Settlers are also responsible for the destruction of Palestinian private property including homes, orchards and vehicles. Ninety per cent of Palestinian complaints about settler violence were closed without ever being investigated by the Israeli police in the year 2007 (B'Tselem 2008). For a detailed account of violence against Palestinians by the Israeli security forces see Hoffstadter 2008. Restrictions on Palestinian movement often prevent them from traveling to the administrative offices where complaints against Jewish settlers and/or the Israeli security forces may be registered.

<sup>17</sup> For details see <[www.btselem.org/english/Human\\_Shields/](http://www.btselem.org/english/Human_Shields/)>.

restrained, and placed in detention and/or solitary confinement. The detained Palestinian body is deprived of sustenance for extended periods of time; it is also subject to beatings and to violent interrogation techniques as well as to torture<sup>18</sup>.

### **Mortal effects**

The confined Palestinian body has also become increasingly vulnerable to death. Severe restrictions on movement can prevent the receipt of life-saving medical treatment, often resulting in death. As well, the Palestinian body is also the target of deadly Israeli military strikes in the Occupied Territories<sup>19</sup>. Butler's notion of the zones of abjection as "unlivable" zones (1993 p.3) is pertinent here.

Since 2000, restrictions on movement have prevented Palestinians from travelling through checkpoints and crossings to obtain life-saving medical treatment. The ailing Palestinian body remains confined, despite a desperate need for medical attention, eventually resulting in death – often a preventable death. In many cases death could have been

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<sup>18</sup> For details see MachsomWatch 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Neve Gordon (2008) notes the disproportionate number of Palestinians killed by Israelis during the second intifada. Citing data from Israeli, American and Palestinian sources, Gordon estimates that 4046 Palestinians were killed by Israelis between September 2000 and December 2006, as compared to 1016 Israelis killed by Palestinians during the same period. Statistics for the same period from B'Tselem differ slightly: 4791 Palestinians killed by the Israeli security forces in the Occupied Territories, as compared to 490 Israeli civilians, and 90 Israeli security force personnel killed by Palestinians. See <[www.btselem.org/english/Statistics/Casualties.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/Statistics/Casualties.asp)> [Accessed October 10, 2009].

avoided had travel permission been granted: Palestinians wounded in attacks, newborn infants, cancer and dialysis patients, stroke and heart attack victims (among others) have all perished as the result of being delayed or detained by the IDF at checkpoints, or refused permits for travel to obtain crucial life-saving medical treatment<sup>20</sup>. Consequently the confined Palestinian body suffers the effects of illness or injury needlessly, and at the extreme resulting in a slow, painful and often, preventable death.

The Palestinian body may also be fatally targeted in the zones of abjection. Since the year 2000, the Israeli government has used targeted assassinations to kill suspected Palestinian militants and political leaders, more often than

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<sup>20</sup> Advanced medical treatment facilities are generally not available in the Occupied Territories, making it necessary for Palestinian patients to travel to Israel or Egypt to seek medical care, most notably for cancer patients. The situation is especially grave for Palestinian residents of Gaza, who are systematically denied exit permits to obtain medical care in Egypt. For example, Fawziyeh a-Darln died of a heart attack when IDF soldiers refused passage through a checkpoint to an ambulance taking her to hospital, on February 26, 2008; Ahmad Wakhman, a week-old infant, died in December 2006 when IDF soldiers delayed his passage to hospital for urgent treatment – soldiers beat the driver of the vehicle who attempted to explain the urgency of the situation; Mahmoud Kamal Taha, a cancer patient, died in October 2007 after the IDF delayed his entry from Gaza into Israel for 10 days despite the fact that he had a permit to travel; for details on these and other instances see B'Tselem 2008. According to B'Tselem, between September 2000 and December 2008, 66 Palestinians in the Occupied Territories died after medical care was delayed due to restrictions on movement. See <[www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Casualties\\_month\\_table.asp?Category=21&region=TER](http://www.btselem.org/English/Statistics/Casualties_month_table.asp?Category=21&region=TER)> [Accessed October 11, 2009]. Even patients with permission to travel to receive medical treatment are often denied passage by the Israeli security forces at crossing points (Oxfam et al 2008). For more details on the impact of travel restrictions on acute Palestinian health needs, see Aghbariyya et al 2007.

not killing civilians in the process<sup>21</sup>. The Palestinian body is strategically targeted from above, and destroyed by mortar fire launched from Israeli helicopters. Weizman further notes that the IDF uses the terms "focused obstruction" or "focused preemption" (2007 p.244) to imply a swift and sanitized elimination of the body. In reality however, the destruction of the body from above is a bloody and messy affair. The body is reduced to bits of bone and blood and limbs and organs that scatter and stick to everything it comes into contact with: land, buildings, other bodies<sup>22</sup>. The bodies of innocent bystanders are often destroyed in the process. The Palestinian Centre for Human Rights notes that 742 Palestinians were killed in extra-judicial killings between September 2000 and December 20, 2008 of which 512 persons were deliberately targeted by Israel and 230 were innocent bystanders<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> Weizman (2007) notes that most states have at one time or another conducted assassinations of their enemies' military and political leadership. He also observes that while Israel has long used such assassinations against Palestinian and Lebanese resistance, "since the beginning of the Al-Aqsa Intifada in September 2000 and increasingly since the evacuation of Gaza, targeted assassinations have become the most significant and frequent form of Israeli military attack" (p.238). His study was published prior to operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2008-2009, discussed on the following page. Targeted assassinations (also called extra-judicial executions) are illegal under international law.

<sup>22</sup> For example the documentary film *Death in Gaza* opens with a graphic scene in which Palestinian children collect the bloody bits of flesh of an assassinated Palestinian militant, for his burial.

<sup>23</sup> See <[www.pchrgaza.org/alaqsaintifada.html](http://www.pchrgaza.org/alaqsaintifada.html)> [Accessed October 10, 2009]; B'Tselem's figures for the same period differ somewhat: 387 persons directly targeted and 234 innocent bystanders; see <[www.btselem.org/english/statistics/Casualties.asp](http://www.btselem.org/english/statistics/Casualties.asp)> [Accessed October 10, 2009].

The Palestinian civilian body is also increasingly vulnerable to death by IDF gunfire. Since September 2000 Israel has enacted open-fire regulations that allow IDF soldiers to open fire on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories even if their own lives are not in danger (B'Tselem 2008). In Gaza, the body is vulnerable to perishing in the "death zones", buffer areas that surround Palestinian cities, refugee camps, towns, coastal and border areas – IDF soldiers are permitted to fatally target anyone who enters them (B'Tselem 2008 p.6).

Butler's notion of "unlivable" (1993 p.3) was manifest perhaps to a new level during Operation Cast Lead, Israel's military attack on Gaza from December 27, 2008 to January 18, 2009. Operation Cast Lead transformed all of Gaza into one single death zone: Palestinian residents of Gaza were forbidden to leave the territory because Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement remained in effect, consequently, every Palestinian living in Gaza risked being killed there<sup>24</sup>. Israel's military attack on a spatially confined population in Gaza left approximately 1,400 Palestinians dead, and 5,380 wounded<sup>25</sup>. Most of them were civilians (United Nations 2009).

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<sup>24</sup> Egypt, which shares responsibility with Israel for the Rafah crossing into Egypt, refused to allow Palestinians passage through this crossing and must be held partly responsible; see Kadman 2009.

<sup>25</sup> The data on wounded Palestinians in the text above is provided by the Palestinian Ministry of Health in Gaza, and cited in *The Humanitarian Monitor* (2009). The United Nations report further notes that, "the percentage of civilians among those killed are generally consistent and raise very serious concerns with regard to the way Israel conducted the military operations in Gaza" (2009 pp.10-11). The same report also cites three Israeli civilians and one soldier killed by Palestinian rocket fire into Israel, and nine IDF soldiers killed in combat, four of them in friendly fire incidents (United Nations 2009). The report condemned the ongoing

The United Nations concluded that, "the direct targeting and arbitrary killing of Palestinian civilians *is a violation of the right to life*" (2009 p.16)[Italics added]<sup>26</sup>. Butler's notion of unlivable (1993) bears reiteration here<sup>27</sup>.

In addition to killing and maiming Palestinian bodies by gunfire and mortar fire, the confined Palestinian body suffered a host of other corporeal effects resulting from Operation Cast Lead. These include the infliction of severe burns induced by the use of white phosphorous; penetrating

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detention of IDF soldier Gilad Shalit by Palestinian militants, as well as the launching of rockets into Israel, which the report notes, have also caused profound trauma among Israeli civilians together with damage to property and economic and social life. The report accuses both the Israeli government and Palestinian militant groups of waging attacks on civilian populations that constitute war crimes under international law. The Israeli government did not cooperate with the United Nations' investigation team and has rejected the report's findings; see in particular the Israeli government's official statement to this effect at <[http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/MFA+Spokesman/2009/Press+releases/Israel\\_reaction\\_decision\\_UN\\_Human\\_Rights\\_Council\\_16-Oct-2009.htm](http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/About+the+Ministry/MFA+Spokesman/2009/Press+releases/Israel_reaction_decision_UN_Human_Rights_Council_16-Oct-2009.htm)>[Accessed 23 October 2009]. The Israeli MFA maintains a comprehensive website outlining the Israeli government's perspective on Operation Cast Lead, see <[www.mfa.gov.il/GazaFacts](http://www.mfa.gov.il/GazaFacts)>[Accessed October 9, 2009 and October 23, 2009].

<sup>26</sup> See in particular pp.198-247 in United Nations 2009 for details on the deliberate targeting of civilians; see also B'Tselem 2009.

<sup>27</sup> With regard to Butler's notion of unlivable, it is also interesting to note that upon completion of its disengagement from Gaza in 2005, Israel claimed that *it was no longer responsible for ensuring the proper functioning of life there* (B'Tselem, *The Gaza Strip After Disengagement*)[italics added]. According to a report released by eight international organizations, "The contention by Israeli officials that Israel is no longer bound by the laws of occupation since it redeployed its forces to the perimeter of the Gaza Strip in 2005 is a fallacy. Israel retains effective control of the Gaza Strip. Hence, the Israeli authorities are bound by their obligations under international humanitarian and human rights law to ensure the welfare of the Palestinian population in the OPT [Occupied Palestinian Territories]" (Oxfam et.al. 2008, p.6)[My addition to the text]. On this point see also Lein 2005.

wounds resulting from the use of flechettes; delays in receiving medical treatment for wounds suffered; hunger and extreme cold resulting from food and fuel shortages in Gaza; and disease as the result of IDF attacks on Gaza's sewage treatment facilities<sup>28</sup>.

### **The body as a weapon of resistance**

The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber is deployed as a weapon of resistance against the Israeli occupation, and one that may be located within a larger historical continuum of resistance to colonial violence. Here, the body is both the target of oppression by the colonizer, and a weapon of resistance that seeks to liberate the colonized from colonial oppression. Following Fanon (1963), the notion of the body as a weapon is inextricably linked to resistance in decolonization and national liberation struggles.

For Fanon (1963), the European colonial project that originated in the late 16th century was one whereby the colonies provided a source of materials and wealth for the colonists. This project was also one of colonial control and domination asserted over *bodies*: the body constitutes perhaps *the* primary object of control in the history of colonization.

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<sup>28</sup> These are all detailed in United Nations 2009; see pp.247-253 on the use of white phosphorous and flechettes; and pp.253-269 on the destruction of food production and water and sewage treatment facilities. On white phosphorous, see also Human Rights Watch 2009. B'Tselem (2009), citing UN data and satellite photos, also notes the extraordinary destruction of homes, property and infrastructure: at least 1200 buildings and over 80 hothouses were destroyed, and tens of thousands of Palestinians were left homeless.

In order to control the wealth and resources of their colonies - notably territory and raw materials - the European colonial powers (Spain, Portugal, England, France and Holland) had to control the bodies of the indigenous inhabitants of their colonies. Bodies were exploited and enslaved so as to provide the labor with which these resources could be transformed into wealth for the colonial powers. In the process, colonized bodies across the Americas, Africa and Asia were subject to acts of violence and subjugation including enslavement and harsh labor, rape, sterilization, and mass-scale violent decimation through massacres and the spread of disease<sup>29</sup>. Bodies continue to be the object of control in the context of modern colonial conflicts but also, ethno-national ones that are the product of colonization<sup>30</sup>.

However the body also plays a central role in resisting colonial domination and oppression. Fanon (1963) explores the notion of resistant bodies and the use of violence in decolonization efforts. For Fanon, decolonization - the liberation of colonized countries from the yoke of colonial powers - is of necessity a violent process, and one that occurs in response to the legacy of violent repression

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<sup>29</sup> The essays in Pierce and Rao (2006) explore the use of violence as a means of disciplining bodies in a variety of colonial contexts from the sixteenth century to the present. See also Ballantyne and Burton 2005.

<sup>30</sup> For example, the systematic destruction of male bodies and the use of rape against women's bodies in ethnic cleansing campaigns in the former Yugoslavia and Rwanda; the use of torture by the United States in Central America during the 1980s, and more recently, in the context of the war on terror in Iraq and at Guantanamo Bay. On torture and the war on terror see Strange 2006, Steele 2006, and Butler 2008. On violence and the body in Latin America see the essays in Aldama 2003.

imposed by the colonists on the colonized. Fanon is primarily concerned with decolonization in Africa during the mid-20th century, however, his observations about the resistant body are also relevant to this analysis of the body of the suicide bomber, deployed as a weapon in the context of late 20th century decolonization and national liberation struggles<sup>31</sup>. The body of the suicide bomber is strategically deployed with a view to forcing the withdrawal of occupying forces from an existing nation or to liberate it from occupation, for example, as in Lebanon, Iraq and Afghanistan<sup>32</sup>. It is also deployed in an effort to force the establishment of a national homeland or territory, for example by the Tamil minority in Sri Lanka, and by Chechen and Kashmiri separatists in Russia and India respectively.

Thus the deployment of the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber as a weapon of resistance against the Israeli occupation may be situated within this contemporary continuum of resistance to colonial domination and occupation. The phenomenon of the Palestinian suicide bomber emerged within a larger global context of decolonization and national liberation struggles, as well as within the specific context of a protracted occupation by the state of Israel, a point taken up in more detail shortly.

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<sup>31</sup> On the body as a weapon more generally, see in particular the excellent work exploring the dirty protests by IRA political prisoners in the North of Ireland by Feldman 1991; see also Neti in Aldama 2003, pp.59-76.

<sup>32</sup> I cite Iraq (above) with a good deal of hesitation because what began as a campaign to end the US-led occupation has escalated into a violent intra-national/religious conflict, what may even be considered a civil war between Sunni and Shiite Muslim factions. As Hafez (2006-a) notes, suicide bombings in Iraq now kill more Iraqis than Americans.

### **A succinct introduction to the modern suicide bomber**

The modern suicide bomber is defined as "*an individual who willingly uses his or her body to carry or deliver explosives or explosive materials to attack, kill, or maim others*" (Hafez 2006 p.4)[Italics in original]. Further, the attack by the suicide bomber "*is dependent upon the death of the perpetrator*" (Institute for Counter Terrorism 2000 p.6) [Italics in original]. Most suicide bombers use explosive belts directly attached to their bodies. Other methods include driving a vehicle rigged with explosives toward the target, carrying and then detonating explosives, using grenades, and booby-trapping bicycles (Pedahzur 2005)<sup>33</sup>.

Much of the research literature consulted for this study was produced within the field of terrorism and security studies, and it examines the phenomenon of the suicide bomber within the context of global terrorism. This literature seeks primarily to define, identify, and prevent suicide terrorism. Consequently, much of the literature uses the term suicide terrorist and not suicide bomber, as well as the term suicide terrorism, to describe acts of suicide bombings. As Hafez (2006) observes, the terminology used to describe one who explodes her/himself in order to kill others is highly controversial and ideologically charged: one person's suicide terrorist, suicidal murderer or homicide bomber, is another

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<sup>33</sup> For a general overview of suicide bombing, its definitions and characteristics, see Pape 2003, Pedahzur, "What is Suicide Terrorism?" 2005 pp.1-21, Pedahzur and Perlinger, "Introduction: characteristics of suicide attacks" in Pedahzur 2006 pp.1-12, and Moghadam, "Defining suicide terrorism" in Pedahzur 2006 pp.13-24.

person's freedom fighter or martyr. Moghadam (in Pedahzur 2006) notes that there can be no universally agreed upon definition of the term suicide terrorist or suicide terrorism so long as the word terrorism – used mostly in the pejorative sense – is itself contested<sup>34</sup>. Following Hafez (2006-a), I use the term suicide bomber<sup>35</sup>.

The era of the modern suicide bomber began in Lebanon in 1983 (Bloom 2005, Pape 2003, Pedahzur 2006) when Hezbollah operatives began using trucks laden with explosives to bomb US Marine barracks in Beirut, killing themselves in the process. Since that date, suicide bombers have also been deployed by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Elam in Sri Lanka; by the Kurdistan Workers Party in Turkey; by Chechen separatists against Russian targets; by Kashmiri separatists in India; and by al-Qaeda and its affiliated cells and splinter groups in Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Indonesia

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<sup>34</sup> I have attempted to avoid using the term terrorism because, as Coulter-Smith and Owen (2005) point out, it is one that is plagued by semantic and ideological difficulties. They further observe a great deal of disagreement as to which acts constitute terrorism, and which do not, noting that while the term terrorism is generally applied to the actions of non-state actors, it may also be used to describe the actions of governments. Naaman notes that, "This discourse on terrorism also does not account for state terrorism, whereby state institutions such as the army or police inflict violence on civilian populations" (2007 p.939). On this point see also Hage 2003 and Falk 2002. Chapter 1 "Defining Terrorism" in Hoffman 2006 provides a useful historical overview of the shifting meanings of the term terrorism from its popularization during the French Revolution to today, however, his analysis ultimately falls prey to the limitations noted by Coulter-Smith, Naaman and Hage. For a provocative philosophical discussion that examines the problematics of moral distinctions made between terrorism and war see Chapter 1, "Terrorism" in Asad 2007, pp.7-38.

<sup>35</sup> Hafez (2006-a) and Abufarha (2009) also use the term human bomb.

(among others), and in urban centers in the USA and the United Kingdom<sup>36</sup>.

For the purposes of this study, I am primarily interested in the deployment of suicide bombers as a strategic tactic designed to achieve specific political and territorial goals, most notably those of national self-determination (Pape 2003) and resistance. With this in mind, this study considers Palestinian suicide bombers in the context of a protracted struggle against Jewish territorial encroachment and with a view to resisting the Israeli occupation and achieving Palestinian national and territorial rights<sup>37</sup>.

### **Palestinian suicide bombers**

Hamas was the first Palestinian group to deploy suicide bombers, beginning in the year 1993 (Kimhi and Even 2003,

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<sup>36</sup> A detailed discussion of these suicide bombing campaigns lies outside the scope of this research; for details see Pedahzur 2005 and 2006, Bloom 2005, Byman 2005, Shay 2004, Reuter 2004, Juergensmeyer 2003, and Institute for Counter-Terrorism 2000. For a general overview of the contemporary history of suicide bombings see Reuter 2004, "Introduction" in Shay 2004 pp.1-23, and "Introduction" in Bloom 2005 pp.1-18. On the organizational aspects of the groups that deploy suicide bombers, see in particular Moghadam's Chapter 4 in Pedahzur 2006 pp.81-107. A great deal of attention has been devoted to attempting to understand why individuals become suicide bombers; see Chapter 6 in Moghadam 2005, pp.118-154; Bloom's Chapter 2 in Moghadam 2005, pp.25-53, and Chapter 4 in Bloom 2005, pp.76-100. I deal with the issue of motive in greater detail in the following chapter when I discuss intentionality.

<sup>37</sup> Here again, the term "Jewish" is used here to include Zionist settlement on Palestinian inhabited lands prior to 1948, as well as Israeli expansion onto Palestinian lands after 1948.

Hafez 2006)<sup>38</sup>. Suicide bombings by Palestinians peaked in 2001-2002, and have decreased steadily since 2003<sup>39</sup>. The earliest incidents of Palestinian suicide bombings (in 1993-1994) tended to feature the use of explosives in vehicles, however these tactics soon shifted to the use of explosive belts strapped to the bodies of individual suicide bombers (Shay 2004).

Attacks by Palestinian suicide bombers can be divided into two key phases, first, from 1993 to 2000; and second, from the start of the al-Aqsa intifada in 2000 to the present (Bloom 2004 and 2005). During the first phase, suicide bombers were deployed exclusively the by the Islamic organizations Hamas and Palestinian Islamic Jihad (PIJ)<sup>40</sup>.

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<sup>38</sup> There is no consensus in the research literature as to the date of the first suicide bombing by Hamas; some cite the year 1993, and others (for example Abufarha 2009), the year 1994. Israeli government statistics available from the Israeli MFA cite the first suicide bombing to have occurred on April 6, 1994, by Hamas.

<sup>39</sup> It has been difficult to determine with any certainty the number of Israelis killed in Palestinian suicide attacks. Hafez (2006-a) cites 159 Israelis killed in 26 suicide bombings between 1993 and 2000. Data provided by the Israeli MFA note 269 civilians and soldiers killed in terror attacks between 1993 and 2000, see <[www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/terrorism-%20obstacle%20to%20peace/palestinian%20terror%20before%202000/fatal%20terrorist%20attacks%20in%20israel%20since%20the%20dop%20s](http://www.mfa.gov.il/mfa/terrorism-%20obstacle%20to%20peace/palestinian%20terror%20before%202000/fatal%20terrorist%20attacks%20in%20israel%20since%20the%20dop%20s)> [Accessed April 13, 2006]. However these figures do not distinguish between suicide attacks and other types of attacks such as stabbings and shootings. The MFA cites 542 Israelis killed in suicide attacks from 2000 to 2008, see <<http://www.mfa.gov.il/MFA/Terrorism-+Obstacle+to+Peace/Palestinian+terror+since+2000/Suicide+and+Other+Bombing+Attacks+in+Israel+Since.htm>> [Accessed July 8 2008]. As Hafez (2006-a) notes, data about suicide bombings and their victims is collected and interpreted by many different organizations and statistics may to vary from source to source.

<sup>40</sup> Created in 1987, Hamas is the Arabic acronym for *Harakat al-Muqawamah al Islamiyya*, the Islamic Resistance Movement. Hamas emerged from the Islamic Brotherhood, and was founded in an effort

Most importantly for the purposes of this research, Palestinian suicide bombings prior to the year 2000 were sporadic, the exclusive domain of the Palestinian Islamic groups and tended to generate low levels of popular support as most Palestinians supported the Oslo process and its promise of a Palestinian state (Hafez 2006-b, Bloom 2003 and 2005)<sup>41</sup>.

The start of the al-Aqsa *intfada* in 2000 marked a profound shift in the frequency with which Palestinian suicide bombers were deployed, the types of groups that deployed them, and

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to implement a more radical Palestinian nationalist program, and to compete with secular nationalist groups, notably the PLO, as well as with more fringe Islamic groups such as Islamic Jihad (Budeiri 1995). While Hamas is best known in the West for its deployment of suicide bombers and rocket fire into Israel, it is a highly organized and structured social and political organization. Many Western writers (Levitt 2006 is good example of this tendency) consider Hamas exclusively within the context of global terrorism and/or Islamic extremism; exceptions include Mishal and Sela 2000, Hroub 2006, and Tamimi 2007. For a detailed analysis of Hamas' military tactics, including the deployment of suicide bombers, see Chapter 3 "Controlled Violence" in Mishal and Sela 2000 pp.49-82; see also Tamimi 2007 pp.187-207. Palestinian Islamic Jihad was created in Gaza during the 1970s as a branch of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad. PIJ is a much smaller and less cohesive organization than Hamas, focusing on militant activity and lacking Hamas' social network and objectives. As is the case with Hamas, a good deal of the Western literature on PIJ explores the group's objectives and actions exclusively in the context of terrorism and Islamic fundamentalism (see for example Fighel 2003 and Shay 2004). On PIJ see Hatina 2001; while outdated, see the section on PIJ in Abu-Amr 1994 for an overview of the group's history, objectives and activities to 1993.

<sup>41</sup> Bloom (2003 and 2005) notes that in 1999 over 70 per cent of Palestinians had faith in the peace process; support for suicide bombings fell to 20 per cent and support for Hamas was at its lowest point ever – below 12 per cent. She further observes that suicide bombing campaigns are more prevalent in countries where the local population supports such acts, and that militant groups also use suicide attacks to compete for popular support, a process she terms outbidding (2003, 2004, 2005).

the levels of popular support for suicide bombings. The number of suicide bombers deployed began to increase dramatically after the outbreak of the al-Aqsa intifada in September 2000, as did the numbers of their Israeli victims. The most notable shift occurred in 2001 when Palestinian *secular* organizations – notably the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP), the al-Aqsa Martyrs Brigades (AMB), and the Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine (DFLP) – began to deploy suicide bombers (Hafez 2006-a, Asad 2007, Bloom 2004). As these scholars note, suicide bombing was no longer the exclusive domain of Palestinian Islamic organizations<sup>42</sup>.

Bloom notes a correlation between increased Palestinian popular support for suicide bombings after September 2000, and the failure of the Oslo peace process to deliver much in the way of tangible gains for Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, much less its much-anticipated promise of an independent Palestinian state. As such, suicide bombings “resonate against a dual backdrop of economic hardship and the disappearance of any possible peace dividend” (Bloom 2004 p.72). Bloom (2004) also cites ongoing settlement construction in the West Bank, restrictions on Palestinian movement, the use of closure, the faltering Palestinian economy, and the disproportionate use of force by the Israeli

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<sup>42</sup> A basic overview of the al-Aqsa Martyrs’ Brigades and the PFLP are provided in Hafez 2006-a. The AMB emerged in 2000 as a loose grouping of militias linked to the PLO faction Fatah. It sometimes collaborated on joint suicide bombing missions with Hamas and PIJ but remains primarily a secular nationalist group. The PFLP was formed in the 1960s as a Marxist-Leninist and nationalist organization; like the Marxist DFLP it attracts relatively low levels of support as compared to AMB and the Islamist groups.

security forces including targeted assassinations and the killing of innocent civilians, as factors that generated increased levels of popular Palestinian support for suicide bombings after the year 2000.

In contrast, much of the research literature produced by Israeli authors, counter-terrorism think tanks and the Israeli government (in information produced most notably by the Ministry of Defense and Ministry of Foreign Affairs), consider Palestinian suicide *terrorism* – their term – to be the product of Palestinian anti-Semitism, a refusal to recognize Israel by Palestinian extremist groups, and a hate campaign against it<sup>43</sup>. For example, Berko asserts that,

The *shaheed's* act can be viewed as a kind of expressive suicide. It is his way... to express rage, envy, and hatred for the Jews, Israel, and the rest of the Western world, and to release deep, violent impulses, which are difficult to control (2007 p.172).

As well, this literature elides any reference to the Occupation: it is as if the Occupation does not exist. This literature does not consider the deployment of Palestinian suicide bombers to be related in any way to Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, nor to Israeli spatial practices such as construction projects, nor to Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement.

I do not support Palestinian acts of suicide bombings. Yet I also find it impossible to justify Israel's practices in the

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<sup>43</sup> See in particular Israel Information Center 2004, Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2006, and Paz 2000.

Occupied Territories, a point also eloquently argued by Hage (2003). The deployment of Palestinian suicide bombers – certainly since the failure of the Oslo negotiation process in 2000 – must be considered in a relationship to worsening conditions of Occupation in the West Bank and Gaza. Thus I cite a direct correlation between these Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories, and Palestinian suicide bombing campaigns – this with reference to Bloom (2005) who asserts that Palestinian popular support for suicide bombings will not cease until Israel stops its heavy handed tactics and is prepared to negotiate a true peace settlement; and Hafez, who observes that, “Societies under normal conditions do not embrace and venerate suicidal violence” (2006-a p.53). And, as Slater astutely asserts,

Israel has not only occupied but also brutally repressed the Palestinian people for over four decades.

Consequently, Palestinian resistance, even violent resistance, cannot be regarded as primarily a function of religious fanaticism or of a mindless, immutable, and a priori anti-Semitism – though both do play some role – but rather of Israeli behavior (Slater 2009 p.1)

For scholar Mai Jayyusi (cited in Asad 2007), acts of Palestinian suicide bombing constitute part of a historical continuum of Palestinian resistance<sup>44</sup>. So too, for Abufarha (2009), who firmly locates acts of Palestinian suicide

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<sup>44</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, citations of Jayyusi in Asad's text are not direct quotes from Jayyusi, but rather Asad, who describes observations made by Jayyusi in an unpublished conference paper presented in 2004. I have been unable to obtain a copy of this paper and consequently, rely on its citation by Asad.

bombing within a trajectory of resistance to what he terms Israeli state expansionism. To this I would add, that these acts constitute part of a historical continuum of Palestinian resistance to *Jewish (Zionist and Israeli) encroachment on Palestinian inhabited territory*, which also have a history dating back to the turn of the 20th century, and considered in Chapter 2. Scholars Slater (2009), Asad (2007), Hage (2003), Allen (2006-c) Khalili (2007), Whitehead and Abufarha (2008), and Abufarha (2009) all consider Palestinian acts of suicide bombings to be inextricably linked to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and my personal views are consistent with their assertions<sup>45</sup>.

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<sup>45</sup> There is a growing body of literature that grapples with the question of whether acts of suicide bombing constitute a *justifiable* response to acts of state violence, for example, in Asad 2007, and Honderich 2002, 2003. This material draws primarily on moral philosophy, but also on political theory and principles of international law. Of particular importance for the purposes of this study is the volume edited by Steven Law (2008), as it focuses specifically on the deployment of Palestinian suicide bombers. This collection of essays by philosophers responds to an essay by philosopher Ted Honderich, who argues that Palestinians have a moral right to terrorism and killing in the context of the Israeli occupation. All of the essays in this volume respond to Honderich's propositions, most of them using a framework of moral philosophy and some using principles of international humanitarian law. Some writers agree that Palestinians have the right to make recourse to suicide bombings, others categorically do not. Interestingly, all of the writers use the term terrorism. It is with a great amount of trepidation that I attempt to explore this matter in a footnote, yet it should be noted that this book presents one of the most thoughtful and carefully considered debates on the matter. So too does Asad (2007), however his study is much broader in its scope, considering suicide bombings more generally (not only in Palestine). Falk (2002) considers the Palestinian right to resistance in the context of the "just war" doctrine, examining the state of Israel's failures to respect the rights of Palestinians under international law, and he notes that some Israeli state practices may also be regarded as terrorism. While he steadfastly

### **The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber as a weapon**

The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber is what Fanon (1963) has termed a resistant body. The body of the suicide bomber is deployed as a weapon of resistance against the Israeli occupation and against Israel. And like the bodies of the Palestinian martyr of the 1920s and 1930s, the *fida'i*, and the *shab* discussed in Chapter 1, the body of the suicide bomber is also a locus of Palestinian resistance.

The body of the suicide bomber, deployed as a weapon, explodes, and in so doing, it unleashes death and destruction upon Israeli bodies, in Israel. It inflicts mortal damage on Israeli bodies in the process of destroying itself.

The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber enters public spaces in Israel – markets, buses, restaurants, discotheques. Her/his body is strapped with explosives and packed with metal shrapnel and marbles, all designed to maximize the damage and pain it inflicts on Israeli bodies. The suicide bomber carefully penetrates the target area in Israel. There s/he detonates her/himself. The body explodes. His or her body is torn to bits, and often only the head remains, "After

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argues in favor of the Palestinian right of resistance, he also argues that this right stops short of deploying suicide bombers. Unfortunately a more in-depth examination of this matter lies outside the scope of this writing, which cannot accommodate a more profound investigation into either moral philosophy, nor international law, that such a discussion would require. On a different but related note, Hamas views the deployment of suicide bombers as justifiable in the context of war, and considers the current conflict to constitute war; see in particular the interviews with the since assassinated Dr. Abdul Aziz Rantisi in Juergensmeyer 2003 pp.73-80; and in Stern 2003 pp.55-62.

a bomb has been strapped to a stomach, the head is normally left intact but the rest of the body disintegrates" (Berg 2002 unpag.)<sup>46</sup>.

The force of the body's explosion also violently tears Israeli bodies apart, killing some while maiming and wounding many others. The violent explosion of the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber sends Israeli bodies flying. It severs limbs from bodies, shatters bones, pierces skin and internal organs and singes flesh from the body. Fingers, hands, feet, ears, arms, eyes and legs lie scattered across the scene of the attack; bones protrude from skin; jumbles of guts and blood spill from bodies. Eardrums are shattered and blood pours from heads. Shrapnel and metal tear into flesh, become embedded into skin and eyes and tear internal organs to shreds. Blood and bodily detritus cling to the bodies of the survivors; living bodies mingle with dead ones; the smell of charred flesh and hair hang in the air<sup>47</sup>.

The description above attests to the destructive capability of the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber. At once a weapon, the body of the suicide bomber is also a deadly sort of equalizer by virtue of its ability to kill and maim Israeli bodies,

This weapon [suicide bomber] is our winning card, which turned our weakness and feebleness into strength, and

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<sup>46</sup> For a compelling study of the head of the suicide bomber, examined in the context of photography and the gaze, see Wigoder 2006.

<sup>47</sup> The descriptions in the above section were compiled based on Israeli survivor accounts cited in Bards 2006, Brom 2006, Westcott 2002, Berg 2002, and Stork 2002.

created parity never before witnessed in the history of the struggle with the Zionist enemy. It also gave our people the ability to respond, deter, and inflict harm on the enemy" (Azet al-Rushuq, a member of Hamas' political bureau, cited in Hafez 2006-a p.26).

The deployment of body of the Palestinian suicide bomber as a weapon, seeks to transform Palestinian weakness into strength by inflicting damage on Israeli bodies, thus producing a shift in the balance of power with the state of Israel. The IDF is a much more sophisticated and technologically advanced force than the Palestinian groups that deploy suicide bombers, however, the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber, deployed as a weapon, asserts its strength and power through acts of violence that target Israeli bodies. In so doing it has altered the landscape of the conflict.

### **The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber and the refusal of otherness**

The body of the suicide bomber refuses to be spatially confined to the zones of abjection in the West Bank and Gaza. It moves more freely (albeit clandestinely) across territory, refusing spatial confinement. Confinement to enclaves or the zones of abjection in the West Bank and Gaza produces the Palestinian body as an inferior Other to Jewish Israeli bodies that enjoy complete freedom of movement. The refusal of the suicide bomber to be spatially contained constitutes a refusal of otherness produced by Israeli restrictions on movement.

Despite the fences, barriers and checkpoints that seek to contain it, the body of the suicide bomber penetrates into Israeli territory, where it is able to inflict serious and mortal damage upon Israelis. It penetrates the borders of the Israeli national body so to speak, inflicting damage on Israeli bodies, in Israel. The bodily incursion of the Palestinian suicide bomber into Israel also represents an attempt to bring the violence of the occupation into Israel proper (Bloom 2004, Abufarha 2009)<sup>48</sup>. In so doing, the suicide bomber is able to inflict some of the corporeal effects of military occupation and spatial containment – notably violence and mortal suffering – upon Israeli bodies. For Whitehead and Abufarha, Palestinian violence directed at Israeli targets in Israel "mimics Israel's violence in Palestine where the Israelis reach the Palestinian depth and spread terror throughout Palestine" (2008 p.405). Deployed as what a Hamas spokesman described as a deadly equalizer (in Hafez 2006-a), the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber also inflicts death, damage and destruction on Israeli bodies in the process of destroying itself. This ability to unleash death on Israelis, in Israel, as Israel has unleashed death on Palestinians in the Occupied Territories, may also be construed as a refusal of otherness, by the Palestinian suicide bomber.

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<sup>48</sup> Some of the Israeli practices described earlier (notably the use of restrictions on movement, closure, checkpoints and barriers, and the construction of the separation barrier) have been deployed in a specific effort to contain the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber and to prevent its penetration into Israel. However as has been noted by human rights groups such as B'Tselem, Bimkom, MachsomWatch and Hamoked, the *draconian* use of these practices constitutes a form of collective punishment, rather than viable security mechanisms.

## Martyrdom and the martyr in Palestine

Martyrdom in Palestine is linked to self-sacrifice, whether deliberate and intentional or not. The Palestinian martyr (or *shahid*, from witness) is one who sacrifices his or her life for Palestine<sup>49</sup>. The martyr has appeared and continues to appear in almost all spheres of Palestinian cultural and political life, in literature and art, film, political speeches and elegies (Abu Hashhash 2006), and in political and religious discourse. Earlier instances of the Palestinian martyr and Palestinian self-sacrifice were explored in Chapter 1, citing as examples, the martyr who sacrificed himself to the land of Palestine in a struggle to defend his land from Zionist encroachment during the 1920s and 1930s; The *fida'i* or guerilla fighter of the 1960s and 1970s, and the *shabab* of the first intifada, are of whom all linked to the possibility of self-sacrifice in the context of Palestinian resistance and national liberation efforts.

During the first intifada, innocent bystanders who were killed by the Israeli army in the context of the occupation came to be considered martyrs or *shahids*. Khalili (2007) observes that the term *shahid* engenders multiple and shifting meanings, and may be mobilized to convey notions of heroism and resistance, as well as victimhood and suffering<sup>50</sup>. For

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<sup>49</sup> Saloul (2003) explains that the term *shahid*, from *shahada*, means to bear witness to one's Islamic faith by way of self-sacrifice. I return to notions of self-sacrifice in Islam on page 148.

<sup>50</sup> Khalili (2007) notes that the notion of the innocent victim-as-martyr or *shahid* was prevalent during the first intifada, during which support for Palestinians as victims of Israeli brutality found a supportive international audience. A similar argument can be found in Whitehead and Abufarha (2008). Khalili (2007) notes

Khalili, the common denominator of martyrdom during the first intifada – whether an activist's or an innocent bystander's – was death at the hand of the Israeli oppressor. Martyrdom is transformative because it "transforms that potentially senseless death into a redemptive self-sacrifice for the nation" (2007 p.140).

Similarly, in Palestine today (and by today I mean the period of the al-Aqsa intifada), the term martyr or *shahid* refers "to anyone killed by the [Israeli] aggressor, whether a fighter or victim of aggression, whether a member of an Islamic, Christian, secular or Marxist organization, whether targeted or untargeted" (Abufarha 2009 p.8)[my addition]. Suicide bombers, suspected militants killed in targeted assassinations, and civilians killed by the Israeli security forces, are all considered to be martyrs or *shahids* (Abufarha 2009, Abu Hashhash 2006, Allen 2006-a).

During the Al-Aqsa intifada, however, there occurred three substantial shifts in Palestinian conceptions of the martyr and martyrdom: first, the elevation of the suicide bomber to a higher status than the other martyrs as described above; second, an emphasis on intentional and deliberate self-sacrifice by the suicide bomber; and third, the injection of Islamic religious discourses of self-sacrifice to existing secular nationalist ones.

Those who sacrifice themselves in acts of suicide bombing came to be referred to even more specifically as *istishhadi*

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that the discourse of the martyr as a victim depoliticizes the act of dying for a cause.

(Abufarha 2009, Reuter 2004). As the one who performs the act of self-sacrifice, the *istishhadi* "occupies the highest, and most noble ground, above that of the shahid" (Abufarha 2009 p.10), because her or his act of self-sacrifice is deliberate, intentional and desired.

Note that while I continue to use the English term martyr, unless indicated otherwise, from here on in I use it with specific reference to the *istishhadi*, one who sacrifices her/himself in an act of suicide bombing.

Abufarha (2009) observes that the term *istishhadi* was introduced by Hamas, which sought to attach religious meanings to the act of self-sacrifice. Hamas was the first group to execute suicide bombings, which the group specifically refers to as '*amaliyat istishhadiya* or martyrdom operations, and not suicide bombings<sup>51</sup>. Hamas' Islamic ideology and objectives have profoundly shaped discourses of martyrdom in Palestine today, even among the more secular organizations that deploy suicide bombers. Religious and nationalist discourses of martyrdom have become intertwined (Saloul 2003): Islamic religious notions of self-sacrifice overlap with nationalist ones, to create distinctly Palestinian discourses of martyrdom and the martyr. There is

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<sup>51</sup> For Abufarha (2009), the term suicide is not appropriate to describe the actions of the human bomb, because it does not reference the notion of self-sacrifice. Nonetheless I continue to use the term suicide bomber in the thesis, because it is consistent with the terminology used throughout the thesis and in a majority of the research literature consulted. The term *istishhadi* refers to the masculine form in Arabic and therefore to male martyrs. The term *istishh'hadiyah* refers to female martyrs. While grammatically incorrect I use the term to *istishhadi* to refer to both male and female martyrs, in lieu of having to always use the gender specific terms *istishhadi/istiahh'hadiyah*.

not necessarily one singular and overarching notion of martyrdom in Palestine today, as these tend to vary according to the specific doctrines and objectives of the different organizations that conduct martyrdom operations, however the various conceptions of martyrdom do share certain commonalities.

It was only upon making final revisions to this chapter that I came to fully understand the complexities of notions of the martyr and martyrdom in Palestine today. I am especially grateful to Palestinian anthropologist Nasser Abufarha (2009), whose important study was published just before completing my thesis, and to Khalili (2007) and Asad (2007). Their work alerted me to the shortcomings of my investigations, which had relied too heavily on Western literature (Bukay 2008, Berko 2007, Shay 2004, Juergensmeyer 2003, Stern 2003, Davis 2002, Esposito 2002, and Paz 2000) that considered the Palestinian martyr and martyrdom in Palestine primarily in the context of *religious terrorism* and therefore, as being motivated primarily by Islamic religious notions of martyrdom<sup>52</sup>. This literature focuses disproportionately on religious motivations for martyrdom, thereby downplaying the *political* aspects of Palestinian martyrdom<sup>53</sup>. As such, much of this literature fails to

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<sup>52</sup> For example, much of the literature cites interpretations by Islamic clerics that consider suicide bombings to be acts of martyrdom, and not acts of suicide. While these interpretations may be used to *justify* Palestinian martyrdom operations (and those in other countries), they do not in and of themselves *motivate* them (Asad 2007).

<sup>53</sup> The problem is not with analyses of Islamic notions of martyrdom *per se*, but rather with the disproportionate focus on martyrdom as being *exclusively* linked to the Islamic faith in these sources

adequately consider the Israeli occupation. As Asad (2007) astutely notes, to focus disproportionately on religious motivations fails to acknowledge the impact of the Israeli occupation. Consequently, none of these writers are able to grasp the complexities and particularities of martyrdom in the Palestinian context. These are polyvalent and informed by discourses of self-sacrifice in the context of soldiering and national resistance (Khalili 2007), as well as in defense of one's Islamic faith (Saloul 2003, Khosrokhavar 2005).

As was discussed in Chapter 1, self-sacrifice is a feature of the modern nation. Self-sacrifice occurs most often in the context of soldiering and national defense, and is therefore considered to be a positive act in service of the nation. Self-sacrifice in this context is not intentional or deliberate. Self-sacrifice is also associated with resistance and national liberation struggles, yet here too, self-sacrifice is not intentional or deliberate. This latter notion of self-sacrifice – which was also a secular notion of self-sacrifice (Khalili 2007) – was prevalent in Palestine before the suicide bomber emerged in 1993.

Palestinian conceptions of self-sacrifice and martyrdom have also shifted since then, toward a privileging of *intentional* self-sacrifice by the *istishhadi*. Current Palestinian conceptions of martyrdom and the martyr have been informed by both, historical and modern Islamic notions of self-

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(Bukay 2008, Mazarr 2007, Shay 2004, Palmer 2004, Davis 2003, Esposito 2002, and Hiro 2002). Many of these sources also tend to explore acts of violence as if they are inherent to Islam and not to other religions. Asad (2007) highlights mistakes made by many Western writers in their discussions of Islamic theological interpretations of martyrdom.

sacrifice. Historically in Islam, martyrdom occurred when one lost his [sic] life in the struggle or to defend his Islamic religious beliefs, or was killed in the service of God (Saloul 2003, Juergensmeyer 2003, Khosrokhavar 2005). As such martyrdom was considered a holy death (Khosrokhavar 2005)<sup>54</sup>.

However, modern (late 20th century) Islamic notions of martyrdom center on *intentional* and *deliberate* self-sacrifice (Khosrokhavar 2005, Tamimi 2007). Khosrokhavar (2005) and Tamimi (2007) further observe that the modern Islamic notion of martyrdom as a certain and deliberate death concretized in the discourses and strategies of Hezbollah in Lebanon during the 1980s, and they both also note the influence of Hezbollah, on Hamas in Palestine<sup>55</sup>.

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<sup>54</sup> Khosrokhavar (2005) notes that the notion of holy death – attributed to Muslims who died on the battlefield while fighting the enemy – likely emerged after the Muslim conquest of Palestine in the seventh century. Historical examples of Islamic martyrdom include most notably the Ismailis (also known as the Assassins), a Shiite sect whose members in the 11th and 12th century would slay Christian and Muslim opponents alike and then willingly be captured and killed for their actions; see also Khosrokhavar 2005, Shay 2004, and Reuter 2004.

<sup>55</sup> The connections and cross-pollination of Islamic discourses of martyrdom in Iran, and then Lebanon, and later Palestine, is also observed by Robert Baer in his film *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber*. Baer cites the deportation by the Israeli government of 415 Hamas and PIJ militants to southern Lebanon in 1992, prompting closer links with Hezbollah, an observation also made by Khalili 2007, Hafez 2006, Reuter 2004, and Stern 2003. For Khosrokhavar (2005) and Tamimi (2007) the evolution of modern Islamic martyrdom discourses have also resulted from clerical interpretations of the Koran that distinguish between the act of suicide (which is prohibited in Islamic theology) and the act of martyrdom, which some clerics condone as the highest form of sacrifice for a noble cause – defending one's Islamic faith, for example. On this point see also Reuter 2004, Stern 2003, and Juergensmeyer 2003.

Notions of martyrdom in Palestine today link religious discourses with nationalist ones (Hafez 2006-a), as do those that emerged in Iran and Lebanon. However, martyrdom in Palestine today is distinct. I am most grateful to the investigations of Abufarha (2009), Abu Hashhash (2006) and Saloul (2003) in allowing me to understand the unique way in which Islamic religious and secular nationalist objectives intersect in Palestine, to produce *distinctly Palestinian* conceptions of martyrdom.

For Abufarha (2009), martyrdom in Palestine is inextricably linked to intentional self-sacrifice, for Palestine. For him, martyrdom is linked *first and foremost* to Palestinian *resistance* and to Palestinian *national liberation* objectives. Further, while the discourses of martyrdom espoused by the Islamic organizations Hamas and PIJ are informed by Islamic thought, these groups execute martyrdom operations so as to achieve *Palestinian national liberation objectives*<sup>56</sup>. For Abufarha (2009), the Islamic agendas of these two groups are based *primarily on national liberation strategies of resistance*, and guided by Islamic thought as a *political strategy*<sup>57</sup>. For Abufarha, the Islamic objectives of Hamas and the PIJ provide "an Islamic platform for the liberation of

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<sup>56</sup> Abufarha (2009) notes that while most Palestinians are more interested in the Islamic groups' tactics of resistance than they are in building a society governed by Islamic law, he also concedes that the Palestinian resistance has been Islamized, and that there have been many changes in Palestinian society – changes that coincide with the Islamic ideologies of these groups – as the result of having Islamic groups lead the resistance.

<sup>57</sup> Abufarha further notes that Hamas's objectives are primarily nationalist but that it "conceives of Islam as the most solid ideology through which to achieve the goals of the Palestinian national struggle" (2009 p.10).

Palestine" (2009 p.80). While this analysis moves slightly away from a focus on martyrdom, it is important to understand the relationship between the Islamic and nationalist objectives of Hamas and PIJ if one is to understand the fusion of Islamic and nationalist discourses that underpin acts of martyrdom in Palestine today.

Therefore, and following Abufarha's analysis (2009), I consider the Palestinian martyr – the *istishhadi* – in the specific context of this research, to be one who deliberately and intentionally sacrifices her/his life, in an a martyrdom operation or act of suicide bombing, as an act of resistance against the occupation and against Israel, and one that seeks to further Palestinian *national* objectives – the creation of a Palestinian state – that may or may also not be bound up in Islamic-religious ones, that is, the creation of a specifically Islamic state in Palestine. Here I draw the reader's attention to a shift in terminology, to the more frequent use of the term *istishhadi* or martyr.

### **The *istishhadi* in commemorative posters**

The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber explodes and in the process it destroys itself. The body ceases to exist, prompting the question: What remains of this body, as remains? On one hand, there are physical remains – flesh, blood, the head, other body parts perhaps. These bodily remains are collected at the scene of the attack by Israeli forensic specialists, separated from Israeli bodily remains,

and buried<sup>58</sup>. On the other hand, there remains the visual depiction of the body, in the form of commemorative posters produced and disseminated by the groups that execute martyrdom missions<sup>59</sup>. They commemorate the deceased as a martyr who sacrificed her/himself for Palestine.

While commemorative posters are produced for all those who become martyrs or shahids in the context of the occupation (civilians, militants, suicide bombers), the focus here is on commemorative posters of the *istishhadis*<sup>60</sup>. All of the Palestinian groups that deploy suicide bombers produce and disseminate print posters to commemorate their martyrs. The posters are displayed in public and private spaces alike in the West Bank and Gaza: on billboards, walls and buildings,

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<sup>58</sup> Despite a good deal of research it has been almost impossible to ascertain exactly what happens to the physical remains of Palestinian suicide bombers. Israel generally refuses to hand their remains over to the families in the Occupied Territories, choosing instead to inter them in Israel (Farrell 2003). Weiss (2002-b) provides a detailed account of the process by which Jewish-Israeli bodily remains are collected by ultra-Orthodox Jews in the aftermath of suicide attacks, and later sorted and identified at the National Institute of Forensic Medicine in Tel Aviv.

<sup>59</sup> The deploying groups also produce commemorative video material, which I discuss in the following chapter. I first discovered commemorative posters of the *istishhadi* on Hamas' English-language website hamasonline.com (taken offline under UK anti-terrorism legislation in late 2005), consequently, most of the images in my collection are of Hamas martyrs.

<sup>60</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, the scholars whose investigations I cite are writing about commemorative posters for Palestinian martyrs more generally (and as previously defined). However their remarks are nonetheless relevant to my own observations about the *istishhadis*.

inside shops and places of business, and inside people's homes (Abu Hashhash 2006, Allen 2006-a)<sup>61</sup>.

The posters, through the combination of text and visual elements, depict the deceased as a *martyr*. As Allen notes, the posters represent "both the person who was killed and the martyr that person has become" (2006-a p.117). The posters fulfill a transformative function: they elevate the martyr's self-sacrifice – and the martyr her/himself – to a high or heroic status (Abu Hashhash 2006)<sup>62</sup>. Here I remind the reader of Abufarha's observation (2009) that the *istishhadi* occupies the highest ground in Palestine today.

The posters fulfill a memorial function in that they help to preserve the memory of the *istishhadi*, and allow the her/him to maintain a presence among the living. Allen (2006-a) notes that during the second intifada the martyrs' posters became the most prevalent form of memorialization. I discussed the poster as a type of remains: in the absence of a body to bury, the posters also function as a surrogate or substitute site for public and private remembrance<sup>63</sup>.

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<sup>61</sup> For an outstanding analysis of commemorative posters of Palestinian martyrs read through discourses of photography, visual culture, art criticism and philosophy, see Abu Hashhash (2006).

<sup>62</sup> Many Israeli writers, notably Oliver and Steinberg (2005), contend that the posters serve *primarily* to glorify martyrdom so as to attract future suicide bombers. They contend that the lure and promise of martyrdom are so powerful that potential martyrs come to imagine themselves not only as heroes but "as something of a movie star" (2005 p.73). Their study posits these posters as the "centerpiece of a cosmology of martyrdom" (2005 p.72) that has seduced and put a stranglehold on Palestinians. See also Intelligence and Terrorism Information Center 2006.

<sup>63</sup> The posters belong to a larger Palestinian tradition of commemorating martyrs in various forms, for example, memorials,

The commemorative posters share certain characteristics despite being produced by different groups. Most notably they all prominently feature at least one image of the *istishhadi*, photographed prior to her/his deployment. The posters are inscribed with text designating her or him as a *martyr*, together with her or his name, and the date of the martyrdom operation. The posters often include quotes from the martyrs' last will and testaments, in which s/he describes their reasons for martyrdom<sup>64</sup>. And, with the exception of those produced by the PFLP, the posters include verses from the Koran (Abu Hashhash 2006), and often, those that reference eternal life as the reward for self-sacrifice.

The *istishhadi* often wears army fatigues and holds a weapon, most often a Kalashnikov assault rifle, but sometimes, a knife<sup>65</sup>. The martyr often wears a suicide belt. In posters produced by the Islamic groups Hamas and PIJ, the martyr holds the Koran and often, a Koran in one hand and a weapon in the other. Some posters combine photographs of the martyr with additional photographs and imagery, for example, of the al-Aqsa mosque or the Dome of the Rock in Jerusalem; of scenes of the Israeli occupation; and photographs of the aftermath of martyrdom operations in Israel. There are most often more than one poster created for each martyr. Some posters rely more heavily on the juxtaposition of visual imagery, while others include more text, for example, more

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ceremonies and holidays, the naming of people and places after martyrs, songs and historical and literary texts (Khalili 2007).

<sup>64</sup> The last wills are considered in more detail in the following chapter.

<sup>65</sup> Abufarha notes that the Kalashnikov – the weapon of the *fida'iyeen* – "became a symbol of pride in Palestinian revolutionary culture like the sword in classical Arab poetry" (2009 p.44).

extensive citations from the martyr's last will and testament, more detailed descriptions of the martyrdom operation, or more verses from the Koran.

The posters connect the martyr to Palestine through the use of the colors of the Palestinian flag, and images of the al-Haram al-Sharif (site of the dome of the Rock and the al-Aqsa Mosque). These also symbolize the connection to a *future* Palestinian homeland with al-Quds (Jerusalem) as its capitol<sup>66</sup>. The juxtaposition of scenes of the Israeli the occupation together with scenes of the martyrdom operation posit the martyr's self-sacrifice as a form of resistance to the occupation. The Haram al-Sharif connects the martyr to the *desired* Palestinian national homeland, and to resistance as a means of creating a homeland. Through the combination of these images and symbols, the posters present a visual narrative of resistance and self-sacrifice *for Palestine*.

Such is the case in the example provided in Figure 2 on the following page, a commemorative poster of Hamas martyr Reem al-Riyashi that places her at the centre of a visual narrative of self-sacrifice and resistance *for Palestine*<sup>67</sup>.

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<sup>66</sup> Khalidi (1997) notes that Jerusalem had long been the geographical, spiritual, cultural, political and administrative center of Palestine going back to the Ottoman empire, and he explores a connection to Jerusalem as one of the central factors in Palestinian national identity formation.

<sup>67</sup> On the representation of female martyrs see Hasso's excellent study (2005); see also Naaman (2007).



**Figure 2**

Commemorative poster for Hamas martyr Reem al-Riyashi.

Source: hamasonline.com

The text reads, "The Martyr (*Al istish'hadhiyyah*) Reem Saleh Al-Riyashi", thereby identifying her as a martyr<sup>68</sup>. In the largest image, al-Riyashi hovers above the al-Aqsa mosque, signifying a connection to Palestine. She holds the Koran in one hand and an assault rifle in the other, symbols of Hamas' nationalist objectives informed by Islamic principles. The blue sky, the sun, the bird, and the transparent ghost image

<sup>68</sup> I am grateful to Reem Fadda for the translation and transliteration into English of the text on these posters.

of al-Riyashi – an assemblage within an assemblage – depict al-Riyashi as a martyr in Paradise. To the right are three smaller photographs: al-Riyashi reading, most probably from her last will and testament; the scene of a martyrdom operation, probably al-Riyashi's; and a Palestinian woman and two children in the Occupied Territories, reading graffiti that says " Hamas".

Like all commemorative posters, this one identifies al-Riyashi as a martyr. The military fatigues, rifle and suicide belt connect al-Riyashi to Palestinian resistance. The al-Aqsa mosque connects al-Riyashi to Palestine and it connects her self-sacrifice to Palestine and to Palestinian national liberation objectives, to a future Palestinian nation-state. Together the various visual components combine to present a narrative of Palestinian resistance to the Israeli occupation and of self-sacrifice for the Palestinian nation.

### **The whole body of the martyr in the commemorative posters**

Abu Hashhash (2006) notes that the posters are created through a process of inclusion and exclusion, notably, the exclusion of any reference to death: the words death and suicide do not ever appear in the posters. Building on his observation, the exploded and destroyed body of the suicide bomber is also excluded from the posters, an observation also made by Allen (2006-a)<sup>69</sup>. Instead, the posters depict the

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<sup>69</sup> Referring to martyrs as all of those who perished in the context of the occupation, Allen asserts that, "never would a poster of this genre include an image of the martyr's death or show his or her wounds" (2006-a p.117).

whole body of the *istishhadi*, photographed *prior* to her/his deployment. And while photographs of the scenes of the martyrdom operation are sometimes included in the posters, they serve to highlight the destruction unleashed against *Israeli* bodies by the martyr, and not the destruction of the body of the martyr itself.

The body of the martyr in the commemorative posters is not only a whole body: it is a soldier's body. The martyr wears army fatigues, a suicide belt, and wields a weapon: it is a militarized body. The body of the martyr serves to visually reinforce the notion of the body as a weapon of resistance, deployed against Israel.

In Figure 3 on the following page, Hamas martyr Bassem Takruri wears a suicide belt. The belt designates the body as a weapon of resistance. Prominently occupying the background in Figure 3, are two hands holding oversized assault weapons, a symbol of armed Palestinian resistance.



**Figure 3**

Commemorative poster for Hamas martyr Bassem Takruri.

Takruri blew himself up on a bus in Jerusalem on May 18, 2003, killing seven Israelis and wounding 20.

Source: hamasonline.com

In Chapter 2, I examined the IDF soldier as the ideal Israeli body from 1967 onward, linking it to the military occupation of territory and to the realization of Israeli territorial ideals of wholeness, an ideal that is contingent on the fragmentation of Palestinian inhabited areas. The body of the IDF soldier is a strong and powerful body. So too is the Palestinian body in the commemorative images. The Palestinian martyr is visually depicted as a soldier: as a whole, strong

and powerful body. The whole body of the martyr functions as a visual, if not military equal, to the Israeli ideal body of the IDF soldier<sup>70</sup>.

### **The body of the martyr and the ideal of wholeness**

Chapter 1 explored the Palestinian body as a metaphor for land and for the loss of the homeland. In particular, the infertile Palestinian male body was explored as a metaphor for Palestinian territorial losses in the wake of al-Nakba in 1948. On the one hand, the exploded and shattered body of the Palestinian suicide bomber provides a metaphor for Palestinian-inhabited territory in the West Bank, fragmented as it is by Israeli construction projects such as settlements and roads as discussed in detail in the previous chapter.

However the exploded body is elided in the commemorative posters, which instead depict the whole body of the martyr. The body of the *istishhadi* in the commemorative posters is a whole, strong and powerful body. It presents an idealized image of the Palestinian homeland as a whole one, despite its current fragmentation by Israeli construction projects in the West Bank in particular. Thus the posters also present an idealized image of the Palestinian nation as a whole, strong and powerful one. They present an image of the Palestinian nation as an equal to the Israeli nation. Here I return to

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<sup>70</sup> This observation derives in part from Amireh (2003), who observes the militarization of Palestinian society at the end of the first intifada. She notes that while the use of weaponry was largely symbolic, it served to put Palestinian men on a more equal footing with the Israeli soldier.

Tina Sherwell's observation, made in Chapter 1, that the representations that individuals and communities create of themselves are contoured by how they wish to see themselves (Sherwell 2003).

Israelis and Palestinians – in very different contexts – deploy images of the *whole body* in an effort to reflect and uphold national ideals of wholeness. Meira Weiss (2002-a, 2002-b) has written extensively about how depictions of the whole body serve to uphold Israeli ideals of the health and strength of the nation. For example she cites how Israeli media images of the fragmented bodies of victims of suicide bombings are depicted very briefly in the aftermath of such attacks, but soon disappear from the public realm. This shift mirrors ritualized acts of grieving that seek first to foster a collective sense of Israeli national loss and mourning, and later, of national wholeness and recovery. Weiss (2002-a and 2002-b) has also written about the forensic reconstruction of the bodies of fallen Israeli soldiers, emphasizing that even in death the chosen body of the IDF soldier reflects and upholds Israeli ideals of strength and wholeness. In her analysis, the whole body serves to reinforce ideals of the health and strength of the Israeli nation, particularly in the aftermath of suicide attacks.

Israeli and Palestinian ideals of wholeness are also bound up in idealized notions of the other's fragmentation. Israelis and Palestinians each use images of the fragmented body of *the other* in an attempt to represent weakness and vulnerability in the other. For example Weizman (2007) notes that Israeli media images depicting the aftermath of targeted assassinations of suspected Palestinian militants blatantly

display the shattered and bloodied bodies of their victims. Palestinian media images of the aftermath of suicide bombings graphically depict the carnage perpetuated by the bomber, and specifically, the bloody detritus of dead and wounded Israeli bodies. This is not a thorough analysis of Israeli and Palestinian media images, but rather an attempt to briefly consider how ideals of wholeness are also linked attempts to visually depict the other as a fragmented and vulnerable body, and by extension, to reinforce ideals about the wholeness and strength of one's own nation.

### **The body of the martyr and the refusal of Palestinian otherness**

The Palestinian body under Israeli occupation, confined as it is to enclaves – to zones of abjection – is produced as an inferior Other body to Jewish Israelis, as discussed. The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber, deployed as a weapon, serves as a refusal of Palestinian spatial subjugation and by extension, a refusal of otherness, in its ability to penetrate Israeli space and to destroy Israeli bodies, in Israel.

However the body of the martyr in the commemorative posters, also conveys a refusal of Palestinian otherness. The commemorative posters serve as a reminder of the destructive potential of the Palestinian body. The body of martyr in the commemorative posters serves as a reminder of Palestinian resistance and defiance, strength and power: the Palestinian body is able to unleash death and destruction inside Israel. The body of the martyr in the commemorative posters, provides

a visual reminder of the destructive potential of the Palestinian body. And while the Separation Barrier has since 2003 dramatically reduced the ability of the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber to enter Israel, the posters nonetheless act as a reminder that if unchecked, the Palestinian body will continue to pose a threat to the Israeli nation and to Israelis.

Checkpoints and other restrictions on movement confine Palestinians to enclaves, however within these enclaves, these zones of abjection, the body of the martyr in commemorative posters displayed prominently across public spaces throughout the West Bank and Gaza, serves to visually dominate Palestinian-inhabited, Israeli-occupied territory. The body of the martyr constitutes a Palestinian attempt to control contested territory, at least visually. It serves to refuse Israeli control asserted over Palestinian-inhabited territories, at least visually. Unlike the physical body of the suicide bomber, these images cannot be spatially contained; nor can they be erased from the landscape. The body of the martyr in the commemorative posters, has become a permanent feature of Israeli-occupied, Palestinian inhabited territory (Allen 2006-a).

The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber refuses otherness in its ability to trespass spatial boundaries and inflict damage on Israeli bodies, in Israel. The body of the Palestinian suicide bomber is capable of inflicting death on Israelis much as the IDF soldier is capable of inflicting death on Palestinians, albeit not to the same extent.

In its depiction as a soldier's body, a strong and powerful body, the body of the martyr mirrors the Israeli body ideal of the IDF soldier as a strong and powerful one and by extension, functions as a visual equal to the IDF soldier. In its depiction as a whole body, the body of the martyr presents an idealized image of the Palestinian national homeland as a whole, strong and powerful one, mirroring the Israeli national ideal of territorial wholeness, and presenting an image of the Palestinian nation as a strong and powerful one – as an equal to the Israeli nation.

## Chapter 4

### **Theorizing the performance of Palestinian martyrdom: intentionality, performance, and subjectivity under occupation<sup>1</sup>**

In focusing on the Palestinian martyr – the *istishhadi* – this chapter is centrally concerned with three key areas of investigation: intentionality, performance and subjectivity.

This chapter foregrounds notions of the martyr's intentionality. It uses the term intentionality in its strictly defined sense, as pertaining to the purposeful and deliberate undertaking of an action or actions<sup>2</sup>. The martyr *intentionally chooses* martyrdom: the martyr's act of self-sacrifice is willful and intentional. This assertion derives from my own performance practice, as discussed in the following chapter. It also follows on from scholarly investigations, and the work of Farhad Khosrokhavar (2005) and Nasser Abufarha (2009) in particular.

Following Khosrokhavar (2005), martyrdom is linked to subjectivity and to subject formation. Khosrokhavar (2005)

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<sup>1</sup> I am most grateful to Neda Hadjikhani, PhD Candidate in Philosophy at SUNY Binghamton, for her invaluable feedback and suggestions on a draft version of this chapter. I am also grateful to the participants at the *Radical Intersections: Performance Across Disciplines* conference held at Northwestern University in April 2009, for their feedback on sections of this chapter, presented at the conference.

<sup>2</sup> As defined in the Barber, Ed 2004, Canadian Oxford Dictionary. Intentionality has also been the subject of philosophical inquiry, where it is linked to questions of language, cognition and the mind; see for example the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, <plato.stanford.edu/entries/intentionality>. This area of philosophical investigation remains outside of my research framework.

asserts that martyrdom constitutes a type of subjectivity formed at the moment of the martyr's death. This prompted me to consider significant questions about Palestinian subjectivity under Israeli occupation. Given the focus on territory and territorial control in the thesis, my investigations in this chapter came to focus more specifically on the impact of Israeli spatial control in the Occupied Territories, on Palestinian subjectivity there.

The Palestinian subject in the West Bank and Gaza is produced as an inferior Other subject, by Israeli spatial practices of confinement and restrictions on movement. However Israeli spatial control over the West Bank and Gaza is so extensive, and restrictions on Palestinian movement so severe, that they prevent Palestinians from living normal lives, diminishing possibilities for asserting control over one's daily life, and at the extreme, one's death. This produces Palestinians not only as inferior or Other subjects as compared to Jewish Israelis, but also, as non-subjects (Butler 2004, Collin 2004).

This chapter theorizes what I term the performance of Palestinian martyrdom. Performance consists in the *istishhadi's* performance, prior to deployment, for the purposes of producing the commemorative posters and also, commemorative video material. The *istishhadi* also performs for a public audience – albeit one that will only experience the performance posthumously, after her/his death. Individual Palestinians also perform, as social actors in public rituals – notably funeral marches – that commemorate the deceased martyr. Here performance engenders a collective, albeit

temporary transformation among members of the Palestinian public, but also, of occupied Palestinian territory.

I consider the martyr's performance, prior to her/his deployment, as a type of subject formation performed in response to conditions of occupation that dramatically impact Palestinian subjectivity. In so doing I make reference to Bannerji's notion (2002) of the self-inventing subject. Through performance, the martyr enacts a refusal of the Israeli-imposed status of the inferior Other subject, as well as that of the non-subject. In performing as a martyr prior to deployment, the individual enacts a resistant type of subjectivity, characterized by intentionality and the performance of a type of power and control asserted over life and death, in response to the denial thereof, by Israel, in the West Bank and Gaza.

This writing has also been influenced by the work of performance studies scholar Amelia Jones (1998), who examines the relationship between performance and subjectivity in body art practices of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **The martyr's intentionality**

Much of the research literature consulted attempts to determine the reasons *why* Palestinian suicide bombers blow themselves up. This literature proposes a range of explanations, including active recruitment and manipulation by the deploying organizations; religious motivations, including Islamic extremism and fanaticism (Kimhi and Even 2003, Paz 2000); the promise of reward, whether spiritual and/or financial (Ganor 2000, Intelligence and Terrorism

Information Center 2006); anti-Semitism and hatred of Israel (Berko 2007, Israel Information Center 2004); posthumous glorification (Oliver and Steinberg 2005); and hopelessness and despair (Stern 2003). For many of the writers above, these external factors either preclude or play a greater role than does the martyr's intentionality<sup>3</sup>.

Thus for example for Shay, while some Palestinian martyrs willingly volunteer to sacrifice themselves, the majority are influenced by factors such as family, religious beliefs, recruiters, and societal attitudes, what he terms "circles of influence surrounding the terrorist" (2004 pp.22-23). For Kimhi and Even, the small minority of Palestinian martyrs who willfully choose to die are religious or nationalist "fanatics" (2003 p.2), while the remainder are manipulated and exploited by the deploying organizations. Oliver and Steinberg (2005) cite the prevalence of a culture of martyrdom and death that glorifies the martyrs and martyrdom to such an extent that it succeeds in luring Palestinians to their deaths. Finally, in a statement that categorically emphasizes external manipulation, Paz writes:

To the group member who is sent to kill and to be killed, *death is presented as martyrdom* – an act that will bring him closer to Allah. The individual who *puts*

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<sup>3</sup> There is a related body of Western and Israeli literature that seeks to explain the actions of *female* Palestinian suicide bombers, locating the women's actions not as the result of intentionality or individual choice, but rather, as the product of gender oppression, religious extremism and a lack of viable options for women in a patriarchal, Islamic society such as the one in Palestine. I deal with this matter in the following chapter. However it is worth mentioning here because it speaks to the denial of the martyr's intentionality.

*such ideas into a youngster's mind turns him into a ticking time-bomb... The group programs him [sic] so that he will explode at any given time as if by a remote control detonator" (2000 p.61)[Italics added].*

Some writers concur that the individual makes a willful and carefully considered choice to become a martyr (Hafez 2006-a, Bloom 2003 and 2005, Pedahzur 2005, Khosrokhavar 2005, Juergensmeyer 2003, Stern 2003). However, some of these writers continue to stress other factors besides intentionality as the primary motivation for the martyr's actions. For example, Bloom (2005) and Hafez (2006-a) emphasize organizational factors<sup>4</sup>. Stern (2003) emphasizes despair. Ironically, so too does Khosrokhavar (2005), one of the strongest proponents of a theory of intentionality, and whose work I devote more attention to later in the chapter.

It is useful to return to Abufarha's assertion (2009) that the *istishhadi's* actions are intentional and constitute acts of resistance to the occupation undertaken with a view to achieving national liberation objectives, and to cite Hage, who notes that, "it is impossible to understand the disposition toward self-sacrifice without an understanding of the unusually suffocating nature of Israeli colonialism" (2003 p.80). This view also finds echoes in the work of Slater (2009), Asad (2007), Allen (2006-c), Hasso (2005), and Mbebe (2003).

Interestingly, Asad (2007) notes that motives (explanations)

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<sup>4</sup> For a critical review of Hafez 2006-a see Allen 2006-c. I am most grateful to her analysis of Hafez as it helped me to refine my critique of much of the literature cited in this section.

are only sought when one disagrees with the action in question. Consequently, those who refuse to accept the martyrs' actions will go to great lengths to find religious and other reasons to explain them,

we ask for an explanation in terms of motive only when we are suspicious of what the action means. We are not satisfied with 'He did it because he wanted to kill others (whom he regards as his enemies) by killing himself'. We ask: Why? – and assume that there is something bizarre about this action (2007 p.63).

For Asad (2007), the martyrs' motives, whether we agree with them or not, must be considered to be deliberate and politically motivated. Building on the works cited above, I contend that the martyr *intentionally* chooses martyrdom. Israel's military occupation of Palestinian-inhabited territory provides a central impetus for this choice. The point of this research is not to categorically determine motive but rather to assert that the choice to become a martyr is a deliberate one *made intentionally* by the martyr, other possible contributing factors, notably religious convictions, notwithstanding<sup>5</sup>. As Khosrokhavar asserts,

That there is an organisational dimension to the 'human bomb' phenomenon is undeniable, but the anthropological dimension, *which is bound up with a personal and eminently individual decision, is just as important. The*

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<sup>5</sup> Religious convictions certainly play a role in one's decision to sacrifice her/himself, as evident notably in the last will and testaments. However they do not in and of themselves, in my estimation, motivate martyrdom.

*martyrs say so*. In their testaments, video cassettes and writing, they often evoke the personal nature of their decisions (2005 p.131)[Italics added]<sup>6</sup>.

Nowhere is the martyr's intentionality more definitive than in the last will and testament, written by the martyr prior to her/his deployment. In it the *istishhadi* categorically voices her/his *intent* to become a martyr and to execute a martyrdom operation. Mohammed Hafez (2006-a and 2006-b) provides a detailed study of the martyrs' last will and testaments in which they state their intent to sacrifice themselves. He notes, "The written and videotaped statements of suicide bombers contain a wealth of information about their personal motivations as well as the religious and nationalist symbols that inspired them" (2006-b p.167)<sup>7</sup>.

Intentionality is often expressed by the martyr in terms of a deliberate decision. For example, Hamas martyr Ismail Masawabi asserts that, "The wish to become a martyr dominated my life, my heart, my soul, my feelings... *I have decided* to become a shining light, illuminating the way for all Muslims – and a blazing fire to burn to death the enemy of god" (in Reuter 2004 p.91)[italics added]. AMB martyr Dareen Abu Ayshe declares, "I have *decided* to be the second female martyr" (in

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<sup>6</sup> Khosrokhavar's *anthropological* framework is of less interest to me than his focus on intentionality.

<sup>7</sup> Hafez notes three main themes in the last will and testaments (2006-a and 2006-b): First, the desire to become a martyr to demonstrate a commitment to God and to one's Islamic convictions; Second, martyrdom as a redemptive act that will punish the (Israeli) enemy while rewarding one's commitment to her/his faith; And third, afterlife and the reward of eternal life in Paradise; see in particular 2006-a pp.43-46 and 87-92. Hafez (2006-b) also notes that the martyrs use their last will and testaments to ask their families to celebrate their actions instead of mourning them.

Hafez 2006-a p.89)[Italics added]. Intentional self-sacrifice is also described as a desire or dream, as it is for Hamas martyr Reem al-Riyashi, "I have always wanted to be the first woman who sacrifices her life in the way of Allah" ( Hamas 2004)<sup>8</sup>.

### **The performance of Palestinian martyrdom succinctly defined**

I theorize the performance of Palestinian martyrdom in greater detail beginning on page 184. For now, I provide this most succinct definition. The performance of martyrdom consists in actions performed by the martyr prior to deployment and documented for the purposes of creating and disseminating commemorative posters as well as commemorative video material<sup>9</sup>. These actions consist primarily in posing and reciting the last will and testament for the camera. Through this performance, the *istishhadi* also "acts out" specific and central tenets of martyrdom, notably, intentional self-sacrifice, and as a means of resistance, for Palestine. Performance also serves to connect the martyr to Palestine, to Palestinian resistance, and in some cases (as for Hamas and PIJ-deployed martyrs) to Islamic religious principles that underpin Palestinian national liberation objectives as discussed in the previous chapter. The martyr's actions are

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<sup>8</sup> From a commemorative image of Reem al-Riyashi in my personal collection. A similar citation is available via the BBC, "I have always dreamt and wished to carry out a martyrdom-seeking operation... I have always dreamt of sacrificing myself" (BBC Monitoring 2004).

<sup>9</sup> The process of documentation and the specifics of how the posters and videos are created, edited, assembled and produced, lie outside the scope of my research interests.

performed for a public audience that will experience the performance posthumously, after the martyr's death. Further, members of the Palestinian public also participate in the performance of martyrdom, notably in public rituals such as martyrs' funerals, in which they perform as social actors<sup>10</sup>.

### **On performance**

Theoretical considerations of performance elaborated by performance studies scholars Marvin Carlson (2004), Richard Schechner (2003 and 2002), Erika Fischer-Lichte (2008), Amelia Jones (1997 and 1998), and Peggy Phelan (1992 and 1993), have informed my understanding of performance as relevant to my research. As Carlson (2004) notes, performance is an incredibly difficult concept to definitively define, because it eludes firm categorization within any single discipline, instead extending across several of them. Performance intersects with theoretical investigations in a range of academic disciplines, including but not limited to ethnography, anthropology, sociology, theatre and drama, art, linguistics and semiotics, postmodern philosophy, psychoanalysis, and postcolonial and cultural, feminist and

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<sup>10</sup> My observations about performance and martyrdom developed independently and in large part as the result of my own performance practices. However it is important to note that Allen (2006-a) and Khalili (2007) both cite as performance, public acts that seek to commemorate and memorialize Palestinian martyrs, and in particular, funeral marches and processions. Abufarha (2009) writes about the cultural performance of martyrdom, situating his analysis within a cultural studies and anthropological framework of the performance of violence. Juergensmeyer (2003) discusses acts of terrorism such as suicide bombings and in particular that which occurred on 9/11 in New York, as performances created specifically for a global media audience.

queer studies. For Carlson, performance may even be considered an antidiscipline, for it "resists the sort of definitions, boundaries, and limits" useful to academic structures (2004 p.206). The view that performance resists classification is echoed by Hoffman and Jonas (2005), who consider performance to be a pluri-disciplinary set of discourses.

This interdisciplinary notion of performance is most relevant. I consider performance to be both an object of theoretical inquiry, and an action or series of actions performed for and received by an audience, that may unfold in aesthetic and/or non-aesthetic contexts.

As Hoffman and Jonas observe, performance extends into every sphere of activity, "every action, in art as in life, is a performance" (2005 p.21). Here "performance is a 'quality' that can occur in any situation rather than a fenced-off genre" (Schechner 2003 p.22). Performance occurs in artistic, cultural and social contexts, as well as various combinations thereof<sup>11</sup>. It can be understood in terms of behaviors rehearsed and repeated in everyday life (Goffman 1959, Schechner 2002), and as such it is also linked to the performance of social roles. As Carlson (2004) notes, performance is linked to all human activity and by extension, to its social and cultural encodings.

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<sup>11</sup> Performance also unfolds in the realms of sport, business and advertising, however these are not relevant to my research. For Schechner (2003), ritual, theatre, play, games, sports, dance and music comprise the seven performance activities of humans. See also Chapter Two "What is Performance?" in Schechner 2002 pp.22-44 for a concise overview of key considerations of performance.

Social performance – performance in a socio-cultural (non-aesthetic) context can include events such as "prayers, ritual readings and recitations, rites and ceremonies, festivals, and all those things we usually classify under religion and ritual" (Singer 1972, p. 71)<sup>12</sup>. Aesthetic performance – that which unfolds in an aesthetic or artistic context – most often involves performer(s) playing a dramatic or fictional role, in plays and films, for example<sup>13</sup>. Aesthetic performance also includes practices, generally termed performance art, which rely primarily on the body of the artist and not on her/his performing a role (Carlson 2004, Fischer Lichte 2008)<sup>14</sup>. Instances of aesthetic and non-aesthetic performance alike most often tend to follow a script, be it dramatic or social; to be rehearsed and staged

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<sup>12</sup> Victor Turner and Milton Singer are two of the most influential theorists of social and cultural performance, respectively. Turner is best known for theorizing the concept of social drama, a subset of social performance practices defined as organized performance, for an audience, resulting in some type of collective or social transformation, and generally occurring in conflict situations. Social drama includes most notably, rites of passage (Schechner 2003, Schechner and Appel 1990, and Carlson 2004). Cultural performances highlight particular instances of cultural organization, and they enable members of a given culture to display or show off their culture, both to themselves, and where relevant, to outsiders (Singer 1959).

<sup>13</sup> Following Fischer-Lichte (2008), I use the term aesthetic performance to describe all instances of artistic performance, both theatrical or dramatic performance (the performance of a fictional or dramatic work for an audience), and performance art. Carlson (2004), in contrast uses the term theatrical performance. The issue is not one of semantic distinction but rather personal preference.

<sup>14</sup> For Fischer-Lichte (2008) the distinction between aesthetic and non-aesthetic performance rests with whether the performance is sponsored by an arts institution, or not. On performance art see in particular Goldberg 2001 and 1998. Amelia Jones distinguishes body art from performance art, as a specific subset of performance art practices that unfolded during the 1960s and 1970s; see Jones 1998 pp.12-14.

(Fischer-Lichte 2008); and be performed for an audience, one that may or may not in turn also participate in the events.

Following on from these investigations, performance is "an activity done by an individual or group in the presence of and for another individual or group" (Schechner 2003 p.22). Schechner's notion of performance derives from live theatre, however, I am more interested in the notion of performance being "*for another individual or group*" [italics added], than with it being experienced "in the presence of". In contrast to performance scholars such as Fischer-Lichte (2008) and Phelan (1992 and 1993), I do not consider liveness or presence to be the key condition for performance<sup>15</sup>. This understanding of performance owes much to the work of Jones, who considers as performance not only action performed for a live audience but also actions performed in a private setting and documented "*such that it [the performance] may be experienced subsequently through photography, film, video and/or text*" (Jones 1998 p. 13)[Italics in original][my addition], by an audience<sup>16</sup>. This is the case with the

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<sup>15</sup> Phelan (1992 and 1993) and Fischer-Lichte (2008) consider liveness – the co-presence of the performer and spectators – to be *the* key condition for performance, discussed specifically in an aesthetic context. They contend that performance must be experienced live by the viewer, requiring what Fischer-Lichte terms "the bodily co-presence of actors and spectators" (2008 p.68). For Phelan, "Performance's only life is in the present. Performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented, or otherwise participate in the circulation of representations of representation: once it does so, it becomes something other than performance" (1993 p.146).

<sup>16</sup> Writing in 2004, Phelan revisited some of her earlier observations about liveness and the documentation of performance, noting the prevalence of documentary technologies in recording performances today. However she continues to stress that liveness remains *the* most important aspect of experiencing performance. On performance art and its documentation see Auslander 2006.

martyr's performance, prior to her/his deployment, for the camera and by extension for posthumous experience by the viewer in the commemorative posters and videos.

Performance may not require a live audience, however, performance must be *for* someone, "some audience that recognizes and validates it as performance" (Carlson 2004 p.5). Thus I am also interested in what Fischer-Lichte (2008) calls reception, performance as received by the audience, considered here to be members of the Palestinian public. They play a central role in the posthumous reception of the martyr's performance, in the form of commemorative posters and video material, and by participating in public rituals such as funeral marches.

Returning to the idea of performance as an activity or action, I am also concerned with the notion of performance that reflects the active "to perform", as in "to do, to behave, and to show" (Kirchenblatt-Gimblett, in Schechner 2002, p.33). While some theorists, notably sociologist Erving Goffman (1959), have written of the ways in which humans unconsciously perform – behave – in everyday life, I am interested in performance that is deliberate and aware, involving what Carlson (2004) calls a consciousness on the part of the performer. Here performance is linked to playing a role, whether aesthetic or social. It may also be linked to the construction of the self (Carlson 2004), and this connects to my interest in subjectivity. Finally, I consider performance as embodied practice (Schechner 2002), as being contingent on the body and the body's deliberately performed actions.

To summarize, my specific interest in performance is of performance that is deliberate and aware; that is performed for an audience (though not necessarily a live one); that is corporeal and mobilizes the body; that is bound up in some kind of transformation at the level of the self and to a lesser extent, the audience; and that may be linked to subjectivity.

### **The performance of Palestinian martyrdom and performance studies**

The performance of Palestinian martyrdom is difficult to classify using a framework of performance studies. It transcends and traverses the bounds of what may be theorized as either aesthetic or non-aesthetic performance, thereby eluding firm categorization as either one or the other. However and paradoxically, it contains elements of both.

The performance of Palestinian martyrdom may be linked to the notion of becoming a character or performing a role in the context of aesthetic and non-aesthetic performance alike. It may also be linked to the performance of social roles in non-aesthetic performance. In the first instance, the martyr's performance can be considered in terms of becoming a character or performing the role of a character in aesthetic performance, being "embodied (through performance) by an actor" (Carlson 1996 p.6). The martyr is not a fictional character, however the notion of becoming a character serves to highlight the fact that the martyr does perform a type of role. Becoming a character or performing a role is not limited to aesthetic performance as there are also instances

of non-aesthetic performance involving an individual (or more likely groups of individuals) becoming "characters", for example, during ceremonies and festivals<sup>17</sup>. Here, becoming a character occurs in the context of rites of passage, acts of religious worship, etc, rather than a fictional or dramatic role. The martyr's becoming a character occurs in the context of social performance, namely ritual, yet it draws on aesthetic elements such as staging in order to bring the character to life for the audience. This and all of the following elements are discussed in more detail beginning on page 184.

As well, the Palestinian martyr performs according to a script that determines the parameters of how s/he acts, what s/he does, and what s/he says. As Carlson (2004), Schechner (2003) and Fischer-Lichte (2008) all observe, scripts are prevalent in aesthetic and non-aesthetic performance alike. Schechner defines a script most generally as "something that pre-exists any given enactment, which persists from enactment to enactment" (2003 p.68). According to the script of the performance of Palestinian martyrdom, key elements of the martyr's performance – for example, reciting verses from the Koran, reading the last will and testament, wearing specific insignia, dress and wielding props – are determined in advance by the deploying organization, with some variations depending on the specific objectives of the deploying group.

The performance of martyrdom may also be considered as playing a social role, a part consisting in pre-established

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<sup>17</sup> See for example Chapters 4 through 6 in Schechner 1993 pp.94-227; see also the essays in Schechner and Appel 1990.

behaviors presented by the performer on a series of occasions over time to the same audience (Goffman 1959). The role of martyr is performed over and over again, by dozens of Palestinian martyrs over a period spanning several years, for the Palestinian public at-large. The martyr resonates collectively as "a common identification through which Palestinians define themselves" (Eid 2008 p.3). The performance of martyrdom is linked to public rituals in which these common identifications are collectively produced and shared: public marches to celebrate the martyr; funeral processions after which the martyr is symbolically buried<sup>18</sup>; and visits by members of the public to pay their respect to the martyrs' families, for example. As such the performance of martyrdom may also be linked to ritual, "prescribed procedure that is dramatic, socially standardized, and repetitive..." that "links individuals with broader goals and identities" (Hafez 2006-a p.41)<sup>19</sup>. What's more, because it involves the martyr together with social actors (the Palestinian public), the performance of martyrdom may also be considered, in Goffman's terms (1959), as constitutive of social relationships.

### **A context for theorizing the performance of martyrdom**

This analysis of the performance of martyrdom is based on my mediated experience of commemorative posters and video

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<sup>18</sup> I say "symbolically" because there tend to be no corporeal remains that may be physically interred, as noted in the previous chapter.

<sup>19</sup> For a comprehensive study of ritual see Bell 1997, Schechner 2003, Schechner and Appel 1990, and Allsopp and Berghaus 1998.

material, observed and accessed primarily via the Internet. My analysis of this material has been largely mediated and deliberately so. I first discovered the commemorative posters under study on the Internet, and early in my doctoral research I decided against going to Palestine to conduct my investigations *in-situ*. Instead I continued to access much of this material on the Internet, as well as in documentary films and investigative reporting, and in the works of scholars from a variety of disciplines and points of view<sup>20</sup> (Hafez 2006-a and 2006-b, Khalili 2007, Allen 2006-a, Khosrokhavar 2005, Oliver and Steinberg 2005, Juergensmeyer 2003, Stern 2002, and Reuter 2004, Hashhash 2006, Khalili 2007, Allen 2006-a, Hasso 2005, and Naaman 2007). I discussed commemorative posters in the previous chapter, and here a word must be said about the commemorative videos<sup>21</sup>.

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<sup>20</sup> In particular the films *The Cult of the Suicide Bomber* (both the UK and American editions); *Female Suicide Bombers: Dying to Kill*; *Suicide Killers*; *Death in Gaza*; and *Au nom du Hezbollah: Al Manar*. Some commemorative video material was accessed in its translated version in English on the website of the Middle East Media Research Institute TV Monitor Project (MEMRI)([www.memritv.org](http://www.memritv.org)); on the websites of the Israeli media watchdog group Palestinian Media Watch (PMW); and on the online Video Resource Library of the Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs ([www.mfa.gov.il](http://www.mfa.gov.il)). As with Oliver and Steinberg (2005), most of the material circulated by MEMRI, PMW and the MFA serves to promote a view of the Palestinian martyr (generally referred to as a suicide or homicide killer or terrorist) as the product of Islamic extremism, anti-Semitism and organizational manipulation.

<sup>21</sup> The first organization to disseminate videos of its martyrs was Hezbollah, in Lebanon in the early 1980s. By the 1990s, videos were being created by all of the Lebanese and Palestinian organizations that deployed suicide bombers (Rashwan 2002). Iraqi insurgent groups and al-Qaeda and its affiliates, among others, also produce commemorative videos of their martyrs. The earliest known use of video by a militant group in the region occurred in Afghanistan in the 1980s when the US-funded resistance movement was provided with

Like the commemorative posters, commemorative video material prominently features the martyr. The martyr most often wears the colors of the deploying group, together with military fatigues, a suicide belt, and wields a weapon. The martyr reads from her/his last will and testament and may also pray and recite verses from the Koran. Footage of the martyr may later be combined with additional footage (Stern 2003, Oliver and Steinberg 2005), for example, scenes from her/his martyrdom mission, speeches by leaders of the deploying organization, scenes of the funeral procession held for the martyr, and military training exercises. The videos combine many of the same visual elements as do the commemorative posters – the use of weaponry, military fatigues, images of martyrdom operations – and like the posters, they place the martyr's self-sacrifice at the center of Palestinian resistance and national liberation objectives<sup>22</sup>.

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a video camera used to record attacks on Soviet targets, and to subsequently circulate the footage; see *Channel Terror*. Brooks (2002) comments that, "Suicide bombing is, after all, perfectly suited to the television age. The bombers' farewell videos provide compelling footage, as do the interviews [conducted after their missions] with families" [unpag]. Similarly Juergensmeyer (2003) observes that terrorism is increasingly performed for a global television audience.

<sup>22</sup> A recent essay by Israeli curator Joshua Simon (2009) examines Palestinian martyrs' videos within the context of current video practice, positioning them in relation to propaganda images of war and terror on the one hand, and artists' videos on the other. He describes a macabre obsession with death and suicide as the primary focus of the videos. In my opinion his analysis falls short of grasping the true function of the videos: to commemorate the martyr as a hero who sacrificed her/himself for Palestine. His reading of the videos focuses disproportionately on the martyrs' Islamic religious motivations, without any consideration of the Occupation. His framework echoes that of much of the research literature written by Israeli authors in particular, and as described earlier in this chapter and the previous one.

The commemorative videos are circulated on the deploying groups' affiliated television networks and/or websites<sup>23</sup>. They are also distributed to the media (Reuter 2004) and are broadcast in whole or in part by Palestinian media outlets and across the Middle East, including on satellite channels such as Qatar-based al-Jazeera, and Dubai-based Al Arabiya<sup>24</sup>.

### **On the performance of martyrdom, mediation and documentation**

I have not been witness to the martyr's performance for the documentary eye of the camera – the "behind the scenes" so to speak. Very few people have. My experience of the martyr's performance through textual analysis and documentation is informed by the work of Amelia Jones (1997 and 1998), who studied body art works of the 1960s and 1970s exclusively by way of their documentation, some 20 to 30 years after the works were performed for a live audience. Jones refers to the documentation of the performance as "documentary traces" (1997 p.12)<sup>25</sup>. Jones observes, "the problems raised by my absence (my not having been there) are largely logistical rather than ethical or hermeneutic" (1997 p.11). Whilst she concedes that experiencing a performance via its

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<sup>23</sup> For example, Hamas has broadcast videos on its television station, Aqsa TV (see *Channel Terror*). They are also broadcast on Hezbollah's Al-Manar TV, based in Lebanon (see *Au Nom du Hezbollah*).

<sup>24</sup> Unlike the television stations affiliated with groups that deploy or explicitly support suicide bombers (such as Aqsa-TV and Al-Manar), these networks do not necessarily do so with a view to promoting acts of suicide bombing or martyrdom, although they have been accused of doing so by many in the West; see *Channel Terror*.

<sup>25</sup> In the previous chapter, the commemorative posters were considered as a type of remains, and the same can be said of the commemorative videos.

documentation is different from watching it live, she asserts that knowledge about the performance may certainly develop from having experienced it via documentation, and that this knowledge is just as valid as that which develops from experiencing the live performance (1997 and 1998). I don't consider the martyr's performance to be performance art, however, the matter of the lack of direct (lived) *experience* of performance as elaborated by Jones, serves to contextualize and frame my own experience of the martyr's performance.

### **The performance of Palestinian martyrdom**

To reiterate, the performance of martyrdom consists in actions performed by the individual martyr prior to deployment – notably posing and reciting the last will and testament – and documented for the purposes of creating and disseminating commemorative posters and video material. The individual performs as a martyr by way of specific dress and props, and corporeal actions and gestures, that have come to be associated with martyrdom, intentional self-sacrifice, and Palestinian resistance, by the deploying groups. In so doing, the martyr also "acts out" or performs central tenets of Palestinian martyrdom: intentional self-sacrifice, as a means of resistance, for Palestine<sup>26</sup>.

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<sup>26</sup> I use the term "act out" in the sense of Kirchenblatt-Greenberg's "to do, to behave and to show" (in Schechner 2002 p.33), and not in the psychoanalytic sense of acting out in the context of trauma. I am grateful to Carlson's text (2004) for making me aware of this distinction.

The performance of martyrdom consists in a ritual act conceived and orchestrated to stage and document the martyr as a martyr for a posthumous audience<sup>27</sup>. The performance is ritualistic because it is repetitive – performed by every martyr prior to deployment, with some variations depending on the deploying group; it is dramatic and involves aesthetic and theatrical elements; and it connects the martyr to her/his imminent self-sacrifice, and to Palestine.

At the time of the performance, the martyr has not yet executed the act of martyrdom. S/he performs *as a martyr* as part of a larger process through which the individual may become a martyr in the eyes of the Palestinian public, to be discussed in more detail on page 193. This occurs via the commemorative media (posters and videos), which serve in large part to present he or she who intentionally sacrificed her/his life, *as a martyr* or *istishhadi*, to a Palestinian public audience.

The martyr's performance is aimed primarily at a primarily Palestinian audience (Abu Hashhash 2006, Khalili 2007), but it is also indirectly aimed at an Israeli and international

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<sup>27</sup> Brooks (2002) contends that this pre-deployment ritual is designed to make it impossible for the martyr to subsequently back out of her/his mission because of the humiliation it would entail. Prior to their missions, the martyrs also perform acts associated with Islamic burial rites and the afterlife, as described in Hafez 2006-a, Khosrokhavar 2005 and Brooks 2002. Their observations are limited to male martyrs. For example the martyr to be washes, cleans, shaves and purifies his body, and wraps himself in a burial shroud as if preparing for burial in the Islamic tradition. Sometimes the martyr lies in an empty grave to symbolize a peaceful death (Hafez 2006-a, Brooks 2002). The martyr may participate in symbolic burial and ceremonies. The martyr fasts and recites prayers, and writes the last will and testament.

audience (Khosrokhavar 2005)<sup>28</sup>. Aimed at a Palestinian audience, the performance seeks to inspire pride and an identification with the *istishhadi*; aimed at an Israeli audience, it sends a message that they are not safe from the actions of the martyr (Wigoder 2006).

And, like the act of martyrdom itself, the martyr's performance is *intentional*. As Carlson (2004) asserts, performance involves consciousness on the part of the performer, who is aware that s/he is performing.

### **Staging**

On the one hand, staging is largely determined by the deploying organizations. Each organization stages or orchestrates its martyrs' performances through the use of specific insignia, colors, dress and props. These may also be more or less religious, depending on the group's specific ideologies and objectives. Regardless of these nuances, the deploying organizations play a prominent role in *directing* the performance. Beyond staging, it can also be said that the martyr's performance follows a *script* that broadly determines what the martyr does and says, the parameters of which are also largely determined by the deploying group. For example, Wigoder writes about the suicide bomber's posing for the camera as one of the many "gestures and *performances that the Islamists stage*" (2006 p.453)[Italics added], and his observations are also true of the more secular organizations. Wigoder's observations also apply to all of the actions

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<sup>28</sup> Abu Hashhash is discussing commemorative posters specifically.

performed by the martyr – not only the pose – and they highlight the central role played by the deploying groups. However, the organizations' involvement in directing the performance is not incompatible with the martyr's intentionality: Like the act of martyrdom itself, the performance of martyrdom is willful and intentional.

Staging is central to the martyr's performance as a martyr. Staging, "the aesthetic dimension in all possible types of performance" (Fischer-Lichte 2008 p.190), includes all of the aesthetic, planned and pre-rehearsed elements of a performance. Staging is distinct from the performance but is necessary to create the conditions for a successful performance, because it lends an impression of authenticity and makes the performance believable for the audience (Fischer-Lichte 2008).

The martyr's performance may also be linked to the notion of becoming a character. Staging – notably the dress and props worn by the martyr – enables her/him to become the "character" of the martyr. Staging designates the performer as a martyr and enables her/him to bring the "character" to life for the audience. While the performance of martyrdom draws heavily on aesthetic forms such as staging to enable the martyr to authentically play the *role* of the martyr, the martyr is not a fictional character. The martyr also performs a social role, through the establishment of a social relationship with the audience after her/his death, through the martyrs' funerals in particular, discussed beginning on page 195.

Staging involves wearing specific dress and wielding props that have come to be associated with martyrdom by the deploying organizations: their insignia, military fatigues and weapons and in some instances, the Koran. The martyrs don the colors of the deploying organization, most often in the form of a sash worn across the chest, a headband, or both. Martyrs deployed by Hamas wear green; those deployed by the PIJ, black and gold; and those from the AMB, black and white. AMB martyrs often wear a black and white *keffiyeh* around the head or neck, while Hamas and PIJ martyrs sometimes wear a red and white *keffiyeh*. These groups use the colors of the Palestinian flag (white, black, red and green), thereby linking the martyr to Palestine.

Dress and props also link the martyr to resistance and to Palestinian national liberation objectives. The *keffiyeh* worn by the martyr is a symbol of Palestinian resistance, as are the army fatigues, suicide belt and weapons. The belt and weaponry symbolize the means by which Palestinian martyrs (and the groups that deploy them) seek to realize Palestinian national objectives<sup>29</sup>. More religious props such as sashes or headbands inscribed with the phrase *Allahu akbar* (God is great or God is the greatest), the *hijab* (for women martyrs), and the Koran connect the martyr to the Islamic faith and to Islam as a guiding principle of Palestinian national objectives in the discourses of Hamas and PIJ and as discussed in the previous chapter.

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<sup>29</sup> The *keffiyeh* has been a symbol of Palestinian resistance going back to the Arab revolts of the 1930s. Khalili (2007) observes that while the props described above (headbands, the *keffiyeh*, weapons) are Palestinian nationalist symbols, they are also reminiscent of stagings used by martyrs in Iran and those deployed by *Hezbollah*.

Staging connects the martyr to Palestinian resistance and to Palestine. But it does not in and of itself connect the martyr to the third and in some ways most central (for my purposes) tenet of martyrdom: *willful and intentional self-sacrifice*. On the one hand, Hafez notes that props such as guns and bombs "symbolize empowered individuals making a free choice to self-sacrifice" (2006-a p.41). While the suicide belt in particular symbolizes the martyr's self-sacrifice, none of these props alone are able to demonstrate or convey the *istishhadi*'s willfulness or intentionality to the audience.

### **Performing intentionality**

It is not the props alone that symbolize an empowered individual making a free choice to self-sacrifice, but rather, the body that does. Intentionality requires the body and the body's deliberately performed gestures and actions. The martyr poses for the camera<sup>30</sup>. The martyr's pose is strong, the body's gestures deliberate. The pose is that of

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<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of photographic conventions of the pose, see Owens, "Medusa Effect" (1992). For an excellent discussion of the pose examined in the context of Palestinian suicide bombers, see Wigoder (2006). Wigoder examines the pose of the suicide bomber as a type of "pre-emptive mimicry" (2006 p.454) that is directed at Israelis and that sends a message that they are not safe from the suicide bomber. Of particular interest is a section of writing (pp.454-455) in which Wigoder links the suicide bomber's pose to those of Israeli military pilots who pose next to their planes prior to conducting targeted assassinations of Palestinian militants. He notes that in both of these types of images, the pose constitutes a gesture of power. Without equating the photographs of the suicide bomber and the pilot, Wigoder observes certain parallels between them, notably the use of posed photography prior to executing their missions.

one who has chosen her/his course of action, implying intentionality. The martyr turns her/his body to face the audience head-on, demonstrating a sense of conviction and steadfastness, as does eye contact with the viewer. The body of the martyr functions as a locus of intentionality for the act of self-sacrifice but also, for the martyr's performance.

The martyr's intentionality is performed for a public, albeit posthumous audience. Intentionality is enacted in the conscious and aware nature of the performance, and in the martyr's deliberate pose, gesture and actions. It is also enacted in the last will and testament. In it, the martyr voices her/his intent to sacrifice her/himself. The martyr's last will and testament communicates the martyr's intentional choice of self-sacrifice, to a public audience. Through performance, the martyr's intentionality is received by the audience as a *fait accompli*: by the time the audience experiences the performance in the commemorative posters and videos, the martyr will have already fulfilled her/his stated intention of self-sacrifice.

### **Embodiment and the body**

Fischer-Lichte discusses embodiment in the context of performance. She notes that embodiment "creates the possibility for the body to function as the object, subject, material and source of symbolic construction" (2008 p.89). The martyr's actions and gestures, appropriately staged, bring the linked tenets of martyrdom – intentional self-sacrifice and resistance, for Palestine – to life, so to speak, through the register of the body.

In performing the act of martyrdom itself, the body is destroyed. The desire to sacrifice the mortal body is often expressed by the martyr in very graphic terms in the last will and testament. For example, Hamas martyr Muhammad Hazza al-Ghoul states, "How beautiful for the splinters of my bones to be the response that blows up the enemy..." (in Hafez 2006-a p.90). PIJ martyr Hanadi Jaradat speaks of deciding to turn her body into shrapnel as a weapon against the Zionist colonial enemy (MEMRI 2005). So too does Hamas martyr Reem al-Riyashi, who states, "I have always wished... that my body would be shrapnel that tears the sons of Zion [...] By God I wished to be the first female martyr who carried out a martyrdom-seeking operation where my body would be scattered in the air" (BBC Monitoring 2004, unpag.)<sup>31</sup>.

The martyr reads the last will and testament aloud, to the viewer or audience. This act of reading the last will and testament is verbal, but also, corporeal. The martyr faces the camera and by extension, the viewer. The martyr reads the last will and testament *to* the viewer, periodically looking *at* the viewer, and making eye contact with the viewer. In addressing her/himself *to the audience* in this way, the martyr not only reads the last will and testament but also *performs* it, and I remind the reader that one of the key conditions of performance is that it is *for* someone.

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<sup>31</sup> Abufarha (2009) has written about how the spread of Palestinian flesh and blood in Israel – in historic Palestine – serves to maintain a Palestinian connection to historically Palestinian land. Sherwell (2001), writing about the martyr in Palestinian painting, notes that the martyr's blood fertilizes the land and symbolically transforms it into the Palestinian national homeland.

The martyr's reading the last will aloud, to the viewer, shifts the focus to the body and to the voice; it transforms the act of reading into one of a shared relationship between the performer and the audience. This occurs through the voice, which "builds a bridge and establishes a relationship between two subjects" (Fischer-Lichte 2008 p.130). "The voice leaps from the body and vibrates through space so that it is heard by both the speaker/singer and others" (2008 p.125). Unlike in Fischer-Lichte's example, the martyr and the audience do not hear the voice simultaneously. However the martyr's voice does serve to build a relationship between the martyr and the audience, albeit one that develops posthumously after the martyr's death. Fischer-Lichte notes that in singing, the singer's voice exudes presence; the martyr's voice too exudes presence. It allows the martyr to be "present" and to connect with the audience even though s/he is no longer physically present. The martyr's voice may also be considered a type of "remains", for it is left behind after the martyr is gone. The voice – as remains – enables the martyr to live on or at least to maintain a presence among the living – to create a relationship with the living.

The body also conveys strength and power, through the pose. The posing body is a resistant body, the locus of the martyr's power: the power to resist the occupation, the power to destroy itself, and in so doing, the power to destroy Israelis. The previous chapter explored how the whole body of the martyr in commemorative posters provides an idealized image of the Palestinian nation as a strong, powerful and resistant one. The body's gestures and actions in performance, and notably the pose, provide this ideal. The

body in performance – the strong, powerful and resistant body of the martyr – serves to convey this ideal, via the commemorative posters and videos, of the Palestinian nation as a whole, strong and powerful one.

### **The performance of martyrdom as a type of becoming**

The performance of martyrdom is central to a process by way of which the deceased martyr is depicted by the deploying groups as a martyr, after her/his death. Performance is also central to the process by which the deceased becomes a martyr in the eyes of members of the Palestinian public. The martyr's performance helps to transform the individual *into* a martyr in the eyes of members of the Palestinian public. This aspect of the transformation occurs *posthumously*, when the performance is received by members of the Palestinian public via the commemorative posters and videos<sup>32</sup>.

However, the individual's performance might also constitute an act of self-transformation. Performance provokes a type of

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<sup>32</sup> Jones (1998) notes that meaning is not entirely contained in, nor exclusively generated by the performance alone. Meaning emerges in an intersubjective exchange between the performer and the viewer. In some ways the individual may only "become" a martyr if s/he is considered to be a martyr by the viewer. While many Palestinian and other viewers may consider the individual to be a martyr, many others do not. Writing about representation and not performance, Lori Allen notes, "Martyr representations resonate with people, repel them, or cause both reactions simultaneously... and depending on the viewer's own history, as well as the social and political context in which the display and observation occurs" (2006-a p.122). For example, Oliver and Steinberg (2005), MEMRI, PMW and the Israeli MFA, in their analyses of commemorative posters and videos, consider the martyrs to be homicide killers and not martyrs.

transformation at the level of the self, prior to death, and enacted by virtue of the martyr's performance. This may also be described as a sort of "becoming". I propose that in performing as a martyr, the individual also "becomes" a martyr in her/his own eyes.

In contextualizing the performance of martyrdom I referred to the notion in performance studies, of becoming a character. Becoming a character in both aesthetic and non-aesthetic performance has a fixed duration: the performance lasts for a set period of time. In aesthetic performance, a dramatic actor performs as her/his fictional character for the duration of the performance; social actors perform their roles for what may be minutes, days, or years, but a fixed timeframe nonetheless.

In the case of the martyr's performance one might assume that once the performance ends, the martyr will remove the dress and props that allowed her/him to "become" the character of the martyr for the performance, and continue to prepare for, and subsequently execute, her/his martyrdom mission.

However the performance of martyrdom differs from aesthetic and social performance in that the martyr does not necessarily become a character for the duration of the performance alone. While the individual becomes the character of the martyr for the purposes of performance, this "becoming" may not necessarily end when the performance does. It is not easy to categorically determine with absolute certainty the point at which this becoming may or may not come to an end. It is possible that in performing as a martyr, the individual also *becomes* a martyr, or at least

comes to perceive her/himself as a martyr. Performance might thus constitute a moment of self-transformation.

Performing as a martyr is designed in part to foster *identification* with the act of martyrdom by the martyr to be, and may serve to enable the martyr to perceive or "see" her/himself as a martyr. This is speculative, however I suggest that performance produces a transformation at the level of the self. Because the act of performing as a martyr always precedes the act of self-sacrifice upon which martyrdom is contingent, the martyr in some way "becomes" or at least comes to perceive her/himself as a martyr as the result of her/his performance. Performance constitutes a type of "becoming".

#### **The performance of martyrdom and public transformation**

The performance of martyrdom was theorized as being performed by the martyr for a posthumous audience in members of the Palestinian public, and received primarily in the form of the commemorative posters and videos. However members of the Palestinian population at-large also participate in the performance of martyrdom. In examining this type of group or collective performance by members of the Palestinian public I consider public participation in martyr's funerals in the Occupied Territories. In using the terms "group" and "collective" I do not wish to imply that all Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza participate in the funerals, nor that those who do participate share the same experience, nor that all of them share the same views about the martyrs'

funerals<sup>33</sup>. Rather I use these terms to distinguish the individual martyr's performance of martyrdom, from that which occurs in public, during the martyrs' funerals, and in which hundreds or even thousands of Palestinians may participate and perform as social actors. Writing about Palestinian commemorative practices more generally – practices that include the martyrs' funerals – Laleh Khalili observes that, "ordinary Palestinians become not only the audience for these institutional performances, but also actors within them" (2007 p.222)<sup>34</sup>. Similarly, Allen notes, "The process of remembering martyrs is *performed*" (2006-a p.114)[Italics added].

Funerals are held for all Palestinian martyrs or *shahids* killed in the context of the occupation, be they innocent civilians, militants targeted and assassinated, or *istishhadi*<sup>35</sup>. Martyrs' funerals consist primarily in public

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<sup>33</sup> Allen (2006-a) takes up this point about the lack of collective consensus with regard to the martyr's funerals among members of the Palestinian public, and explores how they function as a forum for the expression of political differences and debate among members of the Palestinian public.

<sup>34</sup> In using the term "institutional" Khalili is referring to organized forms of commemoration associated with an organization or institution including (for example), the Palestinian Authority, non-governmental organizations and cultural institutions, and political parties or organizations. While she examines some commemorative practices in the Occupied Territories, her focus is on those that take place in Palestinian refugee camps in Lebanon.

<sup>35</sup> The research material consulted does not always distinguish between funerals held specifically for *istishhadis*, those held for militants assassinated by the Israeli security forces, and those held for innocent Palestinians killed in the context of the occupation. As Allen notes, "Most of the more than 3,800 Palestinians killed since 2000 [as of her writing in 2006] as a result of the occupation were memorialized with a martyr funeral – whether they were engaged in active struggle or not" (2006-a p.113). For a most comprehensive analysis of the martyr's funerals

processions, culminating in a burial ceremony<sup>36</sup>. The martyr's bodily remains, whether physical or symbolic (there are no remains to bury in the case of the *istishhadi*), are carried through the streets to their final resting place, where the martyr is interred.

There are varying degrees of public participation in the funerals. Some Palestinians watch as the funeral procession passes (Allen 2006-a), while others march in the procession that follows the remains of the martyr. Some marchers wield banners and flags, or hold commemorative posters of the martyr. Some marchers wear military fatigues and may also wield weapons<sup>37</sup>. Not all of those who participate, whether as observers or marchers, support acts of martyrdom, as Allen (2006-a) has remarked, for the funerals are part of daily life under Israeli Occupation<sup>38</sup>. And, as Allen further notes, the funerals are also "the only expression of commitment to the struggle against occupation available to most people

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see Allen 2006-a; on the funerals in the larger context of Palestinian commemorative practices see Khalili 2007 and in particular pp.124-127 and pp.187-213.

<sup>36</sup> Allen notes that while it was during the second *intifada* that public martyrs' funerals became prevalent, they may be traced back to the days of the British Mandate in Palestine.

<sup>37</sup> Media depictions in the West often show images of Palestinian marchers dressed as martyrs, wearing army fatigues and headbands and strapping themselves with explosive belts. In so doing they too can be seen to be *performing as martyrs*. However I have been unable to establish with any certainty whether these media images are of martyrs' funerals, or of demonstrations and commemorative events. There is one such scene in the film *Cult of the Suicide Bomber*, however, it was filmed not at a martyr's funeral but rather at a demonstration held to commemorate the one-year anniversary of the deployment of suicide bomber Tariq Hamid, a Hamas martyr, in 2005.

<sup>38</sup> She further observes that some Palestinians participate for social reasons (to see family and friends), or to get out of the house or away from work; or out of a sense of solidarity with the families (Allen 2006-a).

other than those activists willing to take up arms (a small minority of the population)" (2006-a p.112).

The funerals are also linked to loss. They allow members of the Palestinian public to come together in public to support the families of those who sacrificed themselves (Allen 2006-a). However they also serve to transform loss into heroism, dignity and honor (Khalili 2007); to celebrate the martyr's sacrifice of life; and to allow for the public expression of pride (Allen 2006-a).

The martyrs' funerals may also be considered in terms of ritual. They have "a recognizable form, a script, and a culturally validated socializing function" (Allen 2006-a p.108). They serve to foster social bonds between members of the public and the deceased martyr, with her/his family, and with other members of the Palestinian public; and to foster connections between individual Palestinians and broader national identities and goals.

Ritual in performance studies is theorized as occurring within social drama, where it is often linked to liminality, a transformation or change in social status of the participants and by extension the entire society, most notably in ceremonial rites of passage<sup>39</sup>. The martyrs' funerals involve a type of transformation, however, there are limits to the notion of liminality here, because any transformation that may occur is not permanent, nor is it linked to any real or lasting change in the social status of

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<sup>39</sup> As Fischer-Lichte (2008) and Carlson (2004) observe, the term liminality was coined by theorist Victor Turner in reference to the works of Arnold van Gennep and his 1909 text titled *The Rites of Passage*.

Palestinians.

What's more, ritual in performance studies is considered to be a conservative force that provides a structure for predictable changes (Cohen-Cruz 1998). And so while liminality in ritual is linked to transformation, it tends to be limited to that which preserves the *status quo* (Carlson 2004): when the liminal period ends, individuals are always inserted or reinserted into their existing or newly defined places in society (Schechner 1993).

However the notion of liminality as a type of transformation is still a useful one. Fischer-Lichte (2008) distinguishes between liminality that occurs in ritual, and that which occurs in aesthetic performance. The transformations caused by liminality in aesthetic performance for her, are temporary and take effect for the duration of the performance<sup>40</sup>. This transformation is impermanent, fleeting, and in the moment. Yet it is not invalid. For Fischer-Lichte, the transformations produced by performance may be corporeal or psychic; they can transform spectators into actors; and they can create community.

The martyrs' funerals may be linked to transformation on several levels. They serve to publicly acknowledge the *istishhadi's* self-sacrifice, and in so doing they transform the deceased into a hero, much as the commemorative posters do, and they publicly elevate the martyr to a higher status. The funerals serve to transform loss into heroism (Khalili

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<sup>40</sup> While the martyr's funerals are not aesthetic performance in a strict sense they do draw upon on aesthetic elements such as staging.

2007). They also transform individual experience into a group one, or at least a temporarily shared one: they temporarily create community by uniting the participants in acknowledging sacrifice (Allen 2006-a), and in sharing a social bond, despite any differences between them<sup>41</sup>.

The funerals also serve to temporarily transform territory under Israeli control. The funerals are performed under ultimate Israeli spatial and military control. However in coming together to watch and/or participate in the funeral, and in marching through Israeli-controlled, Palestinian inhabited territory, through the streets to the burial site, Palestinians are able to assert some kind of control – albeit temporarily – over contested territory in the West Bank and Gaza, and this represents a temporary transformation of space.

### **Martyrdom as a type of subject formation: Khosrokhavar's individual in death**

Martyrdom, for Khosrokhavar (2005) is a type of subjectivity formed in death<sup>42</sup>. For him, modern (late 20th century) Islamic martyrdom constitutes a type of subjectivity that occurs at

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<sup>41</sup> The funerals, following Allen (2006-a) also create a shared space for the airing and discussion of differences, thus also reflecting a type of community building.

<sup>42</sup> A major weakness of Khosrokhavar's study is that he fails to locate his arguments within a theoretical framework of subjectivity, nor does he define his understanding of the terms subjectivity, subject formation and the subject. As well he tends to conflate much of his terminology, for example, subjectivity and subject formation; the subject, the self and the individual. I examine notions of subjectivity in more detail beginning on page 204.

the moment of the martyr's death, at which point the martyr becomes "an individual in death" (2005 p.46)<sup>43</sup>. Modern Islamic martyrdom, for Khosrokhavar, is linked to the emergence of Islamism – attempts within the Islamic world to merge religion and politics<sup>44</sup>. Modern Islamic martyrdom is also linked to subjectivity and to individual choice (Khosrokhavar 2005).

For Khosrokhavar, the martyr *intentionally* chooses to sacrifice himself<sup>45</sup>. However his analysis rests on the premise that the martyr intentionally chooses death because self-assertion – what he also terms self-realization – the desire to be an individual or a self, is impossible in *life*. This impossibility arises, for Khosrokhavar, because modern Islamic societies offer the promise of self-assertion but demand conformity, thereby precluding any real possibility of

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<sup>43</sup> Khosrokhavar uses the terms martyr and individual in death interchangeably. He exclusively considers young, religious Muslim men who become martyrs by sacrificing themselves in acts of suicide bombing.

<sup>44</sup> Khosrokhavar defines Islamism as "a politic-religious current that tries to appropriate power and justifies a possible recourse to violence to install by authoritarian means a regime based on *shari'a* [Islamic religious law]... placing particular emphasis on opposition to the West" (Khosrokhavar 2005 p.34)[my addition to the text]. Susan Buck-Morss (2003) considers Islamism in a postcolonial context, as a form of political protest against Western political hegemony and attempts to control and assert power over the Islamic world; see pp.41-62. So too does Khalili, who defines Islamism most broadly as, "the utilization of religious practices, discourses, and symbols to achieve concrete political goals, almost always within the territorialized nation-state" (2007 p.26). Khosrokhavar cites as examples of Islamism, the emergence of the Muslim Brotherhood in Egypt in the 1950s together with the challenges it poses to secular politics there; the creation of the Islamic Republic in Iran; Hamas' national-religious objectives in Palestine and Hezbollah's in Lebanon; and al-Queda's goal of building an trans-national *umma* or community of Muslims.

<sup>45</sup> Khosrokhavar is exclusively concerned with male martyrs.

individuation or self-assertion. Using Nietzsche's concept of *ressentiment* (resentment), he outlines a theory of the modern Islamic martyr, what he terms a radical Islamic "martyropathic subject" (2005 p.60) who blames the Western enemy for his inability to individuate or assert himself<sup>46</sup>. Fuelled by the belief that self-assertion in life is impossible, the martyr turns to death (his own) and killing (the enemy), "There is at once a desire for self-assertion and a realisation that it is impossible. The dilemma is resolved through the destruction of both the self and those who are perceived as obstacles to self-realisation" (Khosrokhavar 2005 p.45).

#### **Khosrokhavar's Palestinian individual in death**

Similarly, for Khosrokhavar the Palestinian martyr or individual in death is the product of despair and hopelessness that result from the individual's failure to assert himself, as well as from the impossibility of *collective* Palestinian self-assertion – the failure to achieve Palestinian nationhood. This failure has led to the emergence, over the course of the al-Aqsa intifada, of what he considers to be a specifically negative or pessimistic form of Palestinian martyrdom. The increasing brutality of the occupation, the failures of the Oslo peace process, and the ineffectiveness and abuses of power on the part of the Palestinian Authority have for Khosrokhavar combined to foster a sense of despair and hopelessness for Palestinian

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<sup>46</sup> Khosrokhavar often equates modern Islam with radical or fundamentalist Islam, which is highly problematic.

martyrs, so much so that they crave death (their own) and killing (the Israeli enemy) more than anything else, "One major feature of this wish to die and kill the enemy is the feeling that... there is no future" (2005 p.132) [...] "A glorious death is the royal road that allows them to escape the mediocrity to which they have been condemned" (2005 p.137).

Khosrokhavar's analysis is more insightful and nuanced than many of the ones discussed at the beginning of this chapter and in the previous one, yet it falls prey to some of the same pitfalls. Namely, it downplays the connections between acts of self-sacrifice and the Israeli occupation of Palestinian-inhabited territory, instead focusing disproportionately on despair as providing the main impetus for martyrdom. In contrast, I contend that the Palestinian martyr's death may be considered *an act of self-assertion* in the face of the occupation, because it is an act of resistance to the occupation and one that inflicts harm on the Israeli enemy.

More importantly, Khosrokhavar's assertions – while highly problematic – inspired me to consider a relationship first between Palestinian martyrdom and Palestinian subjectivity, and second, between the performance of Palestinian martyrdom and the enactment of a subjectivity characterized by resistance. Khosrokhavar does not adequately define or explain what he means by the subject, subjectivity or subject formation, and so I had to elaborate a more specific theoretical framework that would allow me to explore these complex and heavily theorized concepts, as discussed below. Because territory is a central focus of the thesis, I focus

my analysis on examining the ways in which Israeli control asserted over Palestinian-inhabited territory may be linked to Palestinian subject formation. First, however, it is necessary to situate these notions within a broader theoretical framework of the subject, subjectivity and subject formation.

### **The subject and subject formation**

The question of subjectivity, of what makes human beings into subjects, has been a matter of concern for philosophical inquiry going back to ancient Greek thought (Strozier 2002). Of greater concern to me are more contemporary theories of the subject. In the mid-20th century, scholarship (notably poststructuralist thought and Lacanian psychoanalysis) came to radically and profoundly interrogate existing conceptions of how subjects are formed, together with the modern notion of the subject itself<sup>47</sup>. The modern subject had previously been theorized as self-founding, unitary and coherent,

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<sup>47</sup> Scholarship that began to emerge at this time included but was not limited to, in addition to the areas of investigation cited above, phenomenological investigations (most notably by Maurice Merleau-Ponty), feminist theory (notably the work of Simone de Beauvoir, Luce Irigaray and Hélène Cixous – and I note a good deal of overlap between feminist and poststructuralist theory, especially in France), and investigations by Michel Foucault, Jacques Derrida, and Jean-François Lyotard. This by no means constitutes a full list of all the theories of subjectivity at this time; a comprehensive study of these movements and scholars lies outside the focus of this research. For a comprehensive introduction to key theories of subjectivity and subject formation, see in particular Blackman, L. et. al 2008, and Johnston 1990 pp.67-78. Grosz's outstanding investigation (1994) into corporeality and subjectivity, provides an innovative reading of the subject as considered by key thinkers such as Nietzsche, Deleuze and Guattari, Freud and Lacan, and Merleau-Ponty.

autonomous and self-intentional (as described in Strozier 2002, McLaren 2002 and Johnston 1990)<sup>48</sup>. This modern subject was radically unhinged as theoretical propositions began to interrogate notions of the subject as unitary, self-founding and autonomous. New conceptions of the subject as fractured and de-centered, "as an ever-varying matrix of biological, social, and cultural determinants" (Johnston 1990 p.69), were theorized. The (normative) Western, male subject came to be challenged by feminist, postcolonial and queer scholarship<sup>49</sup>.

Of particular relevance to my understanding of the subject, is the notion that subjects are *produced*, and this follows on from my interest, explored in Chapter 2, in the body as produced. This notion dominates postmodern theories of subjectivity. Subjects are produced by a complex web of psychic, cultural, and social factors, including ideology (Althusser), desire (Deleuze and Guattari), psychic rupture

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<sup>48</sup> This notion of the subject that dominated modern philosophical inquiry from the 17th century until the mid-20th century is generally traced back to Descartes, who famously linked subjectivity to cognition and to knowledge (I think, therefore I am) and to dualism (the mind-body split), and consequently to the belief that the locus of subjectivity rests in the mind and not the body. The modern notion of the subject can also be traced to Kant's rational, knowing Enlightenment subject. My observations here are derived from readings of Grosz 1994, Jones 1998, McLaren 2002, and Strozier 2002. For a detailed discussion of the subject in Descartes and Kant, see Schwyzer 1997. What's more, while generally not explicitly stated, the modern, self-founding subject is Western and male.

<sup>49</sup> A detailed study of this scholarship lies outside the scope of this research. I briefly discuss otherness in the following section. There is not one unitary feminist theory of the subject, but rather, several schools; for details see Grosz 1994, and Hekman 1995. The critique of heteronormativity is a major theme in the work of Judith Butler; see in particular Butler 1999, 1993, and 2004.

(Lacan), discourse and power (Foucault), and social norms (Butler)<sup>50</sup>.

### **Palestinian subjectivity and the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza**

This research cannot fully consider *all* of the factors that combine to produce Palestinian subjectivity in the West Bank and Gaza. Discursive, psychic, social, cultural, and economic factors, among others, contribute to producing Palestinian subjectivity, as does most importantly for the purposes of this study, Israeli control wielded over Palestinian-inhabited territory in the West Bank and Gaza and by extension, over Palestinian subjects there.

This research could be called to task for eliding some of the complexities of Palestinian subjectivity and subject formation, for it focuses heavily on external factors, notably the Israeli occupation and Israeli spatial practices in the West Bank and Gaza. The intention is not to simplify the complexities of Palestinian subjectivity or subject formation, nor to present Palestinians as victims, but rather to set limits through which to frame an analysis of Palestinian subjectivity under conditions of occupation, and to highlight the disproportionate amount of Israeli control

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<sup>50</sup> These cursory observations describe some of the most influential theories and theorists of subjectivity; a more in depth discussion lies outside the scope of my research. This brief listing does not do justice to the complexities of the theories advanced by many of these scholars, nor to the overlap among their theoretical propositions (for example, Deleuze and Guattari draw upon Foucault; Butler draws on Althusser, Lacan and Foucault, etc.).

wielded over Palestinian-occupied territory in the West Bank and Gaza and by extension, over Palestinians there<sup>51</sup>.

This study is examines alterity, nationalism, and spatial control, as central to Palestinian subjectivity in the West Bank and Gaza.

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<sup>51</sup> Junka (2006) observes that Palestinian subjectivity has often been considered within the narrow parameters of victimhood on the one hand, and militancy on the other. She writes, "lack of attention to the internal politics among Palestinians *risks simplifying the complexities of power relations within which these expressions of Palestinian subjectivity took place*" (2006 p.423)[Italics added]. On the one hand, Junka's observations alerted me to the fact that my study focuses disproportionately on external factors (Israeli control), rather than on internal ones (Palestinian internal politics for example). This decision, however, was a deliberate one, in keeping with my focus in the thesis on territory and on spatial control. However it is also important to note that Palestinian internal politics in the Occupied territories unfold within and are limited by the larger context of the Israeli occupation. Consequently the Israeli state is able to exercise a great degree of influence (wielded directly or indirectly) over Palestinian politics, and over the Palestinian Authority in particular. Without wanting to downplay the complexities of internal Palestinian politics nor their effects on the Palestinian population, Israeli government policies have profoundly affected and contoured Palestinian internal politics; see Rabbani 2006. Since the start of the second *intifada*, Israel has pursued an aggressive strategy aimed at destabilizing Palestinian politics: it imprisoned then PA president Yassir Arafat for three years and assassinated leading figures of the Palestinian opposition movement ( Hamas and Islamic Jihad); it physically destroyed Palestinian political institutions and infrastructure; and it refuses to recognize the democratically elected Hamas government. Kimmerling considers these efforts to be *politicide*, "a process that has, as its ultimate goal, the dissolution of the Palestinian people's existence as a legitimate social, political, and economic entity" (2003 pp.3-4). Jamal (2005) describes these actions as the near-paralysis of Palestinian politics. For him, the impact of Israeli policies weighs heavily on Palestinian politics, however, so too do internal factors such as factionalism and the failure to achieve consensus about political strategies for achieving national goals.

More generally and prior to 1967, as a settler-colonial project, Zionism produced the Palestinian subject as an inferior Other, and I reiterate once more Stuart Hall's observation (1990), that colonial subjects are constructed as Other by, and are perceived to be, inferior to the dominant colonial power. Political theorist Linda Tabar observes more generally that, "Zionism was founded upon the *constitutive exclusion of the Palestinian subject* and the *negation of the rights* of this indigenous population" (2007 p.11)[Italics added].

Palestinian subjectivity has been also contoured in large part in response to territorial losses. Tina Sherwell (2003) notes that Palestinian national identity has been forged not by the stability of the nation, but out of a collective longing for a nation-state. The same can be said of Palestinian subjectivity. Notably, *al-Nakba* (the catastrophe) of 1948 and the territorial losses it entailed for the majority of Palestinians, has played a central role in producing Palestinians as subjects and certainly as *national* subjects. For Lori Allen, "nationalism is hegemonic, structuring the texture of social life, its ideologies *guiding the formation of subjectivity* and political identity" (2006-a p.110)[italics added]<sup>52</sup>. I am grateful to Allen's

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<sup>52</sup> Allen (2006-a) examines the ways in which martyr's posters and funerals serve to "hail" Palestinians in the Occupied Territories as national/nationalist subjects (note that she uses both terms). Zachary Lockman notes that as a force that structures identity and subjectivity, nationalism is problematic because it consists in "a unitary and internally unconflicted ideal that represents the authentic core of personhood in all circumstances superior to or even excluding all other identities, sentiments, interests, loyalties, and aspirations" (quoted in Kanaanah 2003 p.18).

observation about the link between nationalism and subject formation and so I also use the term national subject – a term also used by Sherwell (2003) – in considering notions of Palestinian subjectivity.

### **The self-inventing national subject**

Subjectivity, for sociologist Himani Bannerji (2002), is both invented and inventing: the subject is produced both externally and internally. Writing about gendered and colonized subjects in India during the 19th century, subjects, for Bannerji are externally invented as Other, for example, women by men, and colonized peoples by their colonizers. Yet she contends that is also possible for subjects to *invent themselves* within a given social or historical context<sup>53</sup>. However, Bannerji notes, the process of self-invention is always shaped by the larger social or historical context in which it unfolds, as well as by the discourses of otherness that came to produce the subject as

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<sup>53</sup> Self-invention for Bannerji involves the creation of an ideal type of subjectivity with which members of the group in question will identify and by extension, emulate and seek to become. She is primarily concerned with the social and cultural construction of middle-class women's subjectivity in the western Indian region of Bengal in the mid- to late-19th century, a period when the Bengali middle class in India began to emerge and take shape. At this time there was a significant effort made by members of the Bengali middle class to distinguish themselves from members of other Indian classes (particularly the lower classes), as well as from the British colonists. This required the creation of an ideal type of middle-class Bengali subjectivity with which members of that community would self-identify and by extension, attempt to become. In this context Bengali women created a specific type of female subjectivity for Bengali middle class women as distinct from that of Bengali middle class men; it centered on modesty and education, and these ideals were transmitted notably in women's magazines.

Other in the first place, what she terms doubling. Bannerji's self-inventing subject is not to be confused with the modern self-founding subject. The self-inventing subject is one who seeks to invent or in some cases transform her/himself in response to or in addition to already existing social, discursive and psychic factors that have already produced the subject. Thus her focus is on the subject's ability to invent her/himself within or in response to existing limits or conditions<sup>54</sup>.

Bannerji's notion of the self-inventing subject is also relevant to Jewish subject formation in historic Palestine going back to the late 19th century. There, Jews were able to invent themselves as they desired as *national subjects*, by asserting control over territory in Palestine and transforming it into Jewish national territory – the state of Israel.

Spurred in the late 19th century by the emergence of Zionism, Jewish self-invention as national subjects would unfold in Palestine<sup>55</sup>. There, European Jews would transform themselves from landless, inferior Other subjects (to European gentiles), into *national subjects* in a Jewish national

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<sup>54</sup> This point that finds echoes in the work of Judith Butler, without directly referencing her. I return to Butler in the section dealing with the Palestinian non-subject.

<sup>55</sup> This discussion of Jewish self-invention does not take into account all of the various processes (psychic, discursive, social, etc.) that produce subjects and as such does not constitute a comprehensive analysis of Jewish subject formation in historic Palestine. Such a discussion lies outside the scope of this writing. Rather I focus on the invention of the Jewish national subject in Palestine in a relationship to territory there.

territory<sup>56</sup>. The Zionist settlers to Palestine succeeded in becoming national subjects in their own national territory, a process that came to fruition with the creation of the state of Israel, whence Israelis became national subjects in a sovereign national homeland. Jews in Palestine had succeeded in inventing themselves as they desired, as national subjects but also, as a sovereign nation, Israel.

Since 1948, Israeli national subjectivity has been inextricably linked to soldiering. Because Israeli sovereignty is backed by military power (Weiss 2002-a), soldiering plays a central role in producing Israelis as national subjects<sup>57</sup>. And because military service is compulsory for Jewish-Israelis, soldiering is more central to Israeli subjectivity than it is to concepts of selfhood in many other nations. Following Weiss (2002-a), it may also be said that the ideal Israeli national *subjectivity* – a

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<sup>56</sup> The transformation of the Jewish body in Palestine was discussed in Chapter Two. The desire for Jewish self-invention was itself the product of Jewish otherness in Europe and the lack of a national territory that Jews could call their own. European Jews were often forbidden to own or otherwise control land, in Eastern Europe in particular. Jews were also subject to laws that dictated where they could or could not reside, as was famously the case with the Jewish Pale of settlement in Russia (1791-1917), an area that comprises present-day Poland, Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus. Over 90 per cent of Russian Jews were forced to live in the Pale, with many of them forcibly deported there (see [www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/pale.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/History/pale.html)). The argument can also be made that eastern European Jews were spatially produced as inferior Other subjects by virtue of their territorial confinement within the Russian Pale of settlement.

<sup>57</sup> It should be noted that the *normative* Israeli subject – like the normative Israeli body discussed in Chapter Two – is Jewish, masculine and male, and Ashkenazi, producing as Others, Palestinian citizens of Israel, Sephardim, women, and queers, among others. A more comprehensive analysis of Israeli subjectivity lies outside the scope of this research.

willingness to fight and die for his country – is embodied by the IDF soldier<sup>58</sup>.

In contrast to Israeli national subjects, to date it has been impossible for Palestinians to invent themselves as they desire as national subjects in a sovereign national territory. What's more, Jewish/Israeli<sup>59</sup> self-invention as national subjects *in historic Palestine* had a profound impact on Palestinian subjectivity, for the loss of their land and their widespread deterritorialization in 1947-1949 dealt a serious blow to Palestinian self-invention as national subjects in a sovereign Palestinian national territory. Since 1967, the possibility of Palestinian self-invention as national subjects in a national territory has also increasingly been stymied by Israel's military occupation of the West Bank and Gaza<sup>60</sup>.

### **The Palestinian subject of Israeli spatial control**

Israel wields a disproportionate level of control over Palestinian-inhabited territory and over Palestinian movement in the Occupied Territories – and by extension, over Palestinians – manifest most notably in their confinement to

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<sup>58</sup> Kimmerling (1993) notes that Israeli society is also characterized by the constant anticipation of and preparation for war, and as a result, "Israeli militarism tends to serve as one of the *central organizational principles* of the society" (1993 p.199).

<sup>59</sup> My use of the term "Jewish" refers specifically to Jewish subjectivity in Palestine between 1880 and 1948, and my use of the term "Israeli", to Israeli subjectivity after 1948.

<sup>60</sup> For Israeli political theorist Neve Gordon, Israel's refusal in 1967 to grant Palestinians in the Occupied Territories citizenship and to integrate them into Israeli society has served to constitute them as "non-national subjects" (2008 p.32).

enclaves. Consequently a relationship between Israeli spatial control and Palestinian subjectivity is presented.

The Palestinian subject in the West Bank and Gaza is *spatially produced* as an inferior Other subject by virtue of its spatial control and confinement, by Israel. The Palestinian subject there, is spatially confined to enclaves by Israeli construction projects, checkpoints, fences and barriers, and subject to severe restrictions on movement across territory. In contrast Jewish Israeli subjects enjoy unlimited freedom of movement across territory in Israel and most of the West Bank, on proprietary and exclusively Jewish roads systems. Spatial control thus produces the Palestinian subject as an inferior Other to Jewish Israeli subjects who enjoy unfettered movement across territory. This relationship was cited in the previous chapter in a discussion of Palestinian corporeality and otherness. However Israeli control over Palestinian-inhabited territory is so severe, its restrictions on Palestinian movement so severe, that they produce the Palestinian subject in the West Bank and Gaza not only as an inferior Other subject, but also as a *non-subject*<sup>61</sup>.

### **The Palestinian non-subject of Israeli spatial control**

Grounding her analysis of the subject in a reading of Hannah Arendt's *The Human Condition*, the subject, for Collin, is one

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<sup>61</sup> As theorized by Butler (1993) and Collin (2004).

who figures in speech and action (2004)<sup>62</sup>. In contrast the non-subject, for Collin (2004), is someone who has yet to be recognized as a subject – who has yet to figure in speech and action. Most importantly for my analysis, the non-subject "needs first demand their *right of entry*" (Collin 2004 p.15)[italics added] to the space of the subject. However the authority to decide who is or is not recognized as a subject, for Collin, rests with the subject himself, "He [the subject] has the authority to denounce the authority of the subject" (2004 p.15). Without explicitly mentioning it, the subject, in my reading of Collin, is constituted through relations of *power* ("authority").

Following Collin, it is the Israeli state that has the authority to decide who is recognized as a subject in the Occupied Territories, and who is not. By virtue of their

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<sup>62</sup> For Collin the subject is a speaking subject who figures in speech and in action – whose voice can be heard. Collin is writing about sexual difference and of women as Others to men. Collin is concerned with alterity and ethics and argues for a new formulation of the subject that is ethical and plural, and characterized by respect for difference. This "plural" subject (2004 p.21) would speak with one voice, subverting the subject/non-subject dichotomy in which (sexual) difference produces women as unequal Others – as non-subjects – to men. Julia Kristeva has theorized the speaking subject as one who is split by language; the speaking subject has also been considered in communication studies. The case can be made that Palestinians have been "silenced" (legally, politically, discursively) by the Israeli state: for example, former Israeli prime minister Golda Meir was quoted in an interview published in the Sunday Times (and later in the Washington Post) in June 1969 as saying that there is no such thing as a Palestinian people. Israeli writer and journalist David Grossman, in a public lecture in London in 2005, noted the rendering invisible of Palestinians through discourse in Israel, observing that until the start of the first intifada in 1987, Israeli state broadcasters were forbidden from using the term Palestinian. A more in-depth discussion lies outside the scope of this research.

spatial confinement to enclaves, and the harsh restrictions on movement imposed on them by Israel, Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are not recognized as subjects as compared to Jewish Israelis who enjoy complete freedom of movement across territory.

Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are produced as *non-subjects* owing to Israeli practices of containment, control, and restrictions on movement<sup>63</sup>. I return again to Butler's theory of zones of abjection (1993). Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement serve to exclude Palestinians from the status or domain of the subject, for they serve to confine Palestinians to enclaves – previously explored as zones of abjection – “those ‘unlivable’ and ‘uninhabitable’ zones of social life which are nevertheless densely populated by *those who are not yet ‘subjects,’ but who form the constitutive outside to the domain of the subject*” (Butler 1993 p.3)” [Italics added]. Confinement to zones of abjection thus produces Palestinians as non-subjects<sup>64</sup>.

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<sup>63</sup> For Gordon (2008) restrictions on movement serve to constitute and administer what he terms the “moving subject” (p.38). While Gordon is similarly critical of these restrictions, I would venture that these restrictions produce a *non-moving subject*.

<sup>64</sup> While Butler (1993) links zones of abjection to the non-subject, the subject in Butler is not necessarily produced spatially. Rather, subjects are formed through a process of assuming a sex, what she terms identification. To become a subject requires one to identify with the normative sex (heterosexuality). For Butler, compulsory heterosexuality promotes normative (heterosexual) identifications while disavowing non-normative (homosexual) ones. Therefore, non-normative identification with the “wrong” sex produces non-subjects. It is these non-subjects (also termed abject beings by Butler) who populate Butler's zones of abjection. Subjectivity, the subject and subject formation (particularly of sexed subjects) is one of the predominant and recurrent themes in Butler's extensive oeuvre (1993, 1997, 2004, 2005). She examines

The non-subject, for Butler, is constituted by force of exclusion<sup>65</sup>. So too, for Collin. Collin's notion, cited earlier, of "right of entry" to the space of the subject (2004 p.15) may be considered literally in this context: the Jewish settlements and road networks, fences, barriers and checkpoints and travel restrictions that serve to spatially confine Palestinians and restrict their movement across

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the various processes through which subjects are formed; these may be discursive (read for example through Derrida and Austin), and/or psychoanalytic (read through Kristeva and Lacan among others). As well, subjects are produced by social norms that are internalized and reproduced by the subject. Subjects are also produced by power, both external and internal to the subject. For Butler there is not one single, finite moment or process that can be said to form the subject, rather, subjects are continually being formed. Butler has been criticized for overemphasizing discourse in subject formation, and for doing away with the subject altogether; see Kirby 2006 pp.129-143 for a summary of these arguments, as well as Salih 2002 pp.137-152.

<sup>65</sup> Palestinians in the Occupied Territories are not only spatially excluded from the domain or status of the subject, but also, juridically. Palestinians there are ruled by Israeli military law, and thereby denied the legal framework available to Jewish Israelis (the Jewish settlers) in the West Bank, who are governed by Israeli civilian law. Gordon (2008) notes that one of the most striking characteristics of the second *intifada* is the extensive *suspension* of the law in the Occupied Territories, resulting for example in extrajudicial executions (targeted assassinations). The lack of recourse to law and to legal protection can also be said to produce Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as non-subjects. Israel has refused to respect international humanitarian law in the Occupied Territories and this has also served to deny Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza fundamental legal rights and protections. Butler, discussing the denial of legal rights in the context of indefinite detention for terror suspects at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba, notes that because the detainees are not protected by international law, they "are not subjects in any legal or normative sense" (2005 p.xvi). The same thing may be said of Palestinians in the Occupied Territories. While the issue of law lies outside the scope of this writing it is useful to identify a link between the Palestinian non-subject in the Occupied Territories and the denial of their legal rights there, particularly as compared to Jewish Israelis.

territory also serve to restrict Palestinian entry to the space of the subject, thereby producing them as non-subjects.

### **The Palestinian non-subject and the lack of control over daily life**

Within these zones of abjection Israel wields control not only over territory but also asserts near-absolute control over virtually all aspects of Palestinian daily life. Jeff Halper calls this the matrix of control, "an interlocking series of mechanisms... that allows Israel to control every aspect of Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories" (2006 p.63). These observations are not meant to imply that Palestinians have *no* control over their actions or lives, nor that they do not aspire to greater degrees of control. Rather I wish to emphasize the degree to which Israeli control of Palestinian-inhabited territory, exercised in large part by way of spatial confinement and restrictions on movement, serve to *impede normal daily life*.

For example, Israeli spatial control prevents Palestinians from maintaining normal kinship relations: residency restrictions prevent Palestinians from living where they want to and with whom, and make it difficult and in some cases impossible for Palestinians to marry or live with their spouses. Residents of Gaza may not live in the West Bank and vice-versa, resulting in the separation of families and difficulties for married couples with different residency permits. Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories who are married to Israeli citizens may not live in Israel with their spouses (Macintyre 2006). In 2008 Israeli

introduced new permit restrictions on residency to make it even more difficult for Gazans to live in the West Bank, and began to forcibly remove them from the West Bank as illegal aliens (B'Tselem and Hamoked 2008)<sup>66</sup>. Restrictions on movement prevent Palestinians from traveling over distances long and short alike, to spend time with family members and friends; they also prevent many forms of social and political interaction, by preventing Palestinians from attending social functions, meetings, or participating in political activities. Palestinians are unable to travel to their places of employment; restrictions on movement often prevent them from being employed at all: Palestinians may no longer travel to work inside Israel. Similarly, spatial confinement prevents Palestinians from attending school and from university level education in particular<sup>67</sup>. Because of restrictions on the movement of goods, it is often difficult for them to buy food and consumer goods of their choosing, sometimes if at all. It has become increasingly difficult for Palestinians to plant or harvest their fields and orchards, owing to the construction of the Separation Barrier in the West Bank which often separates Palestinians from their

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<sup>66</sup> According to these groups, "Israel is taking unilateral measures to institutionalize and perpetuate a new factual and legal reality of separation between residents of the Gaza Strip and the West Bank, while severing the interdependent social, economic and cultural ties between the two groups, infringing their rights and impeding the possibility that the Palestinian people will realize their right to self determination" (B'Tselem and Hamoked 2008 unpag).

<sup>67</sup> Restrictions on movement make it difficult if not impossible for Palestinians to study in Israel and abroad. Palestinians accepted to Israeli universities are subject to strict military restrictions that prevent them from entering Israel; see [www.gisha.org](http://www.gisha.org). On restrictions that prevent Palestinians from studying abroad see *Held Back* (2008).

fields and orchards. Palestinians are also prevented from frequenting restaurants or galleries or cultural centers and consequently, from enjoying forms of entertainment, art, music, and theatre, among others. Palestinians are often prevented from leaving their homes at all, owing to closure and also to curfews – and here Israel also controls time<sup>68</sup>.

The Occupied Territories may therefore be considered *unlivable* (Butler 1993 p.3) because Palestinians there are systematically denied the ability to exert control over the daily activities that comprise a normal, everyday life, and consequently, are deprived of almost all possibility of leading a normal life. Israeli spatial control in the West Bank and Gaza can be seen to produce Palestinians there as non-subjects by drastically limiting their ability to live normal daily lives. More recently in Gaza during Operation Cast Lead, it has impacted their ability to *live*, as discussed in detail in the previous chapter<sup>69</sup>. Thus Israel asserts control not only over Palestinian life in the Occupied Territories, but also, Palestinian death, and this was discussed in the previous chapter in the section dealing with the mortal effects of Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement.

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<sup>68</sup> Control of time by virtue of closure and restrictions on movement is examined in detail in Haas (2002), who asserts that Israeli control of time makes any semblance of normal daily life impossible.

<sup>69</sup> My interest in Palestinian subjectivity during the war in Gaza inspired the creation of a studio work titled the *Concrete Infinity Gaza Project*, to be shown as part of my viva exhibition.

### **Sovereign power: power over life and death**

Postcolonial scholar Achille Mbembe has theorized control asserted over the subjects of modern colonialism by the colonizing power as sovereign power, "the power and capacity to dictate who may live and who must die" (2003 p.11). As such sovereign power is also linked to the power to kill<sup>70</sup>. For Mbembe, the exercise of sovereign power often requires the occupation of territory, and occupation in turn relegates "the colonized into a third zone between subjecthood and objecthood" (2003 p.26). Mbembe's "third zone" corresponds to Butler's zones of abjection – enclaves in the West Bank and Gaza – and so the third zone may also be linked to the spatial production of Palestinians as non-subjects.

Following Mbembe (2003), Israel asserts sovereign power over Palestinians in the in the Occupied Territories. Israeli sovereign power may be interpreted not only literally as the power to kill Palestinian (as in the case of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza) but also, the ability to unleash what Mbembe terms "invisible killing" (2003 p.30). For him, the subjection of Palestinians to violence, spatial confinement, and the militarization of their daily lives, has conferred

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<sup>70</sup> Notions of sovereignty, for Mbembe, extend beyond its traditional use in political science, which locates it within the boundaries of the nation state. For Mbembe, "sovereignty means the capacity to define who matters and who does not, who is *disposable* and who is not" (2003 p.27) [*Italics in the original*]. His notion of "who matters and who does not" finds echoes in Butler's observations (1993), cited in Chapter 2, that some bodies matter, while some do not. I would like to acknowledge that it was by virtue of its citation in Junka 2006 that I discovered Mbembe's essay.

upon them the status of living dead (Mbembe 2003)<sup>71</sup>. Mbembe's notion of living dead may be linked back to Butler's notion of unlivable (1993), to the near impossibility of leading a normal daily life in the West Bank and Gaza as the direct result of Israeli spatial control and restrictions on movement – and in some cases (as in Operation Cast Lead), over life itself. Therefore, and following Butler and Mbembe, it is not only spatial confinement that produces Palestinians as non-subjects. Palestinians are also produced as non-subjects owing to the denial, by Israel, of Palestinian control over daily life, and by extension, death, in the Occupied Territories.

#### **The refusal of the status of the non-subject**

Scholars Farhad Khosrokhavar and Mai Jayyusi both invoke the notion of subjectivity in discussing Palestinian martyrs, albeit in vastly different ways. For Khosrokhavar (2005) the Palestinian martyr's subjectivity emerges at the moment of death; this death is a pessimistic one because it is the product of despair and hopelessness. In contrast, for Jayyusi, the martyr's death is an *optimistic* one because it "snatches responsibility for his own life and death from the Israeli occupiers" (in Asad 2007 p.48).

This bears a return to the notion of intentionality. The martyr intentionally chooses death, enacted in the martyrdom mission. For Jayyusi, the martyr's *intentional* death

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<sup>71</sup> Mbembe theorizes the subjection of large numbers of people to devastating and violent conditions of life such that that the status of living dead is conferred on them, as necropower.

constitutes an attempt to assert some degree of control, if only over her/his death: by intentionally choosing death in the act of self-sacrifice, the *istishhadi* wrests control over death away from the Israeli occupier (in Asad 2007). The martyr's assertion of control over her/his death must be considered in the context of a profound and almost absolute lack of control over daily life in the West Bank and Gaza, and by extension death, as discussed.

As well, the martyr's assertion of control over her/his death may be considered a refusal of the status of the non-subject, who is largely denied control over daily life by the Israeli occupiers, but also, over death. In intentionally asserting control over her/his death, the martyr refuses the status of the non-subject. And in so doing, the martyr also aims to make life *unlivable* for Israelis: s/he seeks to disrupt their "normal peaceful life" (Hage 2003 p.68).

#### **The martyr's performance as an equal to the IDF soldier**

In order to kill effectively, the body of the suicide bomber must pass undetected until it reaches the site of detonation, at which point it will explode. As Mbembe observes, "the 'suicide bomber' wears no ordinary soldier's uniform and displays no weapon" (2003 p.36). However the opposite is true of the performance that precedes the act of martyrdom. Here, the martyr performs wearing military fatigues, a suicide belt and wielding a weapon. In so doing, the martyr performs as a type of *soldier*, as discussed.

The visual image of the martyr, depicted as a whole and powerful, militarized body in the commemorative images, was theorized as a visual, if not military equal to the IDF soldier, and constituting a refusal of Israeli-imposed inferior otherness. This refusal is also *enacted* by the martyr, in *performance*. In performing as a soldier, the martyr puts her/himself on par with the IDF soldier, as an equal. And in performing as an equal to the IDF soldier, the martyr also puts her/himself on par with the Israeli national subject as embodied by the IDF soldier.

In performing as a soldier – as an equal to the Israeli national subject – the martyr enacts a refusal of inferior Other subjectivity. And in performing as a soldier – and by extension, as an equal to the Israeli national subject – the martyr also performs a type of Palestinian national subjectivity on par with – and not inferior to – Israeli national subjectivity. Performance constitutes a *performed* refusal of otherness.

Performance may also be considered a type of subject formation. I remind the reader of Bannerji's notion of the self-inventing subject (2002), one who seeks to invent or transform herself [sic] in response to already existing factors that produced the subject. By performing as an equal to the Israeli national subject (the IDF soldier), the *istishhadi* enacts a type of subjectivity that is equal to that of the Israeli national subject. In so doing, the martyr enacts, albeit fleetingly, a type of Palestinian *self-invented* subjectivity as a national subject on par with that of the Israeli national subject. As such performance

constitutes an act, contra Khosrokhavar (2005), of *self-assertion*.

### **The performance of martyrdom and the enactment of sovereign power**

Israeli sovereign power (Mbembe 2003) asserted over Palestinians – the power to dictate who will live and who will die, but also, the power to kill – is made possible by military occupation. Sovereign power is asserted over Palestinians in the Occupied Territories by the IDF. It is also asserted, albeit somewhat differently, over Israelis, by the Palestinian martyr. The martyr deploys her/his body against Israelis, as a weapon designed to kill. The body of the martyr is a locus of this sovereign power: the exploding body unleashes death and it unleashes the power to kill Israelis. The *istishhadi* asserts sovereign power over life and death in the act of martyrdom itself.

The martyr also *performs* or enacts a type of sovereign power, prior to her/his deployment, in the performance of martyrdom. The martyr enacts sovereign power in her/his performance as a militarized and powerful body, adorned by weapons and by the suicide belt in particular. The martyr enacts sovereign power in her/his performance as a soldier, one who, like the IDF soldier, is capable of killing, of asserting power over life and death. The martyr's assertion of sovereign power is also performed in the reading of the last will and testament in which the martyr voices her/his *intent* to sacrifice her/himself, and to kill Israelis in the process. Through

performance, the martyr enacts her/his ability to assert sovereign power over Israeli life and death.

### **The performance of martyrdom and the enactment of a resistant subjectivity**

In the previous chapter, the body of the suicide bomber was examined as a weapon of resistance. The body of the martyr resists spatial confinement and enters Israel, where it explodes. Butler (1993) and Collin (2004) both assert that the subject is constituted by force of exclusion, and I noted how Israeli spatial control and restrictions on movement serve to exclude Palestinians from the space or domain of the subject, producing them as non-subjects.

Through performance, the martyr resists exclusion from the domain or space of the subject. By performing as an equal, the martyr enacts a refusal of inferior Other subjectivity and enacts a subjectivity equal to that of the Israeli national subject. As well, through performance, the martyr enacts sovereign power. In so doing, the martyr enacts a *refusal of the status of the non-subject*. And in so doing, the martyr *enacts a resistant form of subjectivity*, and here too, performance constitutes a type of subject formation.

Israeli restrictions on Palestinian movement during the second intifada have also impacted Palestinian efforts at resistance in the Occupied Territories. Spatial enclavization, the construction of the Separation Barrier, the use of closure and curfew have all served to limit opportunities for Palestinian resistance, for example,

demonstrations, strikes, travel to file paperwork against house demolitions or land seizures; they have also impeded the ability to meet and organize in person<sup>72</sup>.

For Jayyusi, the Palestinian martyr "must be understood in relation to *new forms of subjectivity formed in the context of resistance* to the particular powers that circumscribe them" (in Asad 2007 p.46)[Italics added]. Power, considered here as Israeli spatial control, circumscribes Palestinian subjectivity under occupation to such an extent that it produces Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza as non-subjects who are prevented from asserting control over most aspects of daily life but also, over death. The martyr resists this power in the act of martyrdom itself. The martyr also resists this power in the act of performance, by enacting sovereign power. Martyrdom is an act of resistance to the Israeli occupation. So too is the act of performance.

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<sup>72</sup> In particular these have dramatically reduced Palestinian efforts at non-violent resistance (Junka 2006 and Allen 2006-b). Unlike during the first *intifada* when it was possible for Palestinians to boycott Israeli goods and services and/or to refuse to work in Israel as forms of resistance, these avenues for resistance are largely unavailable now; see Junka 2006, Allen 2006-b, Haas 2002 and Falk 2002. For a comparison of Palestinian resistance in the first and second intifadas, see Allen 2006-b. None of the above is to say that Palestinian resistance has ceased, rather, Israeli control has made all such efforts much more difficult to achieve. As Qumsiyeh (2008) observes, "Palestinians resist by simply living in their homes, going to school, eating and living" (unpag). He cites a range of strategies of resistance including demonstrations, blockades and cordons to prevent house demolitions, legal challenges, witnessing and oral history projects, international solidarity work, and cultural projects. While the specifics of Palestinian resistance lie outside the scope of this research, it is nonetheless relevant to cite the impact of Israeli spatial control and restrictions on movement, on efforts at Palestinian resistance during the second intifada.

Israeli control of Palestinian-inhabited territory in the West Bank and Gaza has, particularly since the start of the second *intifada*, dramatically impacted Palestinian subjectivity. It has produced Palestinians under occupation as inferior Other subjects to Jewish Israelis but also, as non-subjects, notably as a result of spatial confinements and draconian restrictions on movement. I have theorized some of the ways in which the Palestinian martyr has attempted to refuse these forms of subjectivity, not only in the act of martyrdom itself, but also, in the act of performance.

My conclusion, contra much of the research literature consulted, is that the act of martyrdom itself is intentional: the martyr intentionally chooses death. Martyrdom also constitutes an act of resistance against the occupation. Performance too is intentional and constitutes an act of resistance, not only against Israel's military occupation of Palestinian-inhabited territory but also, to the forms of Palestinian subjectivity that it engenders. Through performance, the martyr enacts a refusal of otherness, as well as a refusal of the status of the non-subject itself.

Finally, the subjectivities embodied by the IDF soldier and the Palestinian martyr – while vastly different – are both violent and dangerous, linked as they are to death and to killing. This is not to relativize or directly compare the IDF soldier and the Palestinian martyr, rather, to be aware of the dangers posed by these subjectivities, both of which are produced in the context of a violent and deadly military occupation.

## Chapter 5

### Performance as research and practice

This more personal section of writing discusses the practice element of my doctoral project. It focuses on my performance practice in particular, because while performance is central to my studio practice, it also played a defining role in the development and elaboration of the thesis.

The practice element of this project is where the material in the thesis and my own lived experiences converge. The practice is a type of dialogue or bridge, between material considered in the thesis, personal experiences, and global events that unfolded over the course of my doctoral project. The practice enables me to creatively engage with the subject matter of the thesis but also, with that which falls outside the scope of the thesis, and notably, suicide bombing attacks outside of Palestine and Israel. The thesis was written during a period (2005 to 2009) when suicide bombings escalated dramatically worldwide but especially in Iraq and Afghanistan, and in Western urban centers. It was also written in the aftermath of 9/11 and during the war on terror<sup>1</sup>. The thesis is not directly concerned with these events. However these events – and suicide bombings in New York and London in particular – affected and disturbed me considerably. The London bombings on July 7th 2005 took place on the morning of my upgrade exam. One of the target locations was Aldgate tube station, located just a few

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<sup>1</sup> The events of 9/11 predate my doctoral research by several years. However, the attacks on New York City in September 2001 had a profound effect on me that still resonates today.

minutes away from my flat in Whitechapel. The subject matter of the thesis had struck too close to home.

The practice responds to global events both inside and outside of Israel and Palestine, using performance-based self-portraiture, video, and text-based work. This work will be presented and discussed at the viva exam, and a selection of these projects is included on a DVD that accompanies the thesis<sup>2</sup>.

The present writing focuses on my performance practice, and it considers a series of three staged, self-portrait images I created using performance<sup>3</sup>. It focuses on my performance practice because performance was central to the development, framework and contents of the thesis: the thesis would never have been written as it is, if not for my performance practice. I began using performance as a strategy to decipher material under consideration in the written element at the very early stages of my doctoral research, in 2004. Performance served as a site for experimentation in which I

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<sup>2</sup> This work includes the narrative short video *Blow Up*, whose protagonist is so disturbed by the attacks on London that she blows herself up in a local mosque, included on DVD. Another work, *The Concrete Infinity Gaza Project*, is a text-based project created during Operation Cast Lead in Gaza in 2008-2009, and consists in a handwritten account of my daily activities for those 23 days, also included on DVD. Undertaken during a period of unprecedented constraint to Palestinian daily life, it contrasts my freedom to structure daily life as I wish, with the reality on the ground in Gaza. It was also created in response to constraints on Palestinian subjectivity as explored in Chapter 4 of the thesis. This work is inspired by Adrian Piper's Concrete Infinity Documentation Project (1970), in which she records all of her daily activities for 30 days as part of a process of self assertion and self exploration. A descriptive list of the DVD's contents can be found on page 308.

<sup>3</sup> These images are also included on the DVD.

"try on" material under consideration in the thesis. My performance practice evolved from mimetic acts performed in the privacy of my studio and with a view to developing the thesis, to acts performed in my studio and photographed for exhibition for a public audience. Performance, in the context of this doctoral project, constitutes both a research methodology, and a means of art making. This writing examines my performance practice as both.

### **Performance as research and practice**

During the first year of doctoral study my project was concerned with the work of artists using transgressive approaches to Holocaust representation – altering and manipulating documentary photographs and using the swastika and other Nazi symbols – to ask challenging questions about the legacy of the Holocaust, about victims and perpetrators, and about the politics of Holocaust memory in the USA, Germany, and Israel in particular<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> My investigations focused on the film *The Night Porter* by director Liliana Cavani; the work of Jewish and Israeli artists Alan Schechner, Boaz Arad and Roe Rosen; Anselm Kiefer's *Occupations* series; and an exhibition featuring the work of artists using Nazi imagery and symbols, titled *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art*, held at the Jewish Museum in New York in 2002. Texts by Norman Kleeblatt (2002), Peter Novick (1999) and Norman Finkelstein (2000) were central to my investigations. On transgressive art see Julius 2002. This research followed on from my MA research, which contrasted the documentary strategies employed by director Steven Spielberg in the film *Schindler's List*, with the manipulation of documentary photographs from the Holocaust by artist Alan Schechner.

In April 2004, while doing research on the Internet, I unexpectedly stumbled upon the first commemorative image of a Palestinian *istishhadi* I had ever seen. It was of Hamas martyr Reem al-Riyahsi. The image captivated me, so much so that within a few months female Palestinian suicide bombers and the images that commemorate them as martyrs, became a central focus of investigation.

Writing in 2009, it is difficult to communicate to the reader the profound effect this material had on me. I could not fathom why someone would strap explosives to her body and explode herself so violently. The research literature offered a range of explanations as to why Palestinian women became suicide bombers: emotional vulnerability and social exclusion, the influence of Islamic religious extremism, and gender inequality in Palestine<sup>5</sup>. For Beyler, the deployment of female suicide bombers was "one of the most extreme forms of exploitation of women" (2003 p.15). Some writers (Rabinovitch 2004, Chesler 2004) claimed that al-Riyashi's deployment was a forced suicide, a punishment meted out by Hamas for her having allegedly committed adultery. All of this literature depicted the women as victims of gender oppression, religious extremism, and personal circumstances. I was swayed by these allegations, especially given the dearth of alternative

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<sup>5</sup> See in particular Shemin 2002, Fighel 2003, Beyler 2003, Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2003-a and 2003-b, Chesler 2004, and Victor 2004. For more recent yet similar arguments, see also Schweitzer 2006 and Alvanou 2007. Zedalis (2004) identifies the use of female suicide bombers in Palestine as being primarily strategic, because they are able to reach their targets more effectively than men.

literature available on the subject at the time<sup>6</sup>. Paradoxically, I was also critical of the lack of attention to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza in this literature<sup>7</sup>.

My research into female Palestinian suicide bombers came to focus on Reem al-Riyashi as a case study. She was the first woman ever to be deployed by Hamas, in what the research literature described as a sudden reversal of the group's prohibition on using women to execute suicide bombings. I was curious about this shift, and I was especially interested in her motives.

I was looking to establish a link between Hamas' Islamist doctrine, women's gender oppression in Palestine, and Reem al-Riyahi's deployment. I considered Reem al-Riyashi to be a victim of her gender and her faith. I was hoping to find some kind of visual evidence of her victimhood in her commemorative images. Yet there was nothing in these images to indicate victimhood. Looking at these images, Reem al-Riyashi stared back at me as a strong and powerful, defiant fighter.

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<sup>6</sup> Two exceptions are critical book reviews of Victor 2004, by Rose (2004) and Ismail (2004). Hasso (2005), Brunner (2005) and Naaman (2007) later published studies refuting the findings of this literature; a succinct critique thereof can also be found in Abufarha (2009).

<sup>7</sup> In an essay I wrote in 2004 I asserted that the phenomenon of female Palestinian suicide bombers was one of "women's dwindling position in an escalating climate of Israeli occupation and Islamic fundamentalist influence". At that time my understanding of Islam was generated exclusively through Western writing about Islamic religious extremism and fundamentalism, and as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

And so I turned to performance. I decided to perform as Reem al-Riyashi.

### **Precedents for my performance: Performing Lucia**

I had used performance once before, when I struggled to understand the fictional character Lucia (played by Charlotte Rampling), one of the protagonists of the film *The Night Porter*, then a key focus of the thesis<sup>8</sup>. Performance enabled me to arrive at a new understanding about Lucia and about the power dynamics in the film.

Set in Vienna in 1957, the film, through a series of flashbacks, tells the story of Lucia, then a concentration camp inmate, and her relationship with Max (played by Dirk Bogarde), an SS officer with whom she had a presumed non-consensual sexual relationship. Lucia and Max, victim and perpetrator, meet unexpectedly twelve years after the end of the war and resume their affair.

I considered Lucia to be a *double* victim: first, during wartime, and second, when she resumes her affair with Max in the film's present<sup>9</sup>. I was especially perturbed by what is

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<sup>8</sup> My performance practice can be traced back to my experiences with street performance (often discussed in performance studies texts as street theater). During the 1990s I participated in such performances as a member of ACT-UP, as well as of various feminist, anti-war and Jewish activist groups. I participated in performance not as an art form but as a type of activist protest that mobilized aesthetic and theatrical strategies for social change ends. On street theatre see Colleran and Spencer 1998, Cohen Cruz 1998, and Carlson 2004 pp.179-204.

<sup>9</sup> Writing in 1977 but still relevant today, Teresa de Laurentis (1977) noted that the film was heavily criticized by women because

probably the film's most iconic scene, a flashback to the past in which Lucia performs the song *Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte* (If I Were to Wish for Something) for a group of SS officers. Topless, barefoot, wearing oversized men's trousers held up by suspenders, elbow-length black gloves, and an SS officer's hat, playing with her breasts, running her hand along her stomach and down the front of her pants, simulating masturbation, and dancing provocatively. For me this scene was the epitome of her victimization. What troubled me most was that Lucia appeared to derive *pleasure* from the act of performing. This scene disturbed and angered me.



**Figure 1** Still images from the film *The Night Porter* in which Lucia (Charlotte Rampling) performs *Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte*

My struggle to understand her performance, prompted me to experiment with performance. I performed as Lucia, in a loose restaging of that scene that so disturbed and confounded me. I did so over a period of several months, in the privacy of my studio.

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they found it difficult to accept Lucia's behavior – what they perceived as her victimhood – as metaphors for the female experience, and this is true of my reaction to the film.

Performance required props. It required an SS officer's hat, breeches and boots. The first time I put them on I felt an immediate and unexpected surge of power. The SS insignia of the *totenkopf* or death's head is for me, the symbol of ultimate power over life and death, and over *Jewish* life and death in particular, for it was the SS that ran the mobile killing squads and later the extermination camps. I put these props on and felt their power. And I felt a sense of pleasure in performing with such powerful objects. I surmised that is what Lucia might have felt as well.

By restaging Lucia's performance over a period of several months, I came to understand that she wielded a certain amount of power over Max: she was not a mere victim. I too had experienced a sense of pleasure in performance, and a feeling of power that derived from this act. Performance provided me with new insight that filmic (visual) and textual analysis alone could not provide. My performance had functioned as a type of research methodology: it enabled me to arrive at a new understanding of Lucia and of the film.

### **Performing as Reem al-Riyashi**

Following on from my experience with performing as Lucia, I used a strategy of performance in an effort to resolve some of the questions that profoundly troubled me about Reem al-Riyashi and about Palestinian suicide bombers more generally.

I decided to perform as Reem al-Riyashi as I observed her in the commemorative images. Performing in this way would allow me to "act out" some of the visual material being considered

in the thesis. It would (I hoped) enable me to identify visual clues as to her motives for blowing herself up. I would stage myself as Reem al-Riyashi, as a female martyr. My performance would take place in the privacy of my studio. It would be photographed and subsequently viewed by an audience of one: myself.

I printed the commemorative images of Reem al-Riyashi and hung them on the walls of my studio. I observed the way she held her body, the way she posed and looked at the viewer. I tried to mimic her pose, her stance, her gestures. I wore a *hijab* and a military tunic; I held the Koran. I wore various incarnations of a suicide belt: at first, military pouches purchased from army surplus stores and later, ones that I made myself.

I wanted to put myself in her place, to temporarily "become" Reem al-Riyashi as she posed for the camera, prior to her suicide mission. In photographing and subsequently viewing my performance I was hoping to "see" myself as Reem al-Riyashi, and by extension, to see her in a new and different light, one that might provide me with new insight or understanding of her actions and motives.

### **Performance as a research methodology**

Unlike performing as Lucia, however, my performances of Reem al-Riyashi provoked a profound feeling of discomfort. I hated doing it. Wearing the *hijab* made me uncomfortable. Wearing the suicide belt made me uncomfortable. I felt uncomfortable in my attempts at mimesis. I cringed when I looked at the

images I took of my performances. My blue eyes and white skin made me feel out of place in the image. Seeing myself in these images provoked a sense of discomfort. My performances did not lead to new insight into Reem al-Riyashi's motives. Over time, I began to question my desire to explore motive and victimhood as linked to gender and to the Islamic religion in the thesis. I felt that it was not my place to do so<sup>10</sup>. My performance spurred me to rethink my views on the matter of motive and victimhood, as it had in the case of Lucia's perceived victimhood.

As well, my performance was willful, deliberate, and intentional. There was a sense of conviction in my performance, in my pose, in my stance and gestures. There was a sense of conviction in Reem al-Riyahsi's pose, stance and gestures as I observed them in the commemorative images. In putting myself in her place, so to speak, in attempting to mimic her gestures and pose, I discovered that to do so required deliberate and intentional *actions*. My performance revealed a connection between intention and action: first, I came to understand the actions performed by Reem al-Riyashi for the camera as intentional, and as a result I later came to consider the act of suicide bombing itself as an intentional one. Performance provided the impetus to consider the notion of intentionality, and to further develop this aspect of my research in the written element.

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<sup>10</sup> Later research substantiated this. To do so requires a much better understanding of the complexities of gender in the Arab world and/or in the Islamic religion. See for example, Hasso 2005, Saloul 2003 and Mahmoud 2005.

Performance required me to *physically* position myself. I had to adopt specific positions, face the camera, hold props, hold the pose. This led me to reflect more critically on my own position. My performance spurred me to position myself differently in relation to the subject matter of the thesis. Over time, my perspective shifted dramatically, away from questions of motive, and by extension, gender and religion. My performance also inspired me to position myself more critically and assertively in relation to the research literature: it prompted me to adopt a much more critical position vis-a-vis literature produced within the field of terrorism and security studies, as discussed in Chapters 3 and 4.

My performance also made me more aware of the centrality of the body. In performing as Reem al-Riyahsi, I had to hold my body a certain way. I had a suicide belt strapped to my body, and the belt made me more aware of the body, of the body's destruction in the act of suicide bombing. This also made me more aware of the body's destructive potential. The body in performance is a strong body, one that performs with strength and conviction in its gestures, pose, and actions. The act of performance is contingent on the body. So too, is the act of suicide bombing. Performance prompted me to elaborate this relationship more definitively, and to focus more closely on the body and on corporeality in the thesis.

Performance produced a substantial shift in the written element: away from a visual analysis of commemorative images of Reem al-Riyashi, to a more sustained focus on the body; and away from questions of victimhood and motive linked to

gender and religion<sup>11</sup>. These shifts occurred over an extended period of time, over approximately two years.

My performance also led me to consider the martyr's donning props and posing for the camera, *as performance*. In conjunction with philosophical texts dealing with subjectivity and intentionality (Khosrokhavar 2005, Butler 1993, Collin 2004, Bannerji 2002), I later elaborated a theory of the performance of martyrdom, drawing on scholarship in the field of performance studies, and linking the martyr's performance to the struggle over territory but also, for selfhood.

My performance began as a strategy used to better understand the motives of Palestinian female suicide bombers as described in the research literature available at the time. Combined with scholarly research, it produced a substantial shift in the thesis element, toward a framework that considered the Palestinian suicide bomber using a framework of corporeality, intentionality, performance and subjectivity. In so doing, performance served as a research methodology.

### **Performance as responsibility to the Other**

In Autumn 2006 I was invited to participate in an exhibition titled *Levinas: The Ethics of Encounter*, held in conjunction with a conference on the work of philosopher Emmanuel

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<sup>11</sup> The publication in *Third Text* of Mahmoud Abu Hashhash's excellent investigation (2006) into the visual representation of martyrdom in Palestine was also a contributing factor in my decision to abandon a visual analysis of the commemorative posters.

Levinas. As a result I discovered Levinas' writings on subjectivity and otherness (1981). These enabled me to retrospectively arrive at a new understanding of my performance as Reem al-Riyashi.

For Levinas, the locus of one's subjectivity lies not in the self but in the other (1981, 1985)<sup>12</sup>. For him, the determinative structure of subjectivity is responsibility (Levinas 1981, 1985). Responsibility manifests as substitution, "the possibility of putting oneself in the place of the other" (Levinas 1981, p.117).

I performed as Reem al-Riyashi; I attempted to put myself in her place. At the time I began my performances, I *hated* Reem al-Riyashi. I hated her not so much for being a suicide bomber, but for being (in my opinion), a victim. I perceived her as my ultimate Other. I, a Jew, secular, agnostic, a feminist... She, a Palestinian, a devout Muslim, a suicide bomber and possibly, a forced suicide<sup>13</sup>. Reem al-Riyashi's actions (and those of Palestinian suicide bomber more generally) disturbed me; my performances disturbed me. Yet I persisted in the act of performance.

Performance served as a sort of process of engagement: for approximately two years I engaged with Reem al-Riyahsi through performance. I came to understand this process of engagement as one of responsibility to Reem al-Riyashi and to the subject matter of the thesis (Palestinian suicide

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<sup>12</sup> I reiterate that my understanding of the Other derives primarily from postcolonial discourse (Hall 1990, Bhabha 1994, Peleg 1994), as outlined in Chapter 2.

<sup>13</sup> This dichotomy is problematic in its over-simplification of difference, yet that was my perception at the time.

bombers) more generally. Despite being deeply troubled and disturbed by the phenomenon of the Palestinian suicide bomber and Reem al-Riyashi in particular, I attempted to arrive at a new understanding of their actions. I did so primarily through performance.

By putting myself in Reem al-Riyashi's place in the act of performance, I temporarily "became" Reem al-Riyashi. In so doing, I came to understand her *otherwise than I had previously been able to*. My performance can be understood as a responsibility to put myself in the place of my other, but also, as a responsibility *to her* as my perceived other: a responsibility to attempt to understand, despite my perception (and at times hatred) for her as my Other.

### **Performance as studio practice**

Over time, my performances became less private and less mimetic. They evolved into works created for a public audience. My performances came to be staged and photographed to produce a work for public, gallery display. These performances take place in the studio and are documented so that they may be experienced in public (Jones 1998), as life-sized, self-portrait images<sup>14</sup>. Sometimes these works take the

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<sup>14</sup> Describing the early works of Yayoi Kusama, who photographed herself performing in her studio, Amelia Jones writes, "she performs herself in a private setting for the public-making eye of the camera" (1998 p.7). This is also true of my own performance work. My use of performance-based self-portraiture has also been indirectly influenced by Cindy Sherman's *Untitled Film Stills* series (1977-1980), a series of staged photographs in which the artist performs in a variety of women's roles, including the starlet and the housewife. While my work is quite different from

form of life-sized printed images (approximately five feet by eight feet), and sometimes, life-sized digital projections<sup>15</sup>.

My performances were staged over a period of several months and years, and the process of creating the various self-portraits overlapped temporally. The self-portraits went through a process of development and refinement over time, as I perfected props and staging, as well as my own gestures and poses. Some of the final images to be shown at the viva required up to four stagings over a period of months and years<sup>16</sup>. For each self-portrait, I would have to acquire props, purchasing them or making them myself. At first I would perform and take photos alone in my studio. Later I had a professional photographer photograph the performances for me.

In the self-portrait works, I perform as a Christian fundamentalist American cheerleader, and as an Islamic suicide bomber/martyr. I also perform as a neo-Nazi, and in

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Sherman's (hers is concerned with women's representation in popular culture, and mine, with the critique of cultural identity), her use of mimesis or imitation, props, performance, the posed still image, and her concern with gender, resonate in my own performance work discussed in this writing. It is perhaps impossible to create this type of staged and performed lens-based work without acknowledging a debt to Sherman's seminal work. My performance practice also owes a considerable debt to the practices of feminist artists (in addition to Kusama) such as Hannah Wilke, Eleanor Antin, and Adrian Piper, artists who used their own, often naked bodies in posed, performance-based photography during the 1960s and 1970s. For a comprehensive discussion of the relationships between performance and photography, see the essays in Choinière and Thériault (2005).

<sup>15</sup> Note that they will be presented as life-sized digital projections at the viva.

<sup>16</sup> The viva exhibit will be accompanied by a selection of these earlier images, three of which are included on the DVD that accompanies the thesis.

response to film *The Night Porter*<sup>17</sup>. I used the *Wenn ich mir was wünschen dürfte* scene as a point of departure, yet I had to make the performance my own. For example, I didn't feel comfortable exposing my breasts, and I didn't want to sing. I began to experiment with posing and with the still, self-portrait image.

I began to pose in front of Nazi flags, and this approach became a visual template for all of my subsequent self-portrait images: they are all staged and performed in front of flags. In this particular performance (see Figure 2 on the following page), the pose I adopted developed from Kiefer's *Occupations* series (1969), in which the artist photographed himself doing the Heil Hitler salute in cities across Germany and Europe<sup>18</sup>. I posed in front of an SS flag, doing the Heil Hitler salute. This performance was also influenced by artists using Nazi symbols in their work, and by the exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art*.

The performance, while referencing *The Night Porter*, came to be about Jewish identity and transgression. Wearing the swastika and performing the Heil Hitler salute was taboo for me. It constituted a transgressive act. There I was, a Jew and the daughter and granddaughter of Holocaust survivors, performing the Hitler salute and wearing the SS death's head

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<sup>17</sup> I do not specifically discuss my performance as a neo-Nazi in this writing in order to focus more closely on my experiments with the film *The Night Porter*. One such self-portrait image is included on DVD. It will also be presented and discussed at the viva exam.

<sup>18</sup> During the early stages of my doctoral research I briefly experimented with restaging this work. Kiefer's work was the subject of much of my undergraduate research. On the *Occupations* series, see in particular Huyssen 1995.

– the ultimate symbol of Jewish death. I experienced a profound sense of freedom in creating this work: performed far away from my family and my home, this work became a means



**Figure 2** *After Lucia*. Self-portrait, 2006.

of trespassing what I perceived to be the boundaries of appropriate behavior for me as a Jew.

### **Performance as a female Islamic suicide bomber/martyr**

In wearing the SS props I felt a sense of power. In contrast, the props I wore to perform as a female martyr, and the suicide belt in particular, made me feel *physically* uncomfortable. The suicide belt was tight and prevented me from moving easily; it also presented me with the undeniable prospect of the destruction of the body. On page 157, I observed that the exploded and destroyed body of the Palestinian suicide bomber is visually elided in the commemorative posters. This, I explained, was necessary in order to present an image of the Palestinian nation as a strong and powerful one.

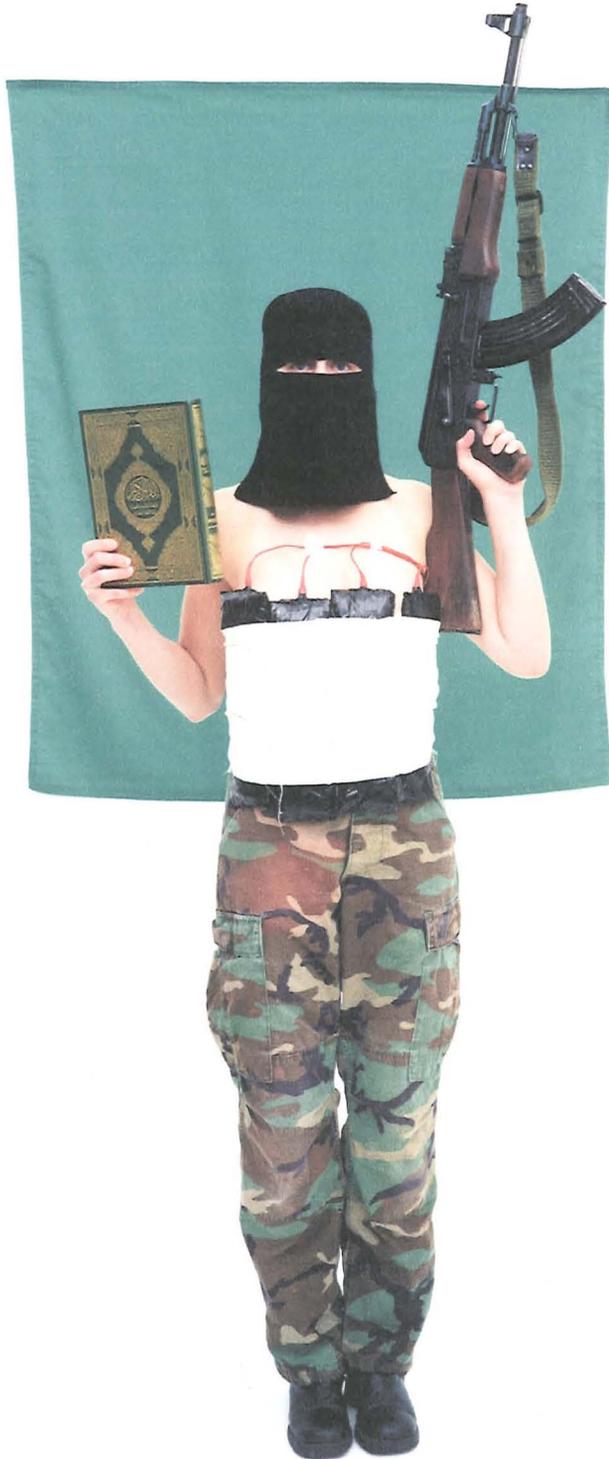
Through performance, however, wanted to address the matter of the elided and destroyed body of the suicide bomber. I wanted to focus attention on the body and the body's destruction in the act of suicide bombing. I did so by exposing parts of my body, by strapping the belt directly to my flesh, using a strategy of narcissism, self display (Jones 1998) in my performance<sup>19</sup>.

I also wanted to somehow address gender and religion – something that I decided against examining in the thesis but that I felt could be more appropriately addressed in art,

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<sup>19</sup> For Jones (1998), narcissism was a strategy used by feminist body artists during the 1960s and 1970s, to subvert the male gaze traditionally associated with women's objectification – by deliberately drawing attention to the naked female body.

through creative interpretation and expression. I began to mix religious symbols with partial nudity: for example, wearing a *niqab* (face veil) and holding the Koran, with the suicide belt partially covering my exposed skin. In so doing I attempted to reveal a tension between the two; see Figure 3 on the following page.



**Figure 3** *Self-portrait as an Islamic suicide bomber/martyr. Self-portrait, 2006.*

Writing about Cindy Sherman's works created in 1987-1988, Peggy Phelan locates the artist's critique of the construction of femininity in the notion of a "mimetic re-posing" (1993 p.64), a re-enactment of that which is being critiqued. Phelan notes that, "In order to critique the imitative pose she [Sherman] enacted that pose" (1993 p.64)[my addition]. I too use this strategy. My performance is not an exact re-enactment of the source material: I am not wearing a shirt, and my face is fully veiled. My performance originates with Reem al-Riyashi as I observe her in the commemorative images, but my performance becomes less mimetic, and more ambiguous. Some viewers may interpret this self-portrait as my being critical of suicide bombings, however, others may read it as my condoning them.

This performance puts me in an uncomfortable position. Created in 2006, in the wake of suicide attacks on London and during the war on terror, performance becomes a putting myself on the line. What does it mean to stage oneself as a suicide bomber in the larger context of the war on terror? I believe that to do so, is a potentially risky act<sup>20</sup>.

In an effort to highlight the climate of the war on terror, I created another performance to accompany that of the Islamic suicide bomber: an American, Christian fundamentalist cheerleader; see Figure 4 on the following page.

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<sup>20</sup> The larger political climate of the war on terror had and continues to have implications for my work and for artists more generally (particularly in the USA), where the Patriot Act, surveillance, racial profiling and other security measures were used to surveil and censor artistic expression; for details see College Art Association (2004).



**Figure 4** Self-portrait as a Christian fundamentalist cheerleader, 2006.

My cheerleader holds a gun and a bible: she is a cheerleader for the war on terror<sup>21</sup>. In performing the cheerleader, the work becomes a critique of religion more generally, and not of Islam exclusively. I exhibit these two images as a diptych, as a single work titled *Patriot Acts* (see Figure 5 on the following page). Positioned side by side, the Islamic suicide bomber and the Christian fundamentalist cheerleader enable me to indirectly broach issues of gender and religion<sup>22</sup>. This also allows me to locate my engagement with these themes within a larger critique of the war on terror<sup>23</sup>.

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<sup>21</sup> My performance as a cheerleader also sought to critique growing patriotism and militarization in post 9/11 American culture, particularly at sporting events, a shift I observed during my many visits there and by way of the media. In addition to rallying support for their football teams, cheerleaders play an active role in supporting American troops, travelling to Iraq and Afghanistan to perform for soldiers there, and posing for photos holding assault rifles.

<sup>22</sup> It was only in 2007 with the exhibition *Global Feminisms* at the Brooklyn Museum in New York, that I became aware of Oreet Ashery's *Self-Portrait as Marcus Fisher I-IV* series (2000), in which Ashery stages herself as a male Orthodox Jew. In *Self-Portrait as Marcus Fisher I*, Ashery, wearing a beard, side-curls (*payes*) and traditional orthodox dress, cradles her right breast – which protrudes from inside her partially unbuttoned shirt – in her hands, gazing down at it. My performance as a partially exposed Islamic suicide bomber finds some echoes in Ashery's juxtaposition of the bare breast, with traditional male religious dress: both projects trouble assumptions about gender in the context of religious orthodoxy or piety. As well, my work shares her underlying concerns with otherness, Jewish identity, and transgression. Ashery's performances as Marcus Fisher – which also include live performances and video work – is at once transgressive (wearing men's clothing is forbidden for women in Orthodox Judaism), and it is also about visibly asserting her own Jewish identity in Britain, where she lives and works. Ashery describes her performance as Marcus Fisher in *In and Out of Love with Marcus Fisher - an alter ego and an Art project* (undated); see also Garfield 2002.

<sup>23</sup> Performance artist Guillermo Gómez-Peña also juxtaposes the *niqab*, partial nudity and weaponry in live and lens-based performance to comment on the war on terror. This work is part of a



Figure 5 *Patriot Acts*, diptych, 2006

With this in mind, my Islamic suicide bomber and my Christian fundamentalist cheerleader are what Levinas (1981) has called Others of the same: they are both religious extremists, and they are both associated with acts of war. In the context of

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larger, sustained critique of otherness and racism in the USA, and it uses the spectacularization of otherness to "heighten features of fear and desire in the Anglo imagination" and, in the wake of 9/11, "to open up a *sui generis* ceremonial space for the audience to reflect on its new relationship with cultural, racial, and political Otherness" (in Gomez-Peña and Collaborators 2004); see also Gomez-Peña 2004 in the same volume; and Gomez-Peña et. al. 2006.

the war on terror, each one requires the other in order to perpetuate acts of war in their respective parts of the world<sup>24</sup>.

### **On my performance and North American Jewish cultural identity**

My performance is also a form of trespass (Julius 2002). Through performance, I seek to position myself *outside* of mainstream North American Jewish cultural identity as I understand and experienced it<sup>25</sup>. The term mainstream is used to describe a type of cultural identity promoted by the Jewish establishment (Jewish community leaders), and with which a majority of Jews in North America tend to identify.

To define Jewish identity in North America today is problematic, because it is not determined exclusively by national or geographic origin, nor by heredity (Stratton 2000). "Jewishness disrupts the very categories of identity because it is not national, not genealogical, not religious, but all of these in dialogical tension with one another" (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993, p.721). The emergence of Zionism in late nineteenth century Europe paved the way for the emergence of new and secular forms of Jewish identity and for the possibility that Jewish identity may be freely chosen,

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<sup>24</sup> On the interconnectedness of Islamic and Christian fundamentalist doctrines in the context of the war on terror see in particular the excellent series, *The Power of Nightmares*.

<sup>25</sup> Subsequent references to mainstream North American Jewish cultural identity sometimes use "Jewish identity" as a more concise term. With the exception of Stratton (2000), all of the research literature consulted deals specifically with Jewish *American* identity, hence the frequent use of the term Jewish American identity in this writing.

rather than religious or genealogical, "To be Jewish now meant to identify with the Jewish people and its cultural heritage" (Silberstein 1994, p.2)<sup>26</sup>.

Stuart Hall (1990) cites two distinct approaches to cultural identity. The first consists in an essential and stable mode of group identity based on notions of sameness, for example, a shared history and ancestry, and this may be termed an essentialist identity. The second, is of identity as a process, not based on notions of sameness but rather, as constructed. This point is also made with specific reference to Jewish identity, by Silberstein (1994) and Kleeblatt (1996). Kleeblatt cites African-American historian and scholar Henry Louis Gates, Jr., who asserts, "Identities are not stable attributes but sites of contestation and negotiation" (1996 p.6).

The problems posed by these two approaches, in discussing Jewish identity, is that Jewish community leaders tend to privilege or promote an essentialist form of Jewish identity based on shared ancestry, ethnicity, and the Jewish religion, but also, an identification with the Holocaust and the state of Israel. The problem arises for me not with these identifications in and of themselves (though I do find them to be problematic), rather, with the notion that this mode of

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<sup>26</sup> As scholar John Stratton observes, the shift from Judaism (religious affiliation) to Jewishness (as a secular mode of organization) problematizes "Jewish" as a type of identification: "Jewish" may be determined by racial/biological heredity, such as having a Jewish parent; "Jewish" can designate someone who practices Judaism (the Jewish religion) without being born Jewish, for example, one who converts to Judaism; and Jewish also implies an identification with Jewish culture. Jewish may also be all three of these together (Stratton 2000).

Jewish identity is the one that Jews in North America do or should share. In reinforcing a singular, essentialist identity as the only acceptable type of Jewish identity, the Jewish establishment marginalizes Jews who do not define their identities according to these conceptions of what it means to be Jewish. As Dorinne K. Kondo (cited in Silberstein 1994) asserts, cultural identity is produced within relations of power that privilege certain forms of identification over others. In the case of Jewish identity, the Holocaust and support for the state of Israel constitute acceptable modes of identification. Consequently, those Jews who question or define themselves otherwise – and especially those of us who are critical of the actions of the government of Israel – are marginalized, silenced, and often called self-hating Jews<sup>27</sup>.

Further, Because “identity presupposes alterity” (Kearney 2004, p.149), any effort by a group to establish the parameters of its own identity inherently entails the exclusion or silencing of Others (Silberstein 1994).

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<sup>27</sup> As Sarah Roy (2007) observes, "To be Jewish and opposed to Israel's occupation of Palestine is still untenable for many Jews and certainly for the American Jewish establishment. We are called self-haters and heretics and viewed as aberrations and deformities" (2007 p.13). See also Rosenfeld (2006): produced by the American Jewish Committee – one of the largest and most prominent American Jewish organizations in the USA – the report considers criticism of Israel's treatment of Palestinians, by Jews, to be a new form of anti-Semitism on par with or even worse than Arab anti-Semitism and that in Nazi Germany. Rabbi Michael Lerner, editor of *Tikkun* magazine, has cautioned that accusations of anti-Semitism or self-hatred leveled at Jews aims to silence dissent by scaring Jewish critics of Israel from speaking out; see Lerner 2007.

Accordingly, Jewish American identity produces dominant and marginal identity positions within Jewish identity<sup>28</sup>.

My objective in this writing is to identify a sense of connectedness to the Holocaust and to the state of Israel, as central factors that shape mainstream Jewish identity, and importantly, as they shaped my own Jewish identity formation *as I experienced* it growing up<sup>29</sup>. It is *outside* of this essentialist form of Jewish cultural identity that I seek to position myself, through performance, and I return to this point shortly.

American historian Peter Novick (1999) notes that contemporary Jewish American identity has come to be defined not by religious beliefs or shared ethnic and cultural characteristics, but by a sense of connectedness to the Holocaust and to the state of Israel. For Stratton (2000), the Holocaust as a focus of Jewish American identity – what he terms "Holocaust Jewishness" (2000 p.11) – fulfilled a

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<sup>28</sup> It also produces what Silberstein (1994) terms Others without. Silberstein (1994) and Peleg (1994) have observed that Palestinians are considered to be the Others of Israeli Jews, and I would add that they are also considered Others by North American Jews, particularly in the wake of suicide bombing attacks and rocket fire into Israel: these acts are often depicted as attacks on all Jews by Jewish community leaders. One cannot speak of Others inside and outside Jewish identity without mentioning the Jew as Other to gentiles in Europe and later, in America. As Other within Europe the Jew occupied a contradictory place, at times idealized and tolerated, at others persecuted and condemned (Garb 1995). Jews became accepted in the USA as they never did in Europe (Stratton 2000). At first marginalized within American society, Jews now represent one of the most educated, upwardly mobile and successful communities in the USA (Goldberg-a 2002). However, Jewish upward mobility and acceptance in the post-War years, came at the price of assimilation (Boyarin and Boyarin 1997, Stratton 2000).

<sup>29</sup> On Jewish American identity see also Kleeblatt 1996 pp.3-38.

need for new forms of collective identification as a result of growing secularism and intermarriage among American Jews<sup>30</sup>.

Novick (1999) notes that while most American Jews support and feel connected to the state of Israel, this connection is not a unifying identity in and of itself, for there are vast differences of opinion among American Jews with respect to Israeli state policy. However Novick (1999) also observes that the connection to the state of Israel is carefully nurtured by Jewish community leaders, who often invoke the Holocaust to generate support for Israel among American Jews<sup>31</sup>.

Historian Steven T. Rosenthal (2005) also explores the complex relationships between the state of Israel and Jewish American identity formation. Like Novick, he notes divisions among American Jews with regard to Israeli state policies, noting that despite American Jews' "support for and obsession with Israel" (2005 p.209), there has also been a fair amount of opposition to Israeli state policies. For Rosenthal (2005), disagreement with Israeli state policies by American

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<sup>30</sup> Novick (1999) cites the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem and the 1967 and 1973 wars in Israel as early factors that contributed to growing American-Jewish identification with both the Holocaust and the state of Israel. On Jewish American identity and the Holocaust see also Rapaport 2005.

<sup>31</sup> Novick (1999) further notes that the connection between the Holocaust and Israel is carefully nurtured, with the Holocaust invoked to defend Israel's more oppressive acts against Palestinians. For Novick, the shift to a Holocaust-centered Jewish identity as well as toward a reliance on the Holocaust to foster support for the Israeli state, was the result of a substantial change in American Jewish leadership in the past quarter century, "The Jewish leaders making the relevant decisions have been, overall, more particularist, more religious, and more Israel-oriented" (1999 p.280) than their predecessors were in the 1970s.

Jews does not preclude their overall support for the state of Israel, however. As well, the events of 9/11, combined with Palestinian suicide bombing campaigns, have substantially shifted American Jewish opinion toward more cohesive support for Israeli state policies (Rosenthal 2005). Ultimately for Rosenthal, American Jews' strong identification with the Jewish state over the past 50 years has occurred at the expense of other religious and cultural forms of identity formation, "American Jews' identification with Israel has largely failed to reinforce other aspects of Jewishness" (Rosenthal 2005 p.223).

My own personal experiences reflect observations by Novick and Rosenthal, albeit on a more personal level. Importantly, it was a connection to the Holocaust and to the state of Israel that defined my own sense of Jewish identity growing up in Montreal<sup>32</sup>. I was raised in an insular and exclusively Jewish environment: I was educated at Jewish private school at the primary and secondary levels<sup>33</sup>, and was raised in an all Jewish neighborhood; all of my friends were Jewish, and all my parents' friends were Jewish. While my family observed certain religious holidays and traditions, we were largely secular. My exposure to non-religious aspects of Jewish culture revolved primarily around *Israeli* culture: going to Israeli cultural fairs, learning Hebrew, singing Israeli folk songs, etc. We celebrated Israeli independence day. We were

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<sup>32</sup> While I technically grew up in Canada, the province of Quebec is culturally distinct, and I do not identify as a Canadian but rather as a Montrealer and a Quebecker. Consequently I would never use the term Jewish Canadian to describe myself.

<sup>33</sup> Public school in the UK system.

schooled in Israeli history. The summer camp I attended was called Masada.

Israel was central to my sense of identity as a Jew. So too was the Holocaust. My mother and her parents were survivors. Holocaust commemoration was part of our school curriculum and *Yom Hashoah* (Holocaust remembrance day) was observed yearly. As well, I came of age at a time when the Holocaust was entering the North American mainstream in novels, made for television movies, and the founding of Holocaust memorial institutions, as also discussed in Novick (1999).

*Memory: I'm in grade four. The mezzanine outside the gym is full of black and white photos of the Holocaust. We walk around looking at the photos. We are called into assembly. The principal tells us that we have nothing to be afraid of anymore because IT will never happen again: we have Israel now. We sing Hatikvah and go back to class.*

### ***Mirroring Evil and the contested nature of Jewish identity***

The exhibition *Mirroring Evil: Nazi Imagery/Recent Art* (2002) indirectly challenged essentialist conceptions of Jewish American identity. This exhibition of works by artists using Nazi symbols to explore the legacy of the Nazi era, shifted the focus from the victims of Nazism, to the Nazi perpetrators. Because of this, it provoked tremendous outrage from Jewish community leaders, who accused the exhibition of

trivializing the Holocaust and the memory of its victims<sup>34</sup>. The heated debates over *Mirroring Evil* created a firestorm about essentialist modes of Jewish American identity and the central role of the Holocaust therein. In so doing, the exhibit exposed the contested nature of secular Jewish American identity and it underscored the existence of Jewish cultural identifications "other" than with Israel (Boyarin and Boyarin 1993, p.713) and the Holocaust among a younger generation of American Jews<sup>35</sup>.

These debates helped me to better understand my own conflicted and contested sense of Jewish identity: I identify as Jewish, and yet as I grew older, I became entirely non-practicing (in terms of religion), more critical of the complexities of the Holocaust and its memory in society, and highly critical of Israeli state policies toward Palestinians.

Inspired by the transgressive approaches of the artists in the show as well as by theoretical writing in the catalog (Kleeblatt 2002), *Mirroring Evil* provided me with the impetus to begin expressing my transgressive views in my art practice<sup>36</sup>.

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<sup>34</sup> See Kanfer 2002, Kramer 2002, and Rosensaft 2002. Even the progressive Jewish monthly *Tikkun* was outraged by the exhibit, see Rosenbaum 2002.

<sup>35</sup> For example, social justice and solidarity movements, feminist and queer projects; artistic and cultural projects rooted in a rediscovery and revival of *Yiddishkayt* or Yiddish culture; and independent periodicals such as *heeb* and *Zeek*. On generational conflict about Jewish American identity, see Goldberg 2002-a and Goldberg 2002-b.

<sup>36</sup> Before working in performance, I used site-specific installation and video work to critique the ways in which Holocaust memory is

I already discussed my performance with Nazi symbols as a pleasurable and transgressive act. Inspired by *Mirroring Evil*, I began to use performance to assert my *opposition to mainstream Jewish identity*, with its emphasis on the Holocaust and Israel. Performance evolved from an act of transgression, to an act of opposition or resistance.

### **Performing the others of my Jewish identity**

My performance practice is centrally concerned with questions of selfhood, identity and the Other. As Stratton (2000) observes, the Other is a modern phenomena linked to the establishment of group identity. The concept of the Other is basic to notions of cultural identity, because we "form our sense of self, our identity, in relation to Others over and against whom we define ourselves" (Silberstein 1994, p.5).

In particular, my performance explores notions of otherness that operate inside and outside of contemporary North American Jewish identity<sup>37</sup>. The Nazi and the Palestinian

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invoked to justify aggression against Palestinians. My work was influenced by that of Alan Schechner in particular, and often used found and documentary footage in combination with scenes from the film *Schindler's List*. My dissenting views about Israeli state policies had previously found their voice in community and activist activities, including street performance. However this represented the first real instance of dissent or transgression in my art practice. Note that I also locate my performances as a neo-Nazi within this transgressive body of work spurred by *Mirroring Evil*.

<sup>37</sup> The work of artists Martha Rosler, Adrian Piper, Coco Fusco and Lorna Simpson has substantially influenced my concerns with cultural identity and otherness. Not all of these artists work in performance. However these artists all assert their identities as

suicide bomber are in some ways the penultimate Others of the Jew. They wield (or have wielded in the past) destructive potential, the possibility of taking Jewish lives. The Christian American cheerleader is also Other, albeit in a much less physically threatening way: gentile, athletic, often blonde, the cheerleader epitomizes the physical otherness of the Jew and embodies an unattainable standard of gentile beauty, of not "looking" Jewish<sup>38</sup>.

I perform these Others. I perform them to transgress what I perceive to be the boundaries of essentialist, mainstream Jewish North American identity *as I experienced them*. I assert my identity as the other within Jewish identity, by becoming – albeit temporarily – the other outside of Jewish identity<sup>39</sup>. I position myself as an other within Jewish identity: I am Jewish, yet I identify otherwise than with Israel and the Holocaust. I perform these others to position myself *outside* of mainstream Jewish American identity.

The construction of self and identity are political acts (Kleeblatt 1996). They require a politics of position (Hall 1990). Performance allows for a radical repositioning of the self. Through performance, I position myself in opposition to the modes of Jewish identity formation that I experienced. I use performance to resist my own Jewish upbringing and identity formation. I turn to performance as an act of

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Others, as women and/or as non-white women within dominant, white male, American culture.

<sup>38</sup> These standards of beauty have also been associated with the Barbie doll; see Lieberman in Kleeblatt (1996), pp.108-114.

<sup>39</sup> These notions of others inside and outside Jewish identity derives from Silberstein (1994).

resistance. Through performance, I enact a resistant subjectivity.

Lorraine Code (1991), writing about positioning oneself in relation to the production of knowledge, describes the notion of the positioned subject. I position myself in opposition to the Jewish knowledge and Jewish history of my parochial education. In writing the thesis as I did, I attempted to engage a different history of Palestine and Israel than the one I was taught growing up<sup>40</sup>. In so doing I position myself in opposition to that version of Jewish history, as a critical and positioned subject.

I also position myself in opposition to much conventional knowledge about Palestinian suicide bombers. In proposing a new understanding of the Palestinian *istishhadi*, I position myself in opposition to a majority of the research literature on the subject. In so doing I insert myself into the thesis as a critical and positioned subject. Performance was central to the development of my position in the thesis. The thesis

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<sup>40</sup> Notably, of a *terra nullus* in Palestine awaiting a Jewish return, and of the miraculous transformation of that land by the Zionist settlers, as described in Chapter 2. That history is encapsulated in two tourist photographs that I took when I visited Israel on a youth trip, over 20 years ago. The first photo is of old stone buildings in the desert, surrounded by sand. The second photo is of a modern city, new buildings surrounded by trees and by flowers, paved roads. The caption under the first photograph, in my own handwriting, reads "Old Jericho". The caption under the second photo reads, "New Jericho". These two photos provide a metaphor for the Zionist transformation of land in historic Palestine into a lush and modern Jewish homeland, and they also provide a metaphor for the history of the Zionist project that I was taught. Unbeknown to us at the time of our visit to Jericho, we were in the West Bank, in Occupied Territory. Looking at these photographs today, for me they also represent the elision of Palestinians as well as the occupation from my experiences in Israel.

would never have been written as it was if not for my performance practice.

## **Conclusion**

This research examined the Palestinian suicide bomber within a larger theoretical framework that analyzed relationships between the body and territory – and by extension the body and the nation – in historic Palestine, a territory that is now home to the state of Israel as well as the occupied West Bank and Gaza. Palestinians and Israelis alike feel a profound and longstanding attachment to the land in historic Palestine: Palestinians to Palestine or *Filistin*, and Israelis to Israel or *Eretz Yisrael*. Both nations also lay claim to this land as national space. Because Palestine/*Filistin* and Israel/*Eretz Yisrael* occupy the same physical or geographical space, this land may be considered contested territory.

However whereas Jews have succeeded in transforming land in historic Palestine into an internationally recognized, Jewish national territory – the state of Israel, Palestinians have so far failed to achieve, or have been denied, a national territory or state. Thus only one nation, Israel, has succeeded in asserting control over this territory as its national territory.

This research identified territorial separation and exclusivity as the cornerstones of Jewish spatial practices in historic Palestine from the end of the 19th century onward. This study also examined spatial practices used by Jews to assert control over Palestinian inhabited territory and to wrest it away from Palestinians. My conclusion is that beginning with the arrival of the first Zionist settlers to historic Palestine, this was achieved primarily through the construction of separate and exclusively Jewish settlements

inside what in 1948 became the internationally-recognized borders of the state of Israel. Since 1967, military occupation, combined with the settlement enterprise, have enabled Israel to assert control over the whole of the West Bank and Gaza. For well over 100 years, settlement construction has been used to transform Palestinian inhabited land, into land controlled exclusively by Jews. Writing in the year 2003, Israeli historian Ilan Troen observes that since the arrival of the first *chalutzim* to Palestine in the 1880s, Zionists/Israelis built nearly 700 villages, towns and cities: 250 of them prior to 1948, and more than 450 of them afterward. In so doing they also de-Arabized historic Palestine (Masalha 1992, Yiftachel 2006, 2001), destroying hundreds of Palestinian Arab villages (Khalidi 1992) and erecting Jewish towns, forests and parks in their places (Massad 2006, Pappé 2006-a).

My conclusion is that the Jewish nation building project profoundly transformed the land in historic Palestine, and it also transformed the European Jewish body there. Through efforts to settle and cultivate the land, the Zionist settlers to Palestine reconfigured the European diaspora Jewish body as a rooted, healthy, strong and powerful body in Palestine, later the state of Israel. The Jewish body has since the arrival of the first European Zionist settlers to Palestine at the end of the 19th century, been produced in a mutually constitutive relationship to territory. In contrast, the Palestinian body has been produced in a relationship to Jewish encroachment on Palestinian inhabited territory, and by extension, a desire to reclaim this territory as Palestinian national territory.

This research examined the Palestinian body in a relationship to territorial encroachment by Jews but also, as a locus of Palestinian resistance. My conclusion is that as Jewish territorial encroachment has continued in Palestine, so too has Palestinian resistance, which has always occurred *in response to* encroachment by Jews onto Palestinian inhabited lands. This study focused a great deal of attention on the Palestinian suicide bomber, considered as a weapon of resistance, and as part of a larger historical trajectory of Palestinian resistance dating back to the 1920s. This research concludes that, like the martyr of the 1920s and 1930s, the *fida'i* of the 1960s and 1970s, and the *shab* of the first *intifada*, the *istishhadi* is linked to Palestinian resistance and to attempts to redeem Palestinian lands from Jewish control and occupation.

Jewish spatial practices in Palestine and in Israel also resulted in the spatial reconfiguration of Palestinian bodies. Between 1947 and 1949 a majority of Palestinians were forcibly uprooted from their lands in what became the state of Israel. Since 1967 but especially so since the start of the al Aqsa intifada in 2000, Israel has used a combination of settlement construction and restrictions on Palestinian movement across territory to spatially confine Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza to enclaves there. Here my conclusion is that in being subjected to severe restrictions on movement, the confined Palestinian body suffers disease, imprisonment and violence, and increasingly, death – what I considered the corporeal effects of occupation.

This research devoted particular attention to the Palestinian *istishhadi*, and it did so using a framework that examined a

larger history of Jewish control asserted over Palestinian territory, and with a focus on Israeli control over the whole of the Occupied Territories. It is my conclusion, contra much of the research literature consulted, that the Israeli occupation provides the primary impetus for Palestinian acts of suicide bombing. And, contra a majority of the research literature consulted for this study, my conclusion is that the *istishhadi*'s act of exploding her/himself is intentional.

Writing about the martyr in painting, Tina Sherwell (2003) observes that through the act of self-sacrifice – the spilling of flesh and blood on the land – the martyr becomes one with the Palestinian homeland. I return to Weiss' remarks (2002-b), about the national territory becoming equivalent to the personal body. Here my conclusion is that commemorative posters of *istishhadi* provide an idealized image of the Palestinian homeland as a whole one, and of the Palestinian nation as strong and powerful one, the same as Israel. They also serve as a reminder of the body's destructive potential. In the case of the Palestinian *istishhadi*, the personal body, in the commemorative posters at least, becomes equivalent to the national territory: it presents an idealized image of the desired Palestinian national territory as a strong and powerful one, the same as Israel.

Over the course of 40-plus years of occupation, Israel has created in the West Bank and Gaza what Agamben (1998) describes as the camp, a permanent spatial arrangement that remains under military rule and exists outside the normal juridical order, a space that exerts absolute control over those confined within it. With the occupation that began in 1967, Israel has not only transformed Palestinians into

ultimate, enemy Others (Peleg 1994), it has transformed them into camp inmates, dare I say prisoners. Confined as they are to enclaves – to unlivable zones or zones of abjection (Butler 1993) – Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza are increasingly subject to Israeli sovereign power (Mbembe 2003), considered as the power over life and death, the power to kill. Israeli practices in the Occupied Territories are preventing Palestinians from living a normal daily life, and they are disproportionately killing large numbers of Palestinians (Gordon 2008).

This research proposed that Palestinians in the West Bank and Gaza, by virtue of their spatial confinement, are excluded from the domain or space of the subject, producing them as non-subjects (Collin 2004, Butler 1993). The thesis theorized the performance of Palestinian martyrdom as an act of resistance, as well as a type of subject formation in response to the occupation and to the constraints it imposes on Palestinian subjectivity. My conclusion is that through performance, the martyr refuses the status of the non-subject. And through performance, the martyr enacts a resistant subjectivity, and one that seeks to put itself on par with Israeli subjectivity and with that of the IDF soldier in particular.

While my conclusion is that Jews have succeeded in transforming and controlling territory in Palestine and later in Israel and the Occupied Territories, the question for me, importantly is, At what cost? Palestinian inhabited territory in the West Bank is perhaps irrevocably fragmented by the Jewish settlements and other construction projects. Gaza's political, economic, and agricultural infrastructure, since

Operation Cast Lead in particular, has been almost completely destroyed. Even Jewish-Israeli society has to some extent been internally fragmented by the issue of the occupation and the settlements.

Palestinians continue to be restricted to zones of abjection in the West Bank and Gaza, and the spaces within which they may assert control over daily life are shrinking, constrained by an increasingly deadly occupation. And while Israelis are capable of asserting an exponentially greater amount of control over their daily lives, they are still not completely secure in their national homeland: Israelis live under the threat of missile fire into Israel, from within the zones of abjection and from Gaza in particular.

The Separation Barrier and restrictions on Palestinian movement have since 2004 by and large prevented the body of the Palestinian suicide bomber from exploding inside Israel. Yet Palestinian groups, notably Hamas, continue to target Israel, firing Qassam rockets over barriers and fences into Israel. Launched over the shoulder of the Hamas operative, the Qassam rocket becomes a sort of prosthetic. The Palestinian body continues to be deployed as a weapon of resistance, and it continues to target Israelis, in Israel.

My conclusion is that until the occupation ends, until Palestinians are able to truly assert control over a viable, contiguous and sovereign national territory; until Palestinians can invent themselves as they desire as national subjects in a sovereign national homeland, these conditions of violence will persist. So too will the enactment of

violent and deadly Israeli and Palestinian subjectivities, as embodied, notably, by the IDF soldier and the *istishhadi*.

My conclusions derive from scholarly research. They also derive from the act of performance. It would have been impossible to arrive at these conclusions had I not engaged in a sustained process of performance.

When I began this research I was swayed by literature that posited the Palestinian suicide bomber as the product of religious fanaticism, personal circumstances, and despair. I initially turned to performance in order to substantiate these claims about motive. Unexpectedly, my performance of material under study over a sustained period of time, prompted me to radically reconsider the assertions in the research literature, together with my own assumptions about motive. Performance spurred me to position myself more assertively and more critically in response to the research literature. It made me realize that I had to expand the scope of my research beyond this source material. It was my performance that produced a substantial shift in the thesis, toward a focus on corporeality, performance and intentionality, and later, as a result of scholarly investigations, subjectivity. Performance inspired these new directions in the thesis: this research would never have coalesced as it has, without my having engaged in this process of performance.

I performed and re-performed material under consideration in the thesis, for two years. I came to understand this process as one of responsibility to the Other, through the work of Emmanuel Levinas. Levinas (1981), writing about subjectivity,

observes that responsibility manifests as putting oneself in the place of the other (1981). Through performance, I put myself in the place of the Palestinian suicide bomber over an extended period of time. I came to understand my performance as a type of responsibility to the Palestinian suicide bomber: a responsibility to attempt an understanding of their actions outside of my preconceived assumptions and outside of conventional scholarship on the subject. Accordingly, the thesis proposes a new understanding of the Palestinian suicide bomber *other than* a majority of the literature on the subject, literature produced within the field of terrorism and security studies.

In so doing I join a growing number of scholars who are attempting something similar, that is, to arrive at a new understanding of the Palestinian *istishhadi*. Some have done so in the field of anthropology (Hage 2003, Abufarha 2009), others in moral philosophy (Asad 2007, Law 2008, Honderich 2002, 2003), some in postcolonial studies (Mbembe 2003), visual culture (Abu Hashhash 2006), Islamic theology (Khosrokhavar 2005), media/feminist studies (Hasso 2005, Naaman 2007), and memorial practices (Allen 2006-a, Khalili 2007). I have done so primarily in the field of performance studies. It is within this developing body of literature that I choose to situate my thesis, and to which I make my original research contribution.

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## List of works presented on the enclosed DVDs

### DVD #1

Jpegs images on DVD:

- Vinebaum\_1      *Self-portrait as neo-Nazi* (2004)  
Performance-based, self-portrait image.  
Digital image.
- Vinebaum\_2      *After Lucia* (2006)  
Performance-based, self-portrait image.  
Print size 60 x 96 inches.
- Vinebaum\_3      *Self-portrait as Palestinian martyr (You've  
come a long way baby)* (2004)  
Digital image.  
Performance-based, self-portrait image.
- Vinebaum\_4      *Patriot Act* (2005)  
Performance-based, self-portrait image  
Print size 60 x 102 inches.
- Vinebaum\_5      From the diptych *Patriot Acts* (2006)  
Performance-based, self-portrait image.  
60 x 96 inches.
- Vinebaum\_6      From the diptych *Patriot Acts* (2006)  
Performance-based, self-portrait image.  
60 x 96 inches.
- Vinebaum\_7      *Patriot Acts* (diptych 2006)  
Performance-based, self-portrait images.
- Vinebaum\_8      *Concrete infinity Gaza Project* (2009)  
23 framed texts with photographs, one for  
every day of Operation Cast Lead in Gaza  
(December 27, 2008 – January 18, 2009)  
Wall installation, approximately 10 x 4 feet.
- Vinebaum\_9      Detail, *Concrete infinity Gaza Project*  
Text for December 29, 2008 (handwritten log

of everything I did that day, with  
photograph).  
8 x 10 inches.

Vinebaum\_10      Detail, *Concrete infinity Gaza Project*  
Text for January 14, 2009 (handwritten log of  
everything I did that day, with photograph).  
8 x 10 inches.

Vinebaum\_work      A PowerPoint document containing these  
images.

blow\_up.mov      A QuickTime version of the video *Blow Up*  
Also included on a self-playing DVD, see  
below.

**DVD #2**

*Blow Up*      Video, PAL, 2005.  
Video plays automatically in any DVD player  
or on any computer (Mac and/or PC).