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Natanel, Katherine Louise (2013) *Active (dis)engagement: the gendered production of political apathy in Israel*. PhD Thesis. SOAS, University of London

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Active (Dis)engagement:
The Gendered Production of Political Apathy in Israel

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Thesis submitted for the degree of PhD in Gender Studies

2013

Centre for Gender Studies

Faculty of Law and Social Sciences

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Signed: *Katherine L Natanel*   Date: 28 January 2014

For David Snelling, Gary Johnson and Ann Glogau Bibi,

who taught me the importance of listening and laughter.

Thesis Abstract

Ma la'asot? 'What can we do?'

Spoken with a sigh and a shrug of the shoulders, this sentiment often brings to a close the tense pause which follows discussions of *ha sichsuch*, 'the quarrel,' in Israel-Palestine. As expressed by Leftist Jewish Israelis, the phrase *ma la'asot* becomes a way of conveying political emotions of despair, helplessness and disappointment at the same time as it presents a practical question of power. Faced with the seeming intractability of conflict, the interminability of a stalled peace process and increasing social and political conservatism, those Jewish Israelis opposed to Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories find themselves at loose ends: what to do indeed?

While an extensive body of research critically engages with 'the Israeli-Palestinian conflict' through lenses including history, political economy and activism, this thesis shifts focus to the production of stasis. In considering *how things stay the same,* we might better understand the roots and routes of how they may become different. Drawing upon one year of ethnographic research with Jewish Israelis living in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, this thesis explores the processes, practices and beliefs which sustain normalcy in conditions of conflict. Central to this investigation is gender – as an aspect of subjectivity, relation of power and ordering principle of state and society, gender is integral to the conduct of everyday life and the maintenance of political realities. Thus, this thesis asks what a gender analysis of Jewish Israeli society might tell us about the trajectory of 'Israel-Palestine,' what the textures of normalcy, apathy and stasis mean for our visions of the future.

Moving through degrees of division and entanglement, modes of avoidance and activism, sites of investment and withdrawal, and instantiations of normalcy and rupture, this thesis foregrounds the gendered subjectivities and sociality central to the production and maintenance of power in Israel-Palestine. By attempting to unpick to relationship between gender and political stasis, this thesis ultimately looks to domination in hopes of finding new paths to transformation.

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Introduction
Bruchim Ha'Baim [Welcome]

"Now you are free," he says with a smile.

The workshop has come to a close and slowly I make my way west, home to Tel Aviv from Birzeit University in the Occupied West Bank. The last two days have marked my first independent trip to the West Bank and Occupied Territories – not part of an activist tour or solidarity initiative as a matter of research, this time I travelled to Ramallah and Birzeit to attend a workshop hosted by the Institute for Women's Studies at Birzeit University in partnership with Warwick University, United Kingdom. Remarkable for the political commitment and academic rigour demonstrated by those present at the workshop, the kindness extended by shopkeepers and strangers in the city, and the intense beauty of the surrounding hills burned pink and orange at sunrise and sunset, my time in the West Bank feels cathartic. Upon leaving the university campus at the close of the session I was apprehensive at the thought of passing through Qalandia checkpoint on the way to East Jerusalem – this would not be the first time I experienced the protocols and practices of Israel's border policies, but it felt a 'first' as someone who had transgressed the occupation in a manner aligned with my politics and potential. As I nervously readied to travel the distance from Birzeit to Qalandia, other workshop participants recounted stories of mobility restricted and denied as Palestinian residents of the West Bank. Confined to the areas surrounding home and university, limited to travel within the West Bank, allowed entry solely into East Jerusalem – each woman spelled out different terms of her seeming incarceration. In contrast, my trepidation at border crossing was a privilege.

On the bus I am the only non-Palestinian passenger, staring out the window with wide eyes as iconic images come into focus upon the looming grey Wall: a young Yassir Arafat, a girl holding balloons drawn by Banksy – a creature beside her offers another floating globe to add to the clutch which might lift her over the wall, "Do you need more, little girl?" – graffiti in English intended for an international audience and their cameras. The bus stops. The passengers exit and I try to stay on board. "See if they are nice today," the driver suggests with a shrug when I tell him that I had heard

international travellers are occasionally allowed to remain on the bus with the ill and elderly rather than queuing for the turnstiles and document check. Two soldiers board: a man and woman who look as if they are barely out of high school. The woman checks IDs of those still on the bus, while the man stands behind her with a hulking weapon. They arrive to my seat. I smile. She checks my passport and orders me off the bus to the queue behind the fence.

In the growing heat we stand clumped together behind the wire fence, not pushing, not shouting, but not pleased – the wait is long and irritating. Many around me are students, with books and backpacks, and I am struck by the difference to my commute in London where travelling to university on the Tube at times felt trying. Held like cattle behind the fence, some chat while others, like me, look out at lanes of traffic and auto bays where soldiers and private security agents inspect cars with guns at the ready. They largely seem bored, these agents of the Israeli state, laughing, joking and scuffling between vehicles, inspecting languidly and shouting derisively when needed. We wait for the turnstiles, slowly drawing nearer. These gates – similar to those permitting entrance to Tel Aviv University and the touristic Dead Sea beaches – allow approximately five people to pass between each 'click' and 'beep,' sometimes more and sometimes less. They seem to start and stop randomly, jarring and embarrassing whomever attempts to pass when the gate jams. *Click! Thunk.* The woman ahead of me gets jammed, looks back at her friends and carries on chatting from within the cage of metal bars. Around me others talk, text and wait – I feel there is some kind of solidarity in this waiting and slamming, that there is something subversively routine about it, that the laughter and conversation of those around me should embarrass the young Israeli soldiers, though they think nothing of it.

Green light. *Click! Beep!* Go. I am sandwiched between two young men in black t-shirts as my turn in the stiles arrives. *Click! Thunk.* The man ahead of me is jammed. My eyes are wide, my heart is racing. He leans against the wall between the bars, waiting. Green light. *Click! Beep!* Go. I am through the turnstile and follow what I have seen others do: place bags on the x-ray conveyor belt, walk to the large window with more soldiers at the ready. I press my passport to the window as those before me have done, only to be directed to use the scanner – as an American citizen my documents are more 'advanced' than the various paper permits issued to different categories of Palestinians. Waved through, I grab my bags and wait again for another

turnstile and green light – the inner sanctum is protected on both ends. Green light. *Click! Beep!* Go. I step out into the exit chute with one more turnstile to pass before reaching the line of empty buses. I sigh in relief and turn to thank the young man behind me, whose subtle guidance – through nods and gestures – made my border crossing less confusing, humiliating, frustrating and frightening than it might have been otherwise.

"Now you are free," he says with a smile.[1]

Occupation Unravelled

Emerging through the account above is an image of occupation, colonisation and domination in the context of Israel-Palestine, as experienced and understood by a white, middle-class American feminist researcher who possesses the social and economic capital – *the privilege* – to cross a boundary which divides relative freedom from daily experiences of oppression. Clear within this narrative are relations of power, modes of regulation, technologies of control and even sites of contestation as a bus is emptied of its human cargo at the behest of security, demarcating zones of 'here' and 'there' along with categories of 'us' and 'them' within the material terrain of a military checkpoint. Here identities are suspected and confirmed, threat is assessed and dispelled, and belonging is differentially produced and denied as individuals traverse the threshold ostensibly separating Israel from Palestine. Whether citizen-soldiers, occupied subjects or doctoral researchers, the movement of bodies across and within a constructed border paints a familiar picture to those who would see it: guns, walls and fences; youth, aggression and barely checked power; humiliation, frustration, fatigue and steadfastness. Yet remaining hidden in relation to this image of domination is the other side of the checkpoint, what lies beyond the turnstiles once the final green light is granted. Certainly, the Israeli state commands a robust tourism industry replete with campaigns and advertisements ushering visitors into the dusty antiquity of Jerusalem's Old City lanes and the European modernity of Tel Aviv's cafes and beaches. So too scholarship and analyses critical of Israel's 46-year occupation of the Palestinian Territories and annexation of East Jerusalem and the

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[1] Field notes, 13 April 2011.

Golan Heights makes visible the political economy which continues to connect Israel with Palestine, despite ostensible separation. Through the circulation of these discourses, images and critiques we indeed *see* Israel – sometimes modern, liberal and democratic, other times repressive, colonialist and despotic. However, rarely do we travel the road from Qalandia through Jerusalem to Tel Aviv in order to ask how its end might produce and maintain its beginning, how lives made possible and liveable on the shores of the Mediterranean Sea might depend upon lives constrained and even cut short in the hills of Birzeit and Ramallah.

Green light. *Click! Beep!* Go.

In a journey beyond the checkpoint, this thesis attempts to make visible the micro-political logics which produce and maintain the material realities, practices and experiences conveyed through the account above. Beyond the turnstiles and soldiers of Qalandia, a coach travels to the East Jerusalem bus station and a researcher walks toward the city's west in order to board a *monit sherut*, or mini-bus, bound for Tel Aviv. This vehicle passes Jewish Orthodox neighbourhoods before reaching the highway which winds westward toward the White City, where restaurants bustle and hum as the sun sets blazing orange in blue waters behind the beachfront boardwalk. At the road's end lies a kind of normalcy which appears entirely disparate from everyday life in the West Bank, where even in relatively affluent Ramallah an elderly man turns earth with a donkey and plough in a tiny plot, if one walks far enough into the Tahta neighbourhood at sunrise. Yet despite its seeming polarity, normalcy at the (Jewish Israeli) end of the road relies upon and arises through the relations of power which necessitate agricultural subsistence within cityscapes, lock academics at Birzeit University within metaphorical and material prison cells, and fashion understandings of 'freedom' through experiences of oppression at the border. Read thus, *continuity* replaces disparity as occupation, colonisation and domination trace a thread binding Israel with Palestine and Jewish Israelis with Palestinians.

In an attempt to provide texture and complexity to this continuity, through gender analysis this thesis shifts focus to consider the production and maintenance of stasis. Contributing to a growing body of critical research which engages with Israel-Palestine through lenses including history (Shlaim 2000, 2010; Abu El-Haj 2001; Masalha 2003; Khalidi 2006; Pappe 2006; Pappe and Hilal 2010), sociology (Lentin

2000; Shafir and Peled 2002; Ron 2003), political economy (Gordon 2008; Hever 2010; Abdo 2011) critical geography (Yiftachel 2006; Weizman 2007) and activism (De Jong 2011; Richter-Devroe 2011, 2012; Weizman 2013), this thesis appraises the attitudes and actions of Jewish Israelis with regard to the occupied Palestinian Territories and annexed East Jerusalem in the hopes that by understanding *how things stay the same,* we might better understand the roots and routes of how they may become different. Here political inaction and disengagement emerge as underwritten by so much knowing, caring, seeing, feeling and doing, as gender analysis reveals degrees of division and entanglement, modes of avoidance and activism, sites of investment and withdrawal, and instantiations of normalcy and rupture in a context of domination. Through centralising the relations which bind subjectivities with sociality and wider political realities, this thesis draws Israel together with Palestine and in doing so asks what the textures of normalcy, apathy and stasis might mean for our visions of the future.

The Trouble with Normalcy

Within the context of a widely perceived two-sided conflict between categories of '(Jewish) Israelis' and 'Palestinians' (Hilal and Pappe 2010: 6), the desire for and construction of normality constitutes a growing, if marginal, area of study. In shifting focus from rupturing events to "the monotony of an unresolved conflict," the mundane is appraised as a site wherein "aborted events and frustrated expectations" might accumulate with significant implications for both stasis and transformation (Allen 2013: 27). Primarily undertaken by anthropologists working with Palestinian communities in the West Bank, studies of normalcy depict "getting by" Israel's occupation, adapting to its disruption of daily life, violence visited upon bodies and dislocation from homes and histories. Lori Allen's (2005, 2008) work in the West Bank highlights the particular kind of agency which accompanies "getting used to it," or *Taw'wwudna* [Arabic], in practices of managing and adapting to the dynamism of occupation during the second *intifada*, as individuals and communities "tame violence" and reincorporate the extreme into the ordinary. Tobias Kelly's (2008) scholarship unfolds during the same period in the West Bank and looks to the ways in which the desire for "ordinary life" in a context of sustained political violence may take on political and ethical charges, as aspiration critically reflects the gap between what "is" and what "ought to be." Penny Johnson, Lamis Abu Nahleh and Annelies Moors

(2009) present comparative scholarship focusing on marriage practises during the first and second *intifadas*, again drawing attention to how the routinisation of violence in the latter uprising extended to practices of everyday life, as "political marriages" were supplanted by the material displays which characterised a more quiescent pre-*intifada* period. In her post-*intifadas* work with Palestinian women in the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Israel, Sophie Richter-Devroe (2011) foregrounds how the pursuit of normalcy and joy might constitute acts of resistance not only to the Israeli occupation, but also to internal Palestinian power structures rooted in patriarchal and social forms of control.

Collectively, this scholarship reveals critical aspects of conflict previously elided by a focus on violent events and macro-level politics, insisting that survival, *sumud* [Arabic: steadfastness] and normalcy can tell us something new about power in Israel-Palestine. Then what is fundamentally *different* about these practices, processes, ideals and aspirations among Jewish Israelis who share this frame of conflict with Palestinians? While methods of "getting by" practiced by Palestinian populations – from travel patterns (Allen 2008; Richter-Devroe 2011) to modes of commemoration (Khalili 2007; Allen 2008), narration (Sayigh 1998; Allen 2008; Kassem 2011), marriage (Johnson, Abu Nahleh and Moors 2009; Jad 2009) and desire (Kelly 2008) – might be mirrored in mechanisms developed by Jewish Israelis, these latter practices unfold in relation to domination not as 'subject to,' but rather 'productive of.' With power at play within and among structures of practice (de Certeau 1984; Mitchell 1990), longing for a normal life then assumes a function and value apart from the normalisation of uncertainty, fear, violence and despair among Palestinians, while remaining subject to these very forces.

The trouble with normalcy among Jewish Israelis is precisely what it produces, elides and maintains in Israel-Palestine. Emerging in tandem with conflict and occupation, among Jewish Israelis normalcy operates in part through its capacity to gloss, streamline and consolidate, promising a sense of stability and certainty within the precarity of everyday life. Yet paradoxically, here normalcy depends upon that which it purports to overcome or erase, becoming a way of life and state of mind among those whose relative power and privilege require maintenance of the *status quo*. In this, a state of flourishing appears to exist despite conflict while taking root in its very perpetuation, an apparent contradiction which makes possible "the good life" (see

Mendel 2009, 2013; Vick 2010; Ochs 2011; Simon 2012; Deger 2012; Natanel 2013). At risk of becoming a euphemism in the context of Israel-Palestine, 'conflict' remains central to normality even as the term effectively renders invisible multiple lines of division and sites of contestation, including those internal to a society which seeks to maintain its primacy. So too 'occupation' becomes stitched into the fabric of everyday life while adherence to this term potentially masks how Israel's control of Palestinian lands and population depends not only upon ostensibly temporary military force, but also upon the development of social and political infrastructure, systems of economic and judicial regulation, and practices of territorial sequestration and confiscation consistent with settler colonialism (see Khalidi 1992; Kimmerling 1983; Shafir 1989, 1999; Abu El-Haj 2001; Masalha 2003; Hajjar 2005; Khalidi 2006; Massad 2006; Pappe 2006; Yiftachel 2006; Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008; Lentin 2008; Weizman 2013). While normalcy in differential contexts does not remain free from relations of power, its pursuit among Jewish Israelis serves to produce, elide and maintain colonisation, annexation, segregation, blockade, de-development, displacement and dispossession – key aspects of 'conflict' and 'occupation' in Israel-Palestine. Thus underwritten by structures of privilege and power, at stake in Jewish Israeli normalcy is the perpetuation of domination.

Ma La'asot?

While the above discussion sheds light upon the ties binding normality with conflict and domination in Israel-Palestine, this is not to suggest that all Jewish Israelis actively consent to participation. Rather, *hegemony* makes visible the ways in which domination may be secured through both active and passive assent, creating the possibility that even those who resist or oppose may become implicated in the maintenance of power. As advanced by Antonio Gramsci (1971), 'hegemony' has been widely translated into popular discourse as 'common sense,' a given order which seems natural, inevitable and enduring. In this parlance, hegemony provides the stability and values from which individual decisions are made, beliefs shaped and courses of action pursued, firmly embedding the individual within a wider collectivity. Yet as developed by Gramsci (1971), at its inception hegemony speaks directly to *domination*, or the securing of control through leadership. For Gramsci (1971: 52-53), hegemony provides the means by which a dominant group maintains its position of leadership through passive or active sanction by subordinate or subaltern social groups.

Dependent only partially upon material force or coercion, domination relies upon processes of "continuous absorption" made possible through mechanisms and apparatuses of political, moral and intellectual influence and attraction (Gramsci 1971: 58-60). Collectively, these structures and relations generate the conditions of normality, the 'common sense' of everyday life in a given context.

Thus through hegemony, the possibility arises that those who articulate and even practice resistance might become 'absorbed' into domination. Importantly, within the context of Israel-Palestine hegemony provides a means through which to appraise how the political despair articulated by many Jewish Israelis opposed to occupation and annexation bolsters the very practices and policies in question. Indeed, at its inception this research project sought to unpick the sense of disillusionment and inefficacy reflected in the phrase "*Ma la'asot?*" [What can we do?], which trails open-ended at the close of conversations with self-described political Leftists.[2] More than purely rhetorical, this query relays a sense of shared fatalism, hopelessness and disenchantment with action, accompanied by an admission that action indeed *should be* taken.

This very tension – when knowledge of what occurs is met with inaction or effacement[3] – points toward *apathy*, a socio-political phenomenon examined to a limited extent in other contexts.[4] Framed primarily in terms of detachment and declining political participation (Rosenberg 1954; Sevy 1983; Boyer 1984; Eliasoph 1997, 1998; Dolan and Holbrook 2001; Hay 2007), explicit studies of apathy undertaken by political scientists and sociologists are complimented by psychological and anthropological approaches which connect these practices to interpersonal and intimate dimensions. Here "alienation" in Argentina and Libya (Auyero 2007; al-Werfalli 2011) meets with cynicism and "getting by" among Palestinians (Allen 2005, 2008, 2013; Kelly 2008; Johnson, Abu Nahleh and Moors 2009; Richter-Devroe

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[2] This Left-to-Right political spectrum is specific to Jewish Israeli society and Israel-Palestine; as detailed in the following chapters, here categories of political Left and Right are defined largely in relation to matters of conflict and security.

[3] Thanks to Laleh Khalili for this concise working definition; email communication 5 April 2011.

[4] Studies focusing on 'political apathy' have been primarily conducted in the United States and United Kingdom, though Hay's (2007) work extends to include a wider spectrum of member states in the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD).

2011) and "denial" in studies of political violence and the Holocaust (Cohen 2001). Though remaining largely undefined in this collective body of work, apathy emerges enmeshed with wider global trends, a relational and social process, bound to attitude and perception, and rooted in subjective aspects of emotion and desire. Yet in its conceptual thickness how can 'apathy' account for the participation of 66.6 per cent of the voting public in the January 2013 elections in Israel (*Ha'aretz* 2013)? Is this apathy at all?

Political disenchantment and inaction among Jewish Israelis presents a complex and contradictory puzzle, at times active and engaged yet deeply and intimately dispassionate. When coupled with conditions of sustained conflict, here appraisals of *what we should do* break against the limitations of *what we can do* given the seeming enormity and impossibility of the wider context. In adhering to the frame of apathy to explain the ways in which the construction of normalcy secures domination even through resistance, this thesis asks us to rethink our assumptions around the term: can apathy involve action and care? What are its textures, mechanisms and logics? How does it shape selves, communities and realities? Here apathy is not solely a matter of political practice or participation, but emerges from the tensions between conflict and normalcy, politics and intimacy, as these assumed dualisms collapse to produce and maintain domination. In this thesis apathy is conceptualised as *active disengagement*, a tension captured by the following query:

> When a desire to change the *status quo* is simultaneously accompanied by recognition of implication in its production and maintenance, what does this do?

Expressed in the knowing admission, "I am a part of it, whether I like it or not," for many research participants this tension results in a seeming paralysis underwritten by knowing, caring, seeing, feeling and doing. Apathy then presents a complex relation which draws together subjects and interpersonal relations with institutions, society and state. Importantly, as this thesis will illustrate, active disengagement among Jewish Israelis is critically structured and made possible through hegemonic patterns of gender emerging at the level of everyday life.

The Politics of Everyday Life

From scholarship by James C. Scott (1985) to Diane Singerman (1995) and Asef Bayat (1997, 2010), the everyday has increasingly become a site of investigation into the complex relationships framing politics, power and social relations. Whether "everyday forms of resistance" in Malaysia (Scott 1985), "the quiet encroachment of the ordinary" in Iran (Bayat 1997) or "popular political expression" in Egypt (Singerman 1995), studies of the mundane reveal structures of practice (de Certeau 1984: xv-xvi) shaping subjectivities and lived realities across diverse contexts. Collectively, this scholarship demonstrates how "[…] a relation (always social) determines its terms, and not the reverse, and … each individual is a locus in which an incoherent (and often contradictory) plurality of such relational determinations interact" (de Certeau 1984: xi). In using this prism of the everyday or ordinary, scholars of Israel-Palestine have produced critical ethnographies linking subjects and social relations with Israel's continuing occupation of the Palestinian Territories. Whether centring on (Jewish) Israeli or Palestinian narratives, experiences or practices, these accounts provide glimpses into the textures and machinations of daily life while revealing individual strategies and structural frameworks for negotiating sustained political violence. From Julie Peteet's (1994) first *intifada* account of beatings and imprisonment turned masculine rites of passage among Palestinian men in the West Bank to Juliana Ochs' (2011) second *intifada* ethnography of security and suspicion as embodied practices linking Jewish Israeli subjects with the state, these insights into daily actions and perceptions shed significant light upon long-term trends and processes.

Echoing sentiments that power may circulate and operate most effectively where it is least obvious (Gramsci 1971; Foucault 1998 [1978]; Mitchell 1990), the move to foreground the ordinary in contexts characterised by conflict highlights processes of repair and maintenance in conjunction with interruption. As scholars of violence convincingly demonstrate, conflict may be sewn into the constitutive fabric of the everyday in ways less obvious and more pervasive than determined through a sole focus on violent events (Scheper-Hughes 1992; Das 2007). In the context of Israel-Palestine, this shift to the mundane additionally facilitates the meeting of scholarship located on either 'side' of the presumed divide between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. Through the everyday, narratives of suspicion and politics of security

practices among Jewish Israelis (Konopinski 2009; Ochs 2011) might indeed share a frame with accounts of *sumud*, or steadfastness, practiced by Palestinian residents of the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (Allen 2008; Kelly 2008; Johnson, Abu Nahleh and Moors 2009; Shalhoub-Kevorkian 2009; Richter-Devroe 2011). Through this lens, we might ultimately "sense the political" (Navaro-Yashin 2003) beneath the guise of stasis and normality which makes domination possible.

Reading Power

Yet in order to appraise the presence of politics and the circulation of power within these everyday structures of practice – to insist that a shared frame of analysis does not imply parity – there must be a shift to "defamiliarise" the everyday, to "make strange" the ordinary for purposes of drawing attention to the inconspicuous (Highmore 2002: 22).[5] Framed by a historical legacy and continuing commitment to "telling stories differently" (Hemmings 2011), feminist gender analysis presents one such "interruptive strategy" (Brecht 1964 cited in Highmore 2002: 23). As an aspect of subjectivity, relation of power and structure of states and societies, gender remains integral to the practices of everyday life; though often elided, gender itself exists as a structure of practice. To foreground gender as a political and analytical category, then, is potentially to estrange the ordinary, particularly in studies of conflict and domination whose histories of gender-blindness limit the scope of both understanding and transformation. Applying feminist gender analysis in search of power in the everyday is to ask critical questions of norms and normality, of divisions assumed static, of valuated space, place and politics. Indeed, as illustrated by feminist scholars such as Cynthia Enloe (1989, 2010) and Diane Singerman (1995), the ostensibly *de*politicised or *a*political spaces of the everyday domestic act as significant sites and forums for political thought, expression and action. Maligned as "low politics" vis-à-vis the "high politics" of states and elites, the too-neat division of private realms – associated with family and women – from those deemed 'public' exists an already political act (Singerman 1995: 5-9; Yuval-Davis 1997: 80). In contexts of war, conflict and violence, often characterised as particularly masculinised enterprises (Cohn 1987; Enloe 1989; Cockburn 2007; Segal 2008), this imposed separation impacts access to political voice and available registers for action just as it influences

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[5] Highmore's imperative follows on Bertolt Brecht's theory of estrangement, as delineated in work by Frederick Jameson (1991 cited in Highmore 2002: 22-24).

academic analyses (Enloe 2010: 22), shaping and reflecting prevailing roles, norms, codes and relations.

However, a feminist gender analysis of everyday life among Jewish Israelis cannot unfold solely on the plane of those relations, codes and roles established between categories of women and men. Rather, in order to fulfil its interruptive potential this analysis must account for contradiction, complexity and interrelation, and in doing so problematise and extend beyond those more obvious divisions between 'us' and 'them' to reveal what lies at stake in the production and maintenance of power. Thus the lens adopted must be intersectional, attentive to "the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts" (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76). In this it must be postcolonial, concerned with the histories, legacies and continuing processes of empire and colonialism, as well as the ways in which these projects impact not only those subjected to domination, but also who participate in subjection (Fanon 1963; Said 1978; Mohanty 1988; Spivak 1994). So too a power-sensitive feminist gender analysis of the everyday must be transnational in scope, insistent upon the links binding local contexts, nations and states with global trends and processes, along with the embeddedness of practices within wider frames of neoliberal capitalism, globalisation, militarisation and geopolitics (Grewal and Kaplan 2000; Mohanty 2003; Shohat 2006; Riley, Mohanty and Pratt 2008; Al-Ali and Pratt 2009; Khalili 2011). With this critical means of estranging the ordinary and defamiliarising the everyday, the structures, practices, processes and beliefs which produce and sustain power begin to come into focus, along with the costs of their maintenance.

Boundaries Of and In the Field

In looking to everyday Jewish Israeli life to reveal the textures of apathy as it produces and maintains domination in Israel-Palestine, boundaries must be drawn around territory, population and locality for the purposes of analysis. Importantly, in a feminist attempt to "tell stories differently" (Hemmings 2011) this thesis does not include an extended methodology section which appraises the strengths and weaknesses of diverse techniques and disciplinary frames, detailing the route through which the conduct of research was ultimately decided. Rather, throughout the

subsequent chapters of the thesis I practice the chosen methodology, from the inclusion of auto-ethnographic material to in-depth readings of key interview narratives. As such, the reader does not gain a sense of methods and methodological approaches opted against, nor is she privy to what remains unseen through these choices in research design. However, through this manner of story telling the reader is woven seamlessly into the fabric of everyday life in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, allowing her to understand its complexity and contradictions more fully.

Academically and politically, I practice and advocate engagement with the totality of 'Israel-Palestine,' emphasising interrelation and connection rather than adhering to the principle of separation (Weizman 2007: 161-184; Gordon 2008: 197-222) which maintains physical, intellectual and ideological divisions between 'us' and 'them,' 'here' and 'there.' As this thesis will demonstrate, Israel exists inextricably bound with Palestine as Jewish Israeli society remains entangled with Palestinian citizens and subjects – to offer an analysis of 'Israel' without reference to 'Palestine' would be politically dubious and empirically misrepresentative. Ultimately, I support the establishment of a single secular multi-national democratic state, with substantive reparations extended to those who have suffered displacement and loss at the hands of the colonial project.[6] Yet in order to reach this horizon, we must first understand the operation of power as it maintains the *status quo*. Thus, in thinking toward how we might conceive of 'Israel-Palestine' as a political reality rather than solely a pre-figurative state of mind, I chose to study the political community of Jewish Israelis – those actors who dominate within the broader context – as enmeshed with 'other' collectivities. Here, I find foundation in Hannah Arendt's (1998 [1958]: 63-64) discussion of the *polis*: enclosed and divided by a series of walls and wall-like laws which separated public from private and interior from exterior, the Greek city yielded a political community explicitly through structures of inclusion and exclusion. As these walls shelter, protect and separate, so too they create the communities whose interests drive collective politics and shape the contours of wider political realities. Within Israel-Palestine my concern lies with those who have historically possessed the

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[6] This state must be established through consensus and redress the erasure of peoples, homes and histories – this is not the single Israeli Apartheid state which is increasingly becoming 'fact on the ground.'

political, legal, economic and discursive ability to construct and destroy these walls at will: Jewish Israelis.

Yet numerous lines of differentiation cleave the category 'Jewish Israeli,' even while constructed to consolidate national identity and political community. Experienced through intersecting vectors of gender, race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, generation, religion and geopolitical location, 'Jewish Israeliness' cannot be understood as monolithic. Rather relations of power and privilege circulate within the ranks of those who dominate; indeed, membership in a group does not guarantee uniform privilege, enfranchisement or belonging. In keeping with the contours of hegemony among Jewish Israelis, this research focuses primarily upon the experiences, attitudes, beliefs, practices and aspirations of secular middle-class heterosexual Ashkenazi[7] Jewish Israelis in relation to 'conflict.' Even as the face of Israel's elected government changes over time – differentially including Mizrahi,[8] Russian, Ethiopian, Druze and Palestinian representatives – Ashkenazi citizens continue to enjoy privilege and shape norms within Jewish Israeli society as a result of a history of ideological, political, economic and social dominance (Shafir and Peled 2002: 88; Sasson-Levy 2013: 28, 33). Intersecting with normative narratives, images and ideals of 'Israeliness' constructed through race, class, gender, religiosity and sexuality (Boyarin 1997; Lentin 2000; Kimmerling 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002), ethnic identity remains central to domination and its study in Israel-Palestine. Thus while Mizrahi Jews now comprise the majority of Israel's Jewish population rather than Ashkenazim (Lavie 2011: 57; Abdo 2011: 89; Sasson-Levy 2013: 32) – and this latter category's secular and middle-class proportions are admittedly in decline – an analytical focus on the minority constitutes a political decision. Following Orna Sasson-Levy (2013: 33), despite changing demographics in Israel "[…] Ashkenaziness can be viewed as a resource, a form of symbolic capital that in turn grants access to additional resources." As Israel's Ashkenazi citizens continue to define the contours of hegemony among Jewish Israelis through current claims to power and the historical exercise of

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[7] Though specific to Jews of Eastern European origin, the term 'Ashkenazi' has been extended within Jewish Israeli society to include those Jews immigrating to Israel from Europe and America; this thesis employs the inclusive understanding unless otherwise stated. Recent critical scholarship by Orna Sasson-Levy (2013) details how this ethnic group has been constructed as Israel's 'white' Jews, enjoying relative privilege and possessing features in common with whiteness in the United States.

[8] 'Mizrahi' describes Jews of North African or Middle Eastern origin.

dominance (Gramsci 1977: 333), this research project is concerned with their (in)action and influence.

With these boundaries established, in October 2010 I departed London for Tel Aviv and twelve months of field research in Israel-Palestine. Chosen for their differing proximities to the Occupied Palestinian Territories and histories of political violence, active research centred on Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, Israel's two main population centres. In addition to sharing the relative political, economic, social and historical privilege enjoyed by residents of urban locales vis-à-vis rural towns, villages, *kibbutzim* and *moshavim* (Yiftachel 2006: 223),[9] these cities provided both contrast and continuity within Israel's internationally recognised 1949 Armistice Agreements borders (Shlaim 2000: 41-47; Shlaim 2010: 31).[10] Indeed, riven by the 'seam zone' separating (Jewish) West Jerusalem from (Palestinian) East, everyday life in Jerusalem is commonly juxtaposed with Tel Aviv, where a cosmopolitan city meets the waters of the Mediterranean Sea; yet within both sites Jewish Israelis desire, pursue and practice normalcy within a shared national frame.

During the course of research, I conducted 29 in-depth semi-structured interviews in each location, contacting participants through 'snowball sampling' largely made possible by the support and social networks of my Jewish Israeli family and friends.[11] In the interest of exploring gender as an explicitly *relational* structure, these 58 interviews were evenly split between Jewish Israeli women and men who defined themselves as politically 'Leftist' and were above the age of conscription;[12] the project's generational range thus extends from early 20s to mid-80s, even as its

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[9] *Kibbutzim* and *moshavim* are two forms of rural collective organisation in Israel; while both emphasise community labour and agriculture, *kibbutzim* often demonstrate an ideological (socialist) subscription to shared wealth among members, whereas *moshavim* permit individual ownership and are rooted in "the ideology of the family" (Nevo 1991: 276).

[10] Negotiations in 1949 resulted in agreed borders between Israel and Egypt, Lebanon, Jordan and Syria, successively; according to these agreements, the bounded area of the Israeli state does not include the West Bank, Gaza Strip, Golan Heights, Sinai Peninsula or entirety of Jerusalem.

[11] As a non-Jewish, non-Israeli researcher married to an Ashkenazi Jewish Israeli with family in Tel Aviv, I experienced an inside-outside social location throughout the time of fieldwork. While family ties brought me 'inside' Jewish Israeli society and opened social networks, the ethno-national aspects of my positionality continued to maintain my location 'outside.'

[12] Both Jewish Israeli women and men are subject to mandatory conscription, beginning upon completion of high school.

demographic profile remains distinctly Ashkenazi and middle-class. The interplay of ethnicity, race and social class gained complexity through the inclusion of a small number of participants who identify as Mizrahi or 'Arab Jew,' as these individuals often recounted racialised experiences of economic and social marginalisation. Among participants in both locations, sexuality and martial status constituted important variables as a spectrum of experiences and attractions necessarily shapes individual beliefs and practices. So too a self-professed degree of political engagement became critical to narratives and subsequent analyses; while I expected to interview two categories of Jewish Israeli 'activists' and 'non-activists,' research participants presented a rich continuum ranging from "former activists" to "should be activists," "passive activists," "couch activists," "sometimes activists," "radical activists" and "recovering activists." Importantly, this diverse participant group is bound together through their specific relationship to politics in Israel-Palestine, a kind of melancholic attachment of despair, disillusionment and fatigue which seemingly precludes action.

During the interview exchanges, discussion centred on five primary topic areas, determined through a process of refinement in response to early interviews: 1) personal background, including military service; 2) relationship to and experiences of political activism; 3) understanding of Israel's occupation and experiences of conflict; 4) politics and family relations; and 5) perception of ability to influence or transform wider realities. After securing verbal consent, the interviews took place in public cafes or private homes and lasted between 60 and 120 minutes, during which time I recorded accounts and responses in the form of hand-written notes.[13] While these notes may not convey the subtleties of hesitation and intonation in the same manner as recorded audio data, this mode of recording set participants at ease and granted silences the space in which to become intimate reflections. After each session, the interview notes were supplemented with descriptions of the surrounding environment, the atmosphere of exchange and any additional observations relevant to the data. At this time, note of pauses, silences and changes in bodily comportment or vocal

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[13] Throughout the course of field study I developed a system of codes and shorthand, which allowed me to take notes quickly and accurately while bypassing the effects of introducing digital recording equipment to the interview environment. Many interview participants commented positively on this practice, conveying a preference for written rather than audio records. As reproduced here, all transcriptions have been anonymised for purposes of confidentiality.

intonation were inserted into the written record, which was transcribed within two days of the interview session.

However, in order to understand and capture the textures and nuances of everyday life in relation to conflict and domination, interviews would not suffice. Throughout the duration of research, I additionally undertook over 300 days of ethnographic participant-observation in everyday life, recording varying experiences of the mundane from informal conversations and personal travels to participation in large-scale political demonstrations and solidarity actions. Beginning with three months of *ulpan* – a state-sponsored Hebrew language programme – I became immersed in everyday Jewish Israeli life even as I remained an outsider; importantly, this non-belonging allowed me to freshly experience the discourses, processes and practices which generate community, from language school lessons to holiday gatherings and discussions of politics. The thesis gains its auto-ethnographic lens from these experiences and encounters, drawing my personal story into contact with wider political and social meanings in Jewish Israeli society.

As I sought experiences available to the Jewish Israelis from whom I expected engagement, recorded observations of the everyday increasingly spilled into sites of political action. Beginning with an October 2010 olive harvesting trip in the West Bank with Rabbis for Human Rights, I pursued available avenues of political action and engagement while noting their prevailing dynamics and narratives. Slowly, I came to understand my role as a catalyst, as trips to visit friends and colleagues in (Palestinian) Wadi Ara, Ramallah and Nablus provoked reactions among Jewish Israeli family and friends; these tensions provided a clear sense of the intimate social dynamics which would become central to my research. Ultimately, political action would come to roost at 'home' in Tel Aviv during the 2011 summer of social protests against the cost of living in Israel. Spurred by frustration among young middle-class Jewish Israelis, tent encampments, demonstrations and protest rallies would re-ignite hope among many of the politically disillusioned, that body of actors central to my research. Thus with the summer of potential came renewed participant-observation, as I reconnected with interview participants in order to learn what now compelled them to action.

In these ways, my research moved beyond 'Israel' and 'Palestine,' conflict and occupation, action and inaction, to become a nuanced study of what tethers individuals and communities to the comfort of the everyday, even as a sustaining sense of normalcy exacts great physical, moral, personal and political costs. Contradiction, complexity and tension then frame the voices emerging within the pages of this thesis, yet the resulting analysis maintains focus on power, driven by the certainty that as prevailing structures, narratives, practices, beliefs and aspirations produce *political effects*, so too do our analyses (Mohanty 1988: 69).

A Tapestry of the Ordinary

In creating a portrait of everyday life and domination among Jewish Israelis, this thesis draws together multiple threads to weave a tapestry of the ordinary suffused with power. While I rejected sewing, weaving and knitting during my early teenage years in an act of burgeoning feminist resistance, these crafts now provide metaphorical tools particularly suited to the transmission of my analysis. Cross-stitch, weft and warp, knit and purl – each technique speaks to the ways in which threads of varying shape, size and composition combine to create a whole, a coherent material structure. Yet so too the resulting fabric may be pulled, unwoven and unravelled to reveal its threads once more. No less robust for the undoing, elemental strands might again be sewn together, yielding a new pattern borne of the original fibres. This thesis, then, stands in part a reclamation of a feminine, feminist craft.

Within the fabric of this thesis, three layers of narrative weave together the elemental threads of political apathy in Israel-Palestine. At the level of theory, the central filament of gender emerges as constituted through and productive of hegemonic patterns, as manifest in prevailing norms, codes, roles and relations. Understood as both dynamic and structural, within this thesis gender is interwoven with the threads of space, normalcy, resistance and politics as together these theoretical frames create the fabric of domination. Importantly, in the interest of "telling stories differently" (Hemmings 2011) these theoretical threads are laced throughout the subsequent chapters; rather than appearing within a single chapter or comprehensive 'theoretical framework,' this thesis explicitly interweaves theory as an experiment with form. At the level of experience, twelve months of fieldwork in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem

provide the loom upon which this thesis is woven. Structurally, chapters unfold in a form which mirrors my period of research in Israel-Palestine, moving from familiarisation with context into a growing understanding of division and entanglement, on to normality produced and maintained, then to political action pursued and resisted, and finally to stasis secured. At the level of metaphor, weaving provides a means of visualising the textures and patterns through which domination is generated, recognised, resisted, entrenched and perhaps undone. From the guise of tightly woven normality threads begin to appear and unravel, becoming disentangled and re-stitched within the fabric of each chapter and the thesis as a coherent material; ultimately, these threads are rewoven into a pattern of radical possibility.

Unfolding in five core chapters, this gendered analysis of political apathy among Jewish Israelis thus assumes an intentional form produced through feminist acts of un-stitching and re-weaving. This approach is not only in keeping with the assertion that stories fundamentally matter (Hemmings 2011), but also draws attention to *how* we tell these stories, as selves and social formations emerge in part through the construction of narratives (Lentin 2000: 3; Hemmings 2011: 5, 26). Chapter One presents the already-woven tapestry of normality, exploring the ways in which a single thread – gender – structures and normalises hegemonic narratives, institutions and politics within Jewish Israeli society. Chapter Two begins the process of un-stitching through examining how principles of separation – 'us here' and 'them there' – exist underwritten by entanglement, as points of contact with and dependency upon 'others' emerge critical to the maintenance of Jewish Israeli normalcy. Chapter Three subsequently appraises the mechanisms through which normality is actively repaired and maintained after rupture, as politics intrude upon intimate realms through the enmeshment of conflict with the everyday. Chapter Four investigates resistance to this normalisation, focusing on avenues for oppositional political action available to Jewish Israelis and the ways in which they might become re-woven with power. Chapter Five engages with the 2011 summer of social protests in Israel and follows the trajectory of these events as, through subscribing to an explicitly 'apolitical politics,' political action ultimately secured the *status quo*. Weaving the personal with the political throughout, this thesis presents a tapestry of domination in Israel-

Palestine with the hopes of offering a critical point of intervention through which it might be transformed.[14]

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[14] This guiding impetus and turn of phrase is inspired by Clare Hemmings' (2011: 20) recent work, which maps the political grammar of feminist theory and in doing so "[…] offer[s] a rigorous point of intervention through which Western feminist stories might be transformed."

Chapter One
The Everyday of Occupation – *HaYom-Yom* [Routine]

"Now are you ready for this? I don't think you are ready. Every woman, when she sees this she's jealous. Are you ready? Take a look at this… Can you believe the size of this closet?!" My mother and I stood in the doorway of what was admittedly an enormous walk-in clothes closet, surveying shelves of shoes beside racks of dresses and trousers, everything organised and indeed impressively expansive. We had just climbed the stairs to the new apartment's second storey after a tour of the kitchen and children's rooms on the lower level – now our tour guide waited expectantly for a sign of appreciation.

After seven months of fieldwork, in May 2011 I received a visit from my mother, a mid-Western American, on her first trip to the Middle East. Residing in a small town in northern Wisconsin, for my mother Tel Aviv and Jerusalem had remained largely imagined sites, though photographs and stories from my previous travels to the region introduced European cafes, white sand beaches and haute cuisine to fantasies of camels, deserts and danger. Happily we passed ten days together, journeying from Tel Aviv to East Jerusalem, Jaffa to Bethlehem, traversing and binding together the multiple landscapes and narratives which constitute the breadth of Israel-Palestine. With months of research behind me and more ahead, my eyes had grown tired despite my best efforts to retain freshness, as with each passing day I lived an increasingly routine life in Tel Aviv. Events and people which appeared extraordinary, out of place or in specific places *only* – the Palestinian workers at a neighbouring construction site, the Eritrean grocery stockers at corner shops, the invasive routine of bag inspection and metal detection at shopping malls – had somehow become my everyday. No less surprising or angering, but somehow seemingly *normal*. To my mother's eyes, however, nothing was taken for granted; every curiosity and incongruity loomed large, becoming the subject of inquiry and explanation.

This clarity still intact, the holiday concluded with a family gathering in a small city north of Tel Aviv, where my partner Guy's relatives arrived to meet my mother and bid her farewell. The day was magnificent, warm and sunny under the bluest of skies, as we consumed delicious dishes on a top-story balcony – a uniquely 'Israeli' mix, the cuisine reflected the extended family's Polish and Iraqi origins combined with a

platter of Palestinian sweets purchased by my mother in Nazareth the day before. Emotions ran high as new-ness, reflection and gratitude met the impending rupture of departure, inflecting upon each introduction and conversation both weight and height. Our tour of the family's new flat thus became an amplified register of observation, as my mother was guided through intimate spaces and private lives with the thoroughness of description reserved for foreign visitors. Moments before entering the closet we had been standing in the youngest daughter's bedroom, where my mother took in the concrete walls, small window and heavy door, with troubled uncertainty appearing in her eyes. "This is the *mamad*, the safe room," our guide explained, drawing her attention to the reinforcement of the walls and window, the thickness of the metal door and the air vent now sealed tight yet ready to be opened in the event of an attack. My mother was stunned. "This is a *child's* room," she whispered forcefully as we stepped through the doorway on our way to the stairs and waiting closet. She was right.[1]

What failed to shock me – shock *us* who resided in Israel-Palestine, whether permanently or temporarily – was not only this preparation for the intrusion of violence into a home, but also the extent to which psychological and material readiness had become normalised. Not necessarily 'normal,' but *normalised*, as the confessed ideal would be a situation in which safe rooms were unnecessary; instead we settled for a way of living 'as if,' an approximation of normalcy as close as we could manage. Here normality emerges a product of aspiration, concession and compromise, a process of negotiation unfolding within the intimate space of a Jewish Israeli family. Against the ideal of a home 'safe' in its totality rises the reality of newly-built apartments with single rooms equipped to meet violence, small sites of security nestled within wider frames of insecurity, a sanctuary-in-waiting where the family's youngest, most vulnerable child sleeps each night. Normalcy becomes that space in-between, where the desire for pervasive safety is knowingly exchanged for the assurance that those precious to us should remain shielded from harm. Enacted and constructed in material terms – the *mamad* with its walls, window, vents and door – these concessions ostensibly protect against the intrusion of violence and conflict into the private realms of everyday life, preventing forcible entry. Yet so too these

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[1] Field notes, 28 May 2011.

seeming guards and guarantees hold violence close, ensuring its passage and circulation within intimate domains, enmeshing conflict with normality in basic units of presumed security.

While this mutuality between violence and normalcy will be explored at length in Chapter Three, the task of this chapter is to investigate the textures and patterns of Jewish Israeli 'everyday life' in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, or what makes particular lives liveable therein. Here a tapestry of the mundane emerges, at once weaving together "is" and "ought" (Kelly 2008), material reality and collective aspiration, in an expression of daily life unique to the processes and narratives shaping Israel-Palestine. Significantly, gender constitutes a principal structural thread lacing together dominant values, institutions, meanings and practices. Here, gender analysis allows us to "sense the political" (Navaro-Yashin 2003) beneath the surface of ostensible normality, revealing the social, political and economic baseline which underwrites Jewish Israeli society. Through enmeshment and mutual constitution, fraternity, security and modernity emerge as central social pillars actively bolstered by military, family, education and media institutions. Together, these constructs and relations reveal the centrality of gender to the assumed stability of everyday life among Jewish Israelis, providing constancy and dependability through hegemonic roles, relations, codes and norms. Yet this stability ultimately remains framed within the normative precarity of Zionism, whose narrative of threat, persecution and transcendence bears critical implications for subjects' understandings of and investment in politics.

The Relative Constitution of Normalcy

Two cities, two tales.

Tel Aviv – at once "the bubble" and the crown jewel; each summer day as hot and humid as the next, every morning a sun burning bright against a clear blue sky. On an ordinary Friday morning the wooden deck of the affluent seaside port in the city's northern district is positively heaving with the weight of relaxation: café patrons reclining with the financial paper, cyclists and joggers weaving their way through crowds and restaurant tables, families strolling languidly with toddlers and

fashionable prams, photography clubs capturing images of fishermen testing their luck along the breakwater, and beaches filling with colourful umbrellas, tanned bodies and the day's first swimmers. Guy and I make our way past the balloon seller with his enormous cluster of brightly coloured Mylar floating overhead in shapes of unicorns and fighter jets, avoiding the growing audience awaiting the variety act about to begin at the port's widest section. En route to our favourite brunch restaurant, 'Gilly's,' I think back on our first late morning breakfast at the start of my fieldwork in October, when the nearby daily farmers' market was a weekend-only affair and hosted actual farmers rather than boutique vendors.

On that October day we had descended upon an afternoon brunch with appetites borne of a morning spent with Guy's sister at IKEA, finding an empty table near to the sea. I made note of the peculiar surroundings, which like the *mamad* would eventually become 'normal': nearby Reading power station with its towering smokestack; the low-flying planes passing overhead to land at Sde Dov airport; the occasional military helicopter taking off from the same location, flying invariably southward. Amidst this mix of luxury, industry and military we settled in for mimosas, brioches, olives, omelettes, salads and cappuccinos, seeking respite from the exhaustion of shopping. Mid-way through my omelette, however, something relatively extraordinary appeared on the sea's horizon: a small gunship stationed just off the coast, near enough to see the gun turret mounted on the front deck in silhouette. Yet neither Guy nor his sister seemed to notice; as I sat watching, the boat moved south and finally curved back northward out to sea. "Oddly normal, I guess," I wrote in my field notes that night, curious as to why this type of ship should appear on that day and not others during visits in years past, why I should find it strange while my companions did not.[2] Later that night, I would learn that the Israel Air Force (IAF) had bombed a car carrying three suspected militants in the Gaza Strip while I was eating my omelette and pondering the gunship (*Ha'aretz* 2010b). This felt like my first real experience of Jewish Israeli *normalcy*: an act of violence miles away unfolding unknown, unseen and unheard as I contented myself with a lunch of chives, goat cheese and tomatoes beside the sea.

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[2] Field notes, 7 October 2010.

Jerusalem – the holy city and a sectarian labyrinth; a complex network of enclaves bisected by a charged and shifting seam. I arrive early for my interview in Baka, a neighbourhood in Jerusalem's southeast identified as one of the city's remaining secular Jewish areas along with the German Colony and Beit HaKerem. My usual walk takes me from Jaffa Street – near to the *de facto* seam between (Palestinian) 'East' and (Jewish Israeli) 'West' – skirting the Old City's Christian Quarter, down through the gardens and studios of Gan Shmu'el, and finally up to Bloomfield Garden with its windmill and panorama of the ancient city and the Wall beyond. By this date in June the journey and view have become routine. The dry heat and dust of Jerusalem offer a welcome reprieve from the humidity of Tel Aviv as I make my way along Jaffa Street where Café Hillel sits facing The Coffee Bean and Tea Leaf, walking by shuttered shops ready to sell religious memorabilia to the throngs of tourists congregating at Jaffa Gate. Upon arrival to the Old City I note the regular presence of *Magav* [Border Police] at the New Gate, my preferred entrance to the city's winding streets and Christian Quarter, and pass along the exterior walls toward the valley below. Quickly I descend and then ascend, climbing limestone steps past planters and window boxes lush with the pinks, purples, yellows and oranges of flowers bidding entrance to the artist studios nearby.

Now across the valley I proceed past the windmill and overlook, arriving to the junction of the affluent German Colony and its humble neighbour Baka. A glance down Emek Refayim and I know what awaits: cafes and restaurants, shops and boutiques, an energy similar to Tel Aviv, but a street where English is as common as Hebrew and modern religious dress mingles with European fashion. Instead, for the first time I continue straight down Derech Beit Lechem [Bethlehem Road] and turn into a small park where I plan to await the appointed hour of my interview. I am unusually tired this day, feeling the strain of field study along with a particular heaviness – today is *Naksa* Day, the anniversary of the 1967 War.[3] Bored, I call Guy in Tel Aviv to chat and pass the time, yet his news comes as a shock: accounts are emerging from Israel's northern borders with Lebanon and Syria, with footage of Palestinians attempting – and succeeding – to break through the border fences into

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[3] The Arabic term '*Naksa*' [setback] is used by Palestinians to mark the 1967 or 'Six Day' War in which the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula were captured by the Israeli military, resulting in ongoing occupation and annexation.

Israel. Majdal Shams, a Druze village in the northern Golan Heights, is a site of intense violence and Guy tells me of the live ammunition being shot into crowds of protestors by the Israel Defense Force (IDF); crowds and violence are also growing near Qalandia checkpoint outside Jerusalem, but somehow I am certain that the violence there cannot touch me. I sit in the empty playground, again experiencing the acute absent presence of violence, but an interview awaits – life must go on. I climb the steps of the nondescript apartment building, passing identical doors with their personalized nameplates and arrive to collection of potted plants which marks the participant's home. Though I hear the news broadcast blaring through the door as I wait, our exchange would unfold without mention of the day's violence, a pleasant conversation between an elderly former-Londoner and an American researcher in the space of a home.[4]

Through this tale of two cities, urban sites make visible the ways in which Jewish Israeli normalcy emerges through a tension between materiality and desire, absence and presence, violence and calm. Rather than a 'split' between worlds or ways of being, normalcy and its cityscapes rely on the continued presence of the seemingly obverse or inverse, a delicate balance between conditions lived daily and dreams of (a better) tomorrow. Normalcy then exists not a matter of substitution or replacement, but an in-between and 'becoming' which locks ostensible polarities in sync. Yet it is not enough to merely observe these degrees of accord and contradiction made visible in physicality, discourse and everyday interactions, noting their easy co-existence. Rather, the material conditions of Jewish Israeli normalcy remain underwritten by particular ideological and structural formations, as normative networks of belief, meaning and investment bind together members of a society and make life liveable.

Fraternity, Security, Modernity

Central to visions and practices of Jewish Israeli normalcy are three core social values: fraternity, security and modernity. Simultaneously distinct and relational, each construct takes shape through the others, melding together within the overarching frame of modern day Zionism. While often narrowly cast as the dominant form of Jewish nationalism centred on the primacy of collectivity and statehood, contemporary Zionism extends beyond popular frames to encompass

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[4] Field notes, 5 June 2011.

economic policies, social practices and political agendas, suffusing and binding together interests once regarded as disparate. Indeed, as depicted in the snapshots above, each central pillar of society continues to rely on the presence of its ostensible opposite or 'other' even as all combine to form the prevailing ethos of state and society. Following Ferdinand de Saussure's assertion that "meaning is made through implicit or explicit contrast" (Scott 1988: 36-37), fraternity requires division and exclusion, security necessitates threat and instability, and modernity rests upon the persistence of tradition. Importantly, these cohering values intersect on subjective, interpersonal and state levels through hegemonic patterns of gender, producing accord among seeming contradictions and creating the foundation for a stable social structure.

Within Jewish Israeli society, military service perhaps provides the clearest illustration of the ways in which fraternity, security and modernity become bound together in the ethos of modern day Zionism; here gender norms, roles, codes and relations lace through and weave together realms ideological and material. As demonstrated by Ronit Lentin (2000: 188, 217), Jewish Israeli society and normality are constructed in explicitly gendered terms, resulting in a "military-masculine hegemony" which privileges 'national security,' generates discourses of "no choice" engagement in conflict, and produces specific categories of 'others' which affirm the contours of 'self.' In this, the construction of 'normal' Jewish Israeli subjectivities becomes bound with the framing of Israel as overtly masculine, as perceived weakness and emasculation in diaspora were historically repudiated through the Israeli-born '*tsabar*' or '*Sabra*' figure, who effectively redeemed Jewish manhood through his health and courage (Lentin 2000: 198-199). Significantly, though explicitly depicted as a male – "[…] the *Sabra* was born into a vacuum in which the ideal figure was not the father, but the son. . . . portrayed in 'Aryan' terms as healthy, tanned, often with blond hair and blue eyes, confident, proud and brave, presumably cleansed of all 'Jewish' inferiority complexes" (Lentin 2000: 198) – the pairing of masculinity with pervasive militarisation in Israel spells the extension of *Sabra* ideals throughout society. Required of both men and women upon completion of high school, service to nation in the form of conscription constitutes a mandatory duty for all Jewish Israelis, for periods of three and two years respectively (Shafir and Peled 2002: 143). Though there exist various forms of conscientious objection and limited terms of legal exemption (see Kidron 2004; Lentin 2004; Rimalt 2007; Lerner 2010; Natanel

2012), in its normative quality military service shapes individual subjectivities, social relations and political realities regardless of active participation in fulfilment of 'duty.' At the most basic and pervasive level, military service connotes belonging by ushering Jews – citizens and non-citizens[5] – into a specific constellation of fraternity, one constructed around narratives of threat and protection. As related by Shoshana, a 68 year-old Jerusalemite born in the United States, this relationship between service and belonging dominates perceptions among Jewish immigrants to Israel: "[…] I didn't do military service. I wanted to – the army builds and protects. We all wanted to do that. From a social point of view, to be in the army is to be Israeli, to be a 'real Israeli,' to be 'in.'" An eager volunteer who arrived to Israel two weeks after the end of the 1967 War, Shoshana had hoped to contribute to the war effort and expressed regret that "They started the war without me!" Unable to enlist in the Israel Defense Force (IDF) due to her advanced age – 25 years old at the time – Shoshana participated in post-war fraternity by cleaning the Mt. Scopus university campus; "I was sent to clean up," she recounted, "but I read Israeli newspapers so I knew that the volunteers were there to take over the jobs of the *men* in the army." Although in this instance a gendered division of labour appears to collapse after the cessation of conflict, Shoshana later described the ways in which militarised gender norms and hierarchies continue to structure roles and relations: "My husband was a non-combatant, so he wasn't called up [in the 1973 War] – he was in a way 'like a woman.' There's a difference between who has to stay at home and who gets to go out and be part of it."[6] Indeed, Oded, a 33 year-old filmmaker now living in Tel Aviv, corroborated this valuation as he reflected upon his military service after immigrating alone to Israel from Latvia at age 16: "I came to stay [in Israel] and it was important to me to 'be Israeli.' First I learned that to be Israeli you have to go to the army – and do full combat. Otherwise you won't be considered a man. It was important to me to be a 'real Israeli man,' to play the tough guy."[7]

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[5] In addition to requiring mandatory conscription from Jewish Israeli women and men living in Israel, the IDF offers opportunities for non-Israeli Jews and Jewish Israelis living abroad to volunteer for service in the Israeli military; see http://www.mahal-idf-volunteers.org, accessed 8 December 2012.

[6] Interview in Jerusalem, 27 June 2011; handwritten notes

[7] Interview in Tel Aviv, 11 April 2011, handwritten notes.

Thus mandatory military service creates fraternity through participation in security, instituting a 'brotherhood' of (Israeli) Jews as fulfilment of national duty produces "real men" and women. At a superficial level, here 'men' take on the attributes of machismo commonly associated with militarised masculinities in diverse contexts; in speaking of the perceived conflict between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians, Oded related the hegemonic construction of masculinity thus: "The cultures in both societies – Palestinians, Middle Eastern societies, Israeli society – are very macho. It's about power. Here [in Israel] it's all mixed up with an insane military thing… the army is seen as producing the best characteristics of society."[8] Once instilled in and adopted by individuals, this brand of masculinity circulates at the level of society as social actors both mirror and produce the prevailing norm. Significantly, the pervasive normativity of militarised masculinity in Israel creates a mode of belonging which seemingly cuts across hierarchies of race, class and sexuality. Yoni, a 28 year-old Jerusalemite activist of Yemeni origin, spoke at length about the overlaps and tensions framing masculinity, sexuality and race in the context of militarisation:

> I embarrass people not really to embarrass them, but as a tool to make them think about what they said a few seconds ago. Like at a *Shabbat* [Sabbath] dinner, there was a guy there who I didn't know and some straight guy asked me, 'Do you think he's hot?' I said, 'Sure, he's hot.' Then the guy said, 'So, do you want to suck his dick?' I turned to him and said, "Baby, if anyone is going to be sucking someone's dick it's *you*!'

> I don't want to be violent like this, but you have to. It's this macho thing that comes through the military and society. You can't be polite. If you don't know how to argue here… It's very violent, but this is how you establish your presence. You have to say 'Fuck you! I'm going to *show* you.' I'm softer with my Sephardic identity because I'm still trying to figure it out – I'm stronger in being gay.[9]

In his non-normative sexuality, Yoni's ability to speak the language and enact the violence of hegemonic 'macho' masculinity grant him belonging; learned through military service, the performance of security begets membership in fraternity. However, even as non-normative sexuality and normative gender co-exist within a frame of militarism, the racialised otherness of Yoni's body and identity remain sites

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[8] Interview in Tel Aviv, 11 April 2011; handwritten notes.

[9] Interview in Jerusalem, 3 July 2011; handwritten notes.

of unease – self-identified as an "Arab Jew," Yoni's 'Arabness' potentially remains a threat to the security of brotherhood and just at it poses a danger to the brotherhood of security.

This apparent co-existence of tension and accord made visible within the framework of security and fraternity additionally unfolds in relation to a third social pillar: modernity. Enmeshed with the two former categories through narratives of (Western) 'progress,' 'civilisation' and 'liberalism,' modernity remains central to Israel's militarised nationalism and its gendered roles, norms and relations. In correspondence with other patriarchal nationalisms, the category (Jewish Israeli) 'woman' has been constructed at the nexus of tense polarities, at once inside and outside the nation, in need of protection and posing threat, a symbol of both progress and custom (Yuval-Davis 1997; Kandiyoti 1991; Lentin 2004; Jacoby 2005). Within Jewish Israeli society, this contradictory symbolism and social location has increasingly spelled the inclusion of women in combat, those positions tasked with providing security in conditions deemed most dangerous (Lentin 2004; Jacoby 2005; Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011: 743; Hopkins 2012). Importantly, the participation of women in military service – including combat – serves not to 'soften' or 'feminise' military structures, policies or practices, but often entangles women in pursuit of masculinised attributes of strength, aggression and power (Sasson-Levy 2005 [2001]), qualities associated with both fraternity and security.[10] During military service, 30 year-old feminist activist Meital worked as an artillery guide stationed on-base, tasked with (re)training reservists for service in combat. As we spoke together in Tel Aviv, she described the position and experience thus: "When people in the *miluim* [reserves] come back for service they need to refresh their memory about the process and practice in the field for a week, so I did that with them. It was fun! I really enjoyed this." Yet toward the end of our exchange, Meital reflected upon how this pleasurable experience of military service impacted her attitude and behaviour later in life, as

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[10] Similarly, Laleh Khalili (2011) points to the ways in which the participation of women in the formulation of counterinsurgency strategies and policies in the United States constructs new modes of "colonial feminism," aligned with American military interests. Again mirroring the tense and at times seemingly contradictory position of women in Israel – simultaneously combat fighters and mothers of the nation – Khalili (2011: 1489) writes of the American context, "The images of the counterinsurgent women shows them as feminine, dressed in ball gowns, kissing their counterinsurgent officers, all the while flaunting their warrior credentials (one counterinsurgent woman has been a former air force pilot, the other a professor at the US Marine Corps University). Others work in the Pentagon in various – and often influential – positions."

masculinised norms absorbed and adopted generated increasing tension with her feminist ideals:

> Two years ago I came to a psychology treatment and I came with a strong feminism. It took me time to realise that although I was feminist, I was militant about it – I was telling women what they should do, what they should think. I was practically doing what I was trying to stop! It took me a long time to see what I was doing through feminist *mishkafaim* [glasses] – a feminist lens. Now I try to bring this to my friends and myself, but I judge myself cruelly. The psychologist helped me to see that there are more options than just 'right' and 'wrong.'[11]

While a striking proportion of the women interviewed in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem recounted military deployment in educational capacities – reflecting the codes which associate women with private, homefront and reproduction (Sharoni 1995, 2005 [1994]; Herzog 2005 [1998]; Jacoby 2005) – the terms of Meital's service correspond to the rise of a new 'modern' woman defined by her willingness to actively fight and sacrifice for security and fraternity. Underwritten by a shift to neoliberalism in Israel beginning in the mid-1980s, new constructions of femininity reflect the 'equal to if not better than' mantra of liberal feminism in the United States, a major proponent of neoliberal economic policies (Mohanty 2003; Mohanty, Pratt and Riley 2008; Hemmings 2011). Indeed, 25 year-old Meirav – another self-defined feminist activist – gave voice to this imbrication of modernity, fraternity and security as evident in the figure of the female combat soldier. "Israel is a militaristic society – either you're in combat or you have babies for them," she said early in our Jerusalem interview. She later followed this assertion with a story about her younger sister:

> My sister did the most combat thing you can do and she changed some procedures – she's actually Leftist. She was on the border with Gaza, in the lookouts in charge of the war room. She's also an animal rights activist and she refused to shoot at herds of sheep to deter the herds and Palestinians from going next to the wall. She directed the forces and saved a lot of lives on both sides. She's very hands-on. Three times she was next to suicide bombings. I asked her once "How are they [the bombings]?" She said that they aren't as

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[11] Interview in Tel Aviv, 16 February 2011; handwritten notes.

frightening as seeing rockets flying above. She's my baby sister, so I'm protective, but she's tough. She's going to Africa to volunteer.[12]

Coupled with future heroism on the final 'frontier' of Africa, Meirav's younger sister embodies the contradictory symbolism of the female combat soldier and the ways in which modernity, fraternity and security operate in tandem through military service among Jewish Israelis. Here "combat" spells not only hand-to-hand fighting, but also *saving* and *caring*, moral practices ostensibly particularly suited to women according to the logic of gendered roles and binaries. Thus while this young woman's participation in combat clearly bolsters security, it simultaneously reinforces multiple constellations of fraternity; here, militarism and Leftist politics sit together. Significantly, this very ease of accord depicted in Meirav's account further aligns Jewish Israeli society and the Israeli state with those deemed 'modern' and 'liberal,' as ultimately a young woman's courage on the battlefield translates into humanitarian bravery and benevolence.

The 'Usual Life' of Zionism

Within the prevailing security paradigm, militarism binds together a nation in fraternity while simultaneously laying the foundation for claims to belonging within a larger collective of 'liberal' Western states, as performances and narratives attest to modernity.[13] Yet the pursuit and construction of these core ideals relies upon the continued presence of ostensible opposites – fraternity needs division, modernity requires tradition, and security arises through conditions of instability and threat. In this way, new norms remain bound with old, moving 'forward' while bearing with them the roles, codes and relations of the past. Again gender is instructive, as 'modern' women remain subject to the pressures of reproduction, though now able as feminists to participate in combat as pilots and infantry troops. So too emergent constructions of masculinity – the new 'high-tech' man working in the latest start-up company – remain bound with 'traditional' roles of protection, as deployment in

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[12] Interview in Jerusalem, 3 May 2011; handwritten notes.

[13] A recent ad campaign by BlueStar – a San Francisco-based "organization dedicated to empowering the next generation of Israel advocates and leaders" – makes visible this critical relationship in its tagline: "Where in the Middle East can gay officers serve their country? Only in Israel. In a democracy positions of leadership and political office are open to all citizens, no matter their race, religion, or sexual orientation. Support democracy. Support Israel." See http://www.bluestarpr.com/military-gay-rights-israel.html, accessed 26 October 2012.

intelligence units tasked with fighting increasing cyber attacks ensures collective safety in ways perhaps more expedient than hand-to-hand combat. While the individualism wrought from neoliberal ideologies and economic policies might appear poised to shatter the collective base of nationalism and early Israeli socialist ideals (Shafir and Peled 2000; Ram 2008), these very relations of fragmentation and stratification enable the constant desire for and reproduction of fraternity. Indeed as Yonathan, a Tel Aviv filmmaker in his mid-30s, claimed, "With capitalism came this idea of the individual, self-survival, and also trauma. New developments are fuelling old ideas."[14] This description of a simultaneous shift and (re-)"fuelling" speaks to the continued normativity of previous aspirations and ideals, as a return to the wholeness of trauma is made possible through splintering borne of capitalism, (re)setting the stage for the performance of security.

In these ways, the mutually inscribed ideals of security, fraternity, and modernity entrench and resuscitate Zionism as ideology and practice, from the cafes and boutiques of Tel Aviv to the dusty streets and markets of Jerusalem. This updated vision of Zionism, a belief draped in drones and rainbow flags, aims not at the goals of its origin – a sovereign state and guaranteed safety for the Jewish people (Herzl 1988 [1896]; Goldberg 1996; Lentin 2000; Ram 2003; Piterberg 2008) – but rather becomes an endless iteration of its founding *narrative*: persecution, trauma, perseverance and triumph. Taking root in the negation of historical exile (Piterberg 2008: 93-96), the narrative of Zionism situates victimhood and powerlessness at the core of the Jewish nation-building project. As historian Idith Zertal (1998, 2005) and sociologist Ronit Lentin (2000) convincingly argue, this narrative has been transformed into a myth which promises transcendence and triumph, completing the cycle proposed above. Following Martin Jaffee, Zertal demonstrates how this myth of victimisation permits the victim to simultaneously understand himself as victor, "'[…] always destroyed but always reborn in a form that overcomes the victimizer' [*sic*]" (Jaffee cited in Zertal 2005: 2). For both Zertal and Jaffee, "The chief beneficiary of that empowerment… is the community, which perceives itself as the historical witness to the degradation of the victim and his subsequent transcendence, as the historical body whose very existence preserves and relives the moment of degradation and

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[14] Interview in Tel Aviv, 21 January 2011, handwritten notes.

transfiguration" (Zertal 2005: 2). Presently, this preservation and reliving – *always* destroyed but *always* reborn – are made possible through active memorialisation of the Holocaust and a popular understanding of the Israeli state as existing within "a world defined repeatedly as anti-Semitic and forever hostile" (Zertal 2005: 4). Indeed, the lyrics of Israel's national anthem – '*HaTikva*' or 'The Hope' – attest to this ethos of constant struggle and striving:

> As long as deep in the heart,
> The soul of a Jew yearns,
> And forward to the East
> To Zion, an eye looks
> Our hope will not be lost,
> The hope of two thousand years,
> To be a free nation in our land,
> The land of Zion and Jerusalem.

Through repetition, ideology and practice – narrative and materiality – thus become entwined, producing and maintaining a particular world (Butler 1993: 9; Ahmed 2004: 12); importantly, this iteration structures and potentially incorporates the terms of its own resistance. Matan, a 35 year-old Jerusalemite artist on the verge of leaving Israel for the first time in ten years at the time of our interview, spoke candidly of this tension:

> The rebellion I told you about in my 20s, with not knowing against what but something strong came up. Probably you don't know about Holocaust families, that you can find common issues. You see many times that the Holocaust generation doesn't talk with the second [generation], but they talk to the third [generation].[15] That's what happened exactly in my family. My grandfather talked to me. . . . All my childhood, every Saturday almost, I listened to my grandfather. My grandmother didn't talk, she never did. He would talk every time, this loop of Holocaust stories – it was six years, the

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[15] 'The Holocaust generation' is popularly understood as those Jewish Israelis who directly experienced World War II in Europe and immigrated to Israel. As Ronit Lentin (2000: 4-5) writes, "Equally complex is the definition of Israeli 'children of Shoah survivors', termed both in the literature and popularly 'the second-generation'. This is a contested term, since some … believe either that children of survivors have no characteristics distinguishing them from other Israelis, or that they do not have the same entitlements as do their survivor-parents..." Importantly, Lentin (2000: 163-164) corroborates Matan's claim to ease of dialogue between the third generation and survivors of the Holocaust or *Shoah*, in contrast to the tension which often characterises the relationship between parents and their second-generation children.

Holocaust, so there were a lot of stories! And before [the Holocaust]: the Communist party, the Soviet Union – it was ten years of life. It was very important, it was injected into me from my early childhood to when my grandfather died. I was in the army [when he died]. *Then* was my rebellion. It was very unconscious. I'm not sure that I'm right about it now either, but now I have a bit more maturity. My inside structure is like this: animals, Sheikh Jarrah, the occupation comes in – whatever makes you cry comes in.[16]

Though 'third generation,' Matan identifies as a "survivor of the Holocaust" despite his clear recognition of the work done by this narrative brought from past into present and future. Even as Matan would later describe himself as "post-Zionist," pervading his vegan and anti-occupation activism is the trauma of his grandfather's generation and the narrative of vulnerability, persecution and striving in which Zionism takes root. Again, apparent contradiction sits easily within this frame as the presence of polarities helps Matan to make sense of the surrounding world, a place where "whatever makes you cry comes in." Thus resistance enacted by Jewish Israelis in Palestinian Sheikh Jarrah – a site geographically distant from the Poland of Matan's grandfather – becomes integrated with the wider narrative of Zionism, fuelling the cycle of repetition and trauma.[17] As Zertal (2005: 2) writes of Israel's relationship to the Holocaust:

Through the constitution of a martyrology specific to that community, namely, the community becoming a remembering collective that recollects and recounts itself through the unifying memory of catastrophes, suffering, and victimization [*sic*], binding its members together by instilling in them a sense of common mission and destiny, a shared sense of nationhood is created and the nation crystallized. These ordeals can yield an embracing sense of redemption and transcendence, when the shared moments of destruction are recounted and replicated through rituals of testimony and identification until

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[16] Interview in Jerusalem, 21 June 2011; handwritten notes.

[17] Sheikh Jarrah is a Palestinian neighbourhood in East Jerusalem, which has become a prominent site of solidarity activism in Israel-Palestine. Once populated by a small Jewish community which left before 1948, the neighbourhood has been home to Palestinian families made refugees by the war and resettled in 1956. Recently, Jewish Israeli settlers acting on legal claims made by Jewish organisations are increasingly displacing these families. Since 2009, Jewish Israeli, Palestinian and international activists have staged weekly joint protests against these evictions; see http://972mag.com/sheikh-jarrah and http://www.en.justjlm.org, accessed 28 October 2012. Throughout the course of my research, Sheikh Jarrah emerged as the single most popular protest site and initiative among Jewish Israeli women and men who consider themselves in some way 'activist,' whether mainstream or radical.

those moments *lose their historical substance,* are enshrouded in sanctity, and become a model of heroic endeavor [*sic*], a myth of rebirth.[18]

Clearly not restricted to the historical past, remembrance and (re)narration are actively renewed at contemporary sites of trauma which give rise to fraternity, security and modernity on scales at once micro and macro. Indeed, as Lentin (2000: 178) writes, "Zionism is 'nationalism as narrative', in that it claims a privileged narrative of the nation and thus justifies its own capacity to narrate its story and construct its history in an assertion of legitimacy and precedent for present as well as future."

Thus the narrative of Zionism transcends its originary intentions, creating a self-sustaining contemporary world characterised by the repetition of instability, a society based on trauma and processes of redemption and healing which can be only be partially complete. Yet what gives this world solid grounding? As depicted above in the tale of two cities, everyday life often unfolds in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem seemingly in the (material) *absence* of violence and conflict – in these sites 'normal' assumes a distinct hue. Gil, a 35 year-old Jerusalemite musician, artist, and social worker, described normalcy thus:

> [The occupation is] an ambient thing. It's like, you know you can live [as if] not noticing it, but it is an ambience here. I just talked with a friend who a few months ago returned from Spain. We talked about Israel, the different feeling here. It starts with the feeling of security. In so many places, if you go to sleep outside you don't feel safe – either because you're afraid of Arab… terror attacks or you're afraid of the army, the police. . . . We hear about [the occupation] all the time: there's an attack, a fight, a conflict… we absorb the feeling. You think that to live like this is a usual life, but it is different from life in other places.[19]

What makes this life liveable?

Beyond the material conditions of a prospering economy, this "usual life" is made possible through the ways in which hegemonic gender norms, codes, roles and relations provide the sense of constancy assumed to underwrite 'normal life' in model contexts, primarily American and European. Indeed, in her analysis of the

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[18] Emphasis added.

[19] Interview in Jerusalem, 13 June 2011; handwritten notes.

masculinisation of Israeli society vis-à-vis the active feminisation of the Holocaust, its survivors and Jewish diaspora, Ronit Lentin (2000: 200) writes, "The Israeli aspiration to an elusive 'normality', to being just like all other (preferably Western) nations, required adhering to strong social norms, which define that 'normality.'" Here, gender provides the *glue* of everyday life, shaping subjectivities and interpersonal relations, demarcating realms of public and private, structuring political and domestic spheres, and providing a sense of belonging to a wider (patriarchal) world. In this, gender enables the co-existence of polarities, permitting old and new, traditional and modern, collective and individual, security and instability to remain both in tension and constitutive relation. Itself a relation of power (Connell 1987), gender does not make even or equal all members of society, but may rather ensure the perpetuation of hierarchies, intersecting with race, class, ethnicity, sexuality, generation and geopolitical location at the levels of subjectivity, society and material reality. Developed in contemporary feminist theory as 'intersectionality,' this approach to gender highlights its constitution through and articulation with the multiple axes of domination shaping and shaped by everyday life. As Avtar Brah and Anne Phoenix (2004: 76) argue, this intersectional quality of gender points to "[…] the complex, irreducible, varied, and variable effects which ensue when multiple axes of differentiation – economic, political, cultural, psychic, subjective and experiential – intersect in historically specific contexts."

Intersectionality then makes visible the ways in which social relations and material conditions may be variably constructed and experienced depending upon multiple aspects of subjectivity, each bound up with power. With regard to the query posed above, an intersectional approach to gender reveals how within the context of Jewish Israeli society, *particular* lives are made liveable. As demonstrated earlier, the category 'Jewish Israeli' can be divided into sub-categories depending on social hierarchies; in this, 'normalcy' remains differentially understood and experienced. Indeed, as a middle-class Jewish Israeli living in West Jerusalem Gil may have space, time and resources to consider the occupation ambient as related above, an aspect of the normality which enables his career and artwork. Despite membership in the category of Israeli Jews descendent from Middle Eastern and North African communities, Gil's physical appearance is strikingly Ashkenazi; thus he is able to traverse the space of the city without eliciting the routine questioning and suspicion

experienced by other Mizrahi Jews living in the Jerusalem area. For a Jewish Israeli man who appears 'Arab,' Israel's occupation may be experienced in a somatic and violent manner rather than as "ambient," subject to requests for identification by soldiers and searches by security agents at the bus station. Here, race intersects with aspects of subjectivity in the space of West Jerusalem to produce distinctly different understandings of and access to imagined, perceived and constructed normalcy. Thus an intersectional approach not only makes clear the ways in which multiple factors and axes intersect within a given context, but also it draws attention to how categories of Jewish Israeli 'man' and 'woman' cannot be approached as monolithic or static, even as gender lends constancy to everyday life.

As Brah and Phoenix (2004) impel scholars to consider the *effects* revealed through an intersectional understanding of gender, in the context of Israel-Palestine a particular kind of stability emerges, one bound tightly with domination. In its complexity and multiple embeddedness, gender possesses the capacity to both regularise and normalise as hegemonic roles, norms, codes and relations produce a hegemonic 'gender order' specific to context (Connell 1987: 134-139; Connell 2002: 3). Despite often appearing unchangeable, these gender patterns remain in process (Connell 1987: 140-141; Connell 2002: 10) and their adaptation and variability become central to stabilising those precarious worlds which both promise and threaten the 'good life' desired by their inhabitants. A given gender order then creates a seemingly predictable and dependable foundation upon which everyday life might unfold, while at the same time remaining critically dependant upon the evolution of norms, codes, roles and relations. Reflecting those historical norms which instate divisions between homefront/battlefield, feminine/masculine, private/public, and domestic/political (Sharoni 1995, 2005 [1994]; Herzog 2005 [1998]; Jacoby 2005) while relying on the very collapse of these binaries, the contemporary Jewish Israeli gender order emerges a site of accord and contradiction. Yet this apparent tension ultimately lends stability and constancy as, to borrow once more from Yonathan, new developments indeed fuel old ideas. While not 'more important' to everyday life than relations of race, class, religion or ethnicity, gender remains unique in its ability to provide coherence to norms, values and practices at once liberal and collective, modern and traditional, novel and entrenched.

Institutional Imbrications

In its very everyday quality, the normative narrative of threat, persecution and transcendence becomes a collective emotion, a sensibility and a manner of engaging with a larger world. Here, Lauren Berlant's work on American culture is instructive, as she argues that political meaning may become attached to the sensations of particular groups, describing how specific emotions come to be experienced as 'the national' (1993: 556, 560). So too Berlant posits that the hegemonic affective regimes of nation-states – those institutionally supported emotions deemed politically meaningful and 'national' – might justify domination (1998b: 640). This overlap of sensation with institution importantly resonates within Jewish Israeli society. Less a matter of which individuals are excluded from the production of national emotion and whose sensations remain beyond the boundaries of political meaning, here the question becomes exactly *how* a particular narrative becomes hegemonic through patterns of gender.

Military, Family, Education

As R.W. Connell (1987: 120) writes, "We cannot understand the place of gender in social process by drawing a line around a set of 'gender institutions.' Gender relations are present in *all* types of institutions. They may not be the most important structure in a particular case, but they are certainly a major structure of most." With these guiding and cautionary words in mind, an investigation into the role of gender regimes – "the state of play in gender relations in a given institution" (Connell 1987: 120) – reveals the extent to which gender reinforces normative narratives through the blurring of boundaries among three key institutions: the military, family and education.

In a manner similar to the imbrication of security, fraternity and modernity and an intersectional understanding of gender, within Jewish Israeli society institutions of military, family and education cannot be separated into "discrete and pure strands" (Brah and Phoenix 2004: 76). Indeed, each institution becomes a critical site of production and reflection of the others, as indicated in extensive research conducted by feminist researchers in Israel (Sharoni 1995; Lentin 2000; Abdo and Lentin 2002; Jacoby 2005; Gor 2007; Gor and Mazali 2007; Abdo 2011; Peled-Elhanan 2012). Binding together the institutions of military, family and education are patterns of gender manifest within and produced through distinct yet enmeshed regimes. Ana, a

university lecturer in her mid-30s now living in Tel Aviv, recounted the complex relationship thus:

> Related to the occupation is the big role of the army – it's in everyone's lives. In order for an 18 year-old to go to the army he must be brainwashed from the day he is born. And part is the gendered military discourse. I remember in high school the girls with the soldier boyfriends were 'so cool.' The discourse is very gendered. Now women can be fighting [combat] soldiers and the position is very high status because it's a *male* position.[20]

Ana's narrative is not unique in its highlighting of "brainwashing" as the reason for their participation in mandatory military service; indeed, many interview participants cited indoctrination as the conduit through which they took part in national duty. Yet Ana importantly extends the period of 'convincing' and 'learning' – here 'brainwashing' occurs from the time of birth, signalling a site of instruction beyond the formal national education system: the family. Interestingly, Ana remembers the education system less for nationalistic or militarised lessons and fieldtrips than for popularity contests won by those girls with (older) soldier-boyfriends, revealing a novel type of militarised hierarchy present within Jewish Israeli (secular) schools.[21] So too this narrative points to the centrality of heterosexuality to Jewish Israeli society as manifest in military, education and social relations. As contemporary Zionism exists a nation-building project rooted in patriarchal nationalism, biological reproduction remains a top social imperative, in part propelled by the construction of a 'demographic race' imagined between Jewish and Palestinian residents of Israel-Palestine (Yuval-Davis 1989; Kanaaneh 2002; Halperin-Kaddari 2004; Steinfeld 2012). Underwritten by the founding narrative of threat, persecution and transcendence and bolstered by corresponding historical experiences of European Jews, heterosexuality retains primacy in Jewish Israeli society, framing hierarchies, norms and relations.

Thus Ana's brief account demonstrates the ways in which gender binds together the Israeli military with the national education system, alluding to the role of the heterosexual nuclear family therein. Yet her further remarks during our conversation

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[20] Interview in Tel Aviv, 6 February 2011; handwritten notes.

[21] With many students able to claim exemption from mandatory military service, Jewish Israeli Orthodox religious schools would present a different mode of hierarchical organisation.

speak *directly* to role of family, demonstrating the significance of an intersectional approach to the institutional production of normalcy:

> I have a son, he's half black and half white – he's four years old now. In the summer we moved to Tel Aviv and he started a new *gan* [kindergarten], which isn't easy. I was reading a big ad in the paper about 'supporting Arabic gas' – this was when there was a huge fight about gas over the summer. For now most of our gas is from Egypt and it's referred to in the paper as '*gaz Aravi*' [Arabic gas]. Anyway, I was talking about it with my husband and my son asked me, "Is that my gas?" I asked him what he means and kids in the new *gan* say that he is an Arab… They're three and-a-half – how do they know what an Arab is?! I answered him and said, a) no, you are not an Arab and b) it's not a bad thing to be an Arab. Later I had an argument with my husband – he told me that by telling our son that he wasn't an Arab I already gave him the feeling that it *was* a bad thing. I don't know… At three and a half how does the conflict influence their lives when they learn this?[22]

In a sense, Ana answers her first question – "How do they know what an Arab is?" – moments later when she links the occupation with the "big role of the army in everyone's lives." Here, values of 'us' and 'them' are eventually translated from the language used in familiar and formal education systems to the terms of national security, only to recirculate within families and schools once more. As Ana reassures her son that, no, he is not an Arab, her husband intimates that her insistence on distinction bestows meaning and value upon the category – Arab becomes a 'bad thing' despite her belief to the contrary. Aware of conflict at three and-a-half years old, Ana's son bears militarism home in his kindergarten backpack, setting upon the family table those harsh lessons of otherness learned in school.

As the thread binding regimes of military, family and education within a given order, gender appears conspicuously absent save what might be read inter-textually between Ana's account and existing scholarship. However, the role of women as biological and cultural reproducers of the nation as outlined by academics (see Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Kandiyoti 1991; Yuval-Davis 1997) seems only partially applicable here, as clearly Ana takes issue with the prevailing narratives and values to which her son is exposed. Immediately following her earlier memory of high school social hierarchies, Ana changed tack to speak once more of her son:

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[22] Interview in Tel Aviv, 6 February 2011; handwritten notes.

You know, on Holocaust Day they tell my son at two and a half, three and a half, about the Holocaust. It's this intense string of holidays: Passover, Holocaust Remembrance Day, then Memorial Day. So first it's 'The Egyptians are trying to kill us,' then it's 'The Germans are trying to kill us'… My son heard me say the word 'German' and he said, 'These are bad people.' What?! And it wasn't even near Holocaust Day. Next Holocaust Day I won't send him there. But what if I have to work? I'm seeing my son being brainwashed.[23]

Returning to the normative narrative of Zionism, in combination with the previous account Ana's quandary over Holocaust Remembrance Day reveals a division of labour based upon and productive of the hegemonic gender order. Despite her work as a university lecturer and the presence of a male partner engaged in parenting, Ana asks what will happen the following year if she is unable to look after her son; *she* answers the question of whether or not 'Arabic gas' belongs to him. Though philosophically subscribing to the tenets and critiques of feminism, Ana retains primary responsibility for her son's care and development. With this provision of care comes the desire to safeguard, ostensibly challenging those norms which link men with defence and protection; yet her husband's non-Jewishness and non-whiteness shift the duty of protection within the remit of motherhood, as ethnicity and race intersect with gender roles, relations and norms.

As gender constitutes a thread linking institutions and their regimes, it indeed remains in process, a site of contestation and accord which importantly provides a material sense of normalcy – as mothers care for and look after children, they answer difficult questions and engage with lessons learned at the nexus of military, family and education. Home becomes a site of stability within a sea of uncertainty, a place where repeated norms, values and narratives might be laid to rest at the same time as they gain new purchase. Clearly, cyclical practices remain in play, yet Ana's investment in repetition is uncertain – despite complex relations of race, ethnicity, gender and class binding her to the majority, Ana tries her best to disentangle herself and her family from dominant narratives and values. Then how does she become part of the hegemonic system, expressing a sense of "depression" at her own political inaction and an inability to transcend the subsequent feelings of guilt? Arising not solely at the gendered confluence of military, family and education to which her son remains

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[23] Interview in Tel Aviv, 6 February 2011; handwritten notes.

subject, Ana's enmeshment points to differential sites of norm production central to a sense of collectivity.

The News-Holiday Cycle

Appearing in Ana's account of her son's early exposure to Holocaust narratives, the annual holiday cycle in Israel not only (re)produces prevailing norms, but also fashions national subjects, both willing and unwilling. Building upon and complicating the foundational work of Michel Foucault and Marxian post-structuralist scholars, queer theorists such as Lauren Berlant and Judith Butler regard the production of norms and subjects closely, discerning potential sites of interruption and transformation even as their scholarship details the pervasive and constitutive qualities of normativity. Indeed, Butler (1993: 1-3) describes the ways in which matter gains "boundary, fixity, and surface" through processes of (re)materialisation, cycles of repetition which remain continually unfinished. Here Butler (1993: 3) posits, "That . . . reiteration is necessary is a sign that materialisation is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialisation is impelled." While raising the possibility that "threat and disruption" might constitute a critical resource in efforts to transform the prevailing valuations of "legitimacy and intelligibility" which frame and constrain subjects (Butler 1993: 3), in the context of Jewish Israeli society these very ruptures and interruptions coalesce with the precarity of Zionist narratives. Thus even as iteration yields "abject beings" (Butler 1993: 3) whose non-conformity and agitation might promise transformation, cycles of repetition and their unruly subjects remain central to the production of hegemony, reinforcing normative narratives, values, practices and relations.

It is no coincidence that the holiday period foregrounded by Ana above – as she expressed trepidation at her son's 'hailing' into the national fold – reappeared as a key timeframe in numerous interviews. Preceded by *Pesach* [Passover], a week-long holiday whose narrative centres on persecution and escape,[24] *Yom HaShoah* [Holocaust Remembrance Day] prepares the ground for *Yom HaZikaron* [Memorial Day], which the next day yields to *Yom Ha'Atzmaut* [Independence Day] all within

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[24] *Pesach* or Passover is an annual Jewish holiday commemorating the emancipation of the Israelites from slavery after exodus from Egypt; see http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidaya.html, accessed 1 November 2012.

the time of one month.[25] While a time of 'high nationalism' similar to American Independence Day with its flags, parades and expressions of patriotism, during this period the narrative of persecution and redemption particular to Zionism suffuses everyday life to an extreme. Compounded by media coverage in the form of films portraying personal stories of loss, television broadcasts of official commemorations attended by government officials, and dedicated radio playlists of songs whose lyrics evoke those emotions considered 'national,' the cycle of holidays produces specific selves, subjects and collectivities.

Sitting on the airy balcony of a Jerusalem café tucked within the winding narrow streets behind *Kikar Zion* [Zion Square], Matan touched upon the holiday-media cycle as he related his process of coming to political action:

> In the 90s, I was 20 [years old] after the army. After [the army] I didn't know what it was against, but it [an energy] was coming up. It didn't have specific content, it was through art, music, raves – rethinking, rebuilding community. I was 20 or 21. It wasn't conscious, it happened through nature. Art, music, freedom – this is what we were building community through. We had some very serious people there, a lot of fantasies of what we could do. We were very young. I don't know the cause and effect, but then the terror attacks started in Jerusalem. The ideal community – art, music, freedom, etc. – broke apart during the bomb attacks. It was very hurtful, every two to three days there was an attack in Jerusalem. I would cry every night. I would hear a bomb – I was living in the centre – and turn on the TV to see how many were killed. I would cry every night, every other. I had a period of three to four years of emotional breakdown, again and again and again and again and again. This is a very special culture in Israel.
>
> KN: That the culture is so emotional?
>
> M: We are born, raised, educated with holidays – not as Jewish but as *Israeli* culture, new Israeli culture. There are some big holidays like Holocaust Memorial Day and Memorial Day for soldiers and from [age] 4, 5, 6, 7, every year we are crying, feeling ecstatic feelings. You are born and raised that way, it's a feeling of being picked up as a child. It's in the music. I would become addicted to the music after a bomb attack, the music played on the radio. The

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[25] While these Jewish Israeli holidays follow the Hebrew calendar, Palestinians annually observe 15 May as *Nakba Day*, the day of 'catastrophe' on which the Israeli state gained international recognition one day after Ben-Gurion's proclamation of the 'Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel.' This proximity means that Memorial Day, Independence Day and *Nakba* Day commonly fall within the same week.

music is so sad. It's special, with an artistic touch and talent, not *kitsch*. After every attack there were days of songs. In a way it was like a party.[26]

The same man who earlier recounted his grandfather's "loop of Holocaust stories" and their impact on his political identity and activism, during our interview Matan explicitly invoked the cycles of holidays, violence and media discourse, relating their repetition to the production of "new Israeli culture" as separate from Jewish culture. In keeping with Butler's (1993) optimism that space for transformation exists within repetition, this wider national cycle indeed produces its own resistance, as Matan sought the formation of an "ideal" community as an alternative to the mainstream against which he rebelled after military service. Described in terms of "art, music and freedom" – for Matan what the mainstream community could not offer – this collective engendered a space of action, for "rethinking, rebuilding" even if now associated with fantasy. Importantly, Matan's account draws attention to the very *pervasiveness* of national narratives and emotions, a quality which lures him back to the fold even in his non-compliance. Catalysed by violent events, Matan's ideal community dissolves as media images and discourses (re)produce the culture unique to Israeli society; here tears induced by bombings meld with the tears of holidays past. His micro-community disintegrates and Matan feels himself rejoin wider society as experiences of violence mirror childhood memories, producing a sense of identification through emotional extremes and even breakdown. This relation of new-old trauma then points to the ways in which feelings of sadness and ecstasy can "pick up" an adult as if a child once more. Through the intimacy of trauma, Matan is effectively re-interpellated or 'hailed' (Althusser 1971: 48-50; Brah 2012 [1999]: 12) back into the national community, as his escape from narrative and collectivity was never quite complete.

Structures of Fear and Fatigue

Significantly, though Matan's narrative concludes in his seeming reintegration with Jewish Israeli society, as we spoke in the café near the 'seam' with East Jerusalem our exchange remained framed by his impending departure from Israel. "Now I'm starting a political immigration," Matan told me when we began our interview. "It's something inside and outside – I'm not that famous that it will be a *real* 'political

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[26] Interview in Jerusalem, 21 June 2011; handwritten notes.

immigration,' but inside, yes. I'm searching for a place. I'm going to Amsterdam for options."[27] Producing not only resistance which might later be reabsorbed within national narratives, overlapping holiday and media cycles create "structures of feeling" (Williams 1977), those socially constructed patterns of intimacy which bind together a collectivity.[28] By entrenching the precarious extremes of experience and emotion so central to Zionism, the repetition of holidays and media discourses fuels differential cycles which result in disengagement and stasis, illustrating how discourse yields subjects, social structures and material consequences (Foucault 1988; Butler 1993, 1997a, 1997b; Lentin 2000; Berlant 2011; Hemmings 2011).

For Dalia, a filmmaker and journalist in her mid-30s living in Tel Aviv, the discursive repetition of trauma is mediated not only through television and radio, but also through her partner and young daughter. As the only interview conducted with a couple, my exchange with Dalia and Avi emphasised the extent to which connectivity and intimacy become bound up in institutional frameworks and cycles. Indeed, in response to my query about the contours of their individual activisms, Dalia and Avi not only negotiated their relationship to hegemonic discourse, but also to each other as partners within a collective:

> Dalia: […] There is so much to suppress here – if you don't you go crazy. If you read all the news, be an activist on all the things, there is no time to breathe between demonstrations and legal actions. There is so much wrong you must suppress in order to live. *But* when something is broken in the suppression it's overwhelming because you recognize how much you have to suppress to live your little life. It makes me think what is the collective cost? If you just live your life the big circle gets smaller – there are less people who think like you. And when less people care, there is more corruption.
>
> Avi: Dalia was reading the paper three hours a day at one point, she would get really angry. We both work at home – we fold our bed up and it becomes our office. I couldn't take it so I cancelled our subscription to the newspaper, the newspaper she writes for! If you read all the headlines in the morning… maybe it's better to read them at night.

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[27] Interview in Jerusalem, 21 June 2011; handwritten notes.

[28] In *Marxism and Literature*, Raymond Williams (1977: 132) describes "structures of feeling" as "thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and inter-relating continuity . . . a social experience still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (through rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies."

Dalia: But through Twitter I know the news before it reaches the paper. I go through cycles or waves of rage and suppression - now I'm on a wave of suppression. I can't even read all the blogs. I think the last straw in the last cycle was a document about the military trial of two Palestinian minors. It was so awful, I felt helpless about it. People 100 times more activist than me were crying about it. But if *they're* crying about it what can I do? Join them and cry? And in the meantime neglect my own kid? I just can't take it anymore – let this place blow up. I don't care.[29]

A self-professed "couch activist," Dalia's narrative makes visible the ways in which the extremes produced through national holiday and media discourses produce particular modes of political disengagement, bolstering the *status quo* and existing material realities. Bound to Matan's account through acts of crying, feelings of helplessness and expressions of antipathy – yet connection – to "this place," the exchange between Dalia and Avi reveals how normative national cycles compound those more personal, here a cycle of "rage and suppression." As Avi resists the intrusion of discourse and politics to the extent of cancelling a subscription to the newspaper which employs his partner, both he and Dalia adhere to a broader public, one characterised by the pursuit of "little lives" amidst necessary uncertainty. Thus while both Dalia and Avi characterise themselves as 'Leftists,' their actions meld with those of the mainstream and Right-wing factions relative to the Jewish Israeli political spectrum, positions which reaffirm stasis through both actions taken and withheld.

While appearing in nearly every interview, 'fear' is not the sole product of the national narratives which circulate through cycles of holidays and media discourses. Whether described as an experienced emotion or used to characterise Jewish Israeli society, subscription to fear masks the extent to which investment in trauma engenders fatigue and political disengagement. Indeed, Meirav, a 25 year-old activist from Jerusalem, made this link between fear, fatigue and disengagement explicit:

People are tired, fear is wired so deeply. For years I can't watch more than ten minutes of the news without getting mad… just the way they tell it. . . . The way the story is told becomes *myth*. Once you understand that life isn't a story, that myth is and can be something else, you are setting for yourself your own goals. I'm frustrated… I care so much. One month ago I was given the option to go to Montreal for next year – it was fun and depressing because I realised

[29] Interview in Tel Aviv, 7 April 2011; handwritten notes.

> how much I feel tired, I want to escape. I want to gain perspective from a place where I don't have to put so much effort into living.[30]

While constitutive of collectivities through the ways in which movement away from a feared object implies movement toward or attachment to a loved object (Ahmed 2004: 68), within Jewish Israeli society fear differentially coalesces community through the production of hegemony. Here, fraternity emerges through security and modernity in new ways, as the cyclical perception of threat creates a community caught up in (post)modern paralysis – indeed 'apathy' is not a condition unique to Jewish Israelis. As described earlier, most existing academic studies of political apathy, disenchantment or disengagement take place in the United States, United Kingdom or other Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) member states (see Rosenberg 1954; Sevy 1983; Boyer 1984; Eliasoph 1997, 1998; Dolan and Holbrook 2001; Hay 2007). So too apathy has been popularly ascribed to publics in Egypt and Libya prior to the 2011 uprisings, which mobilised massive numbers of formerly quiescent citizen-subjects (Diab 2009; al-Werfalli 2012). Yet within Jewish Israeli society, education, military, family, media and commemoration converge to produce a pervasive Zionist ethos inclusive of its own opposition, and awareness of this entanglement – "I am part of it, whether I like it or not" – severs the ties which make transformation seem a tangible possibility rather than a momentary fantasy. Thus trauma emerges as a cyclical combination of fear, aspiration and fatigue; the admission of our implication within its repetition *wears us down* to the extent that Amsterdam, Montreal and "little lives" seem to promise a new object of desire: effortless living.

Collective Politics

As institutional imbrications result in disenchantment and divestment, pervasive institutionalisation further enmeshes the normative Zionist narrative with Israel's hegemonic gender order. Indeed, as political fatigue and disengagement emerge through the repetition of trauma, prevailing gender norms, codes, roles and relations are reinforced, bearing implications for broader meanings and practices of politics.

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[30] Interview in Jerusalem, 5 May 2011; handwritten notes.

Here, cyclical repetition compounds further relations beyond those emotive and discursive; as R.W. Connell (1987: 141) writes, "[…] gender is institutionalised to the extent that the network of links to the reproduction system is formed by cyclical practices. It is stabilised to the extent that the groups constituted in the network have interests in the conditions for cyclical rather than divergent practice." As cycles of trauma are performed, repeated and stabilised – interpellating those who might diverge – so too patterns of gender gain constancy, providing structure for both 'politics' and material realities.

Alienation and Cynicism

Within Jewish Israeli society, 'politics' has been constructed as an interest and practice tied to the privileging of men and masculinity, which accompanies Zionist narratives of persecution, defence and redemption. Popularly associated with conflict and violence, politics emerges as a bastion of security and defence, interests with which most Jewish Israeli women were deemed to have little 'formal' familiarity until the recent inclusion of female conscripts in combat positions (Lentin 2004; Jacoby 2005; Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011). With scant experience of combat, Jewish Israeli 'women' as a category were effectively granted little political voice and few positions of governance, despite the Israeli state's passage of a 'Women's Equal Rights Law' in 1951 and its revision in 2000 (Raday 1991: 18-20; Yuval-Davis 2005 [1980]: 122; Yishai 2005 [1997]: 203; Halperin-Kaddari 2004: 17, 20). While recent intersectional analyses undertaken by feminist scholars such as Nahla Abdo (2011) complicate any claims made around 'women' as a homogenous category in Israel-Palestine, the prevailing valuations and arbiters of national politics remain masculine. Importantly, an intersectional approach again makes visible how access to political voice and leadership are informed not only by gender, but also through intersecting hierarchies of ethnicity, race, class and religion. From the state's naissance and the dominance of Labour Zionism through the rise of Likud in the 1970s and the exclusive nationalist political parties currently gaining influence, primarily white, middle- and upper-class heterosexual Jewish men have populated successive governments and exercised audible political speech (Shafir and Peled 2002: 88-94; Sasson-Levy 2013: 28; see also Swirski and Safir 1991 and Yishai 2005 [1997]). Thus even as recent reorganisation and demographic shifts within the military have opened roles formerly closed to women and reflect a rise in rates of religious

conscription, for many citizens political practice and interests remain exclusive. Though 'politics' might be theorised as conduct and exchange in the public "realm of human affairs" open to all citizen-subjects (Arendt 1998 [1958]), lived experiences and popular understandings in Israel-Palestine yield a complex image of alienation.

Importantly, even as the figures of Jewish Israeli politicians remain relatively stable, the content of their politics has shifted from the liberal Labour platforms dominant until the 1977 elections to agendas and policies increasingly centred around ethno-nationalist concerns (see Shafir and Peled 2002: 213-230). Along with the waning influence of historically strong Left-of-centre parties in Israel, the recent power sharing agreement between the centre-Right *Likud* party and Right-wing *Israel Beiteinu* ['Israel Our Home'] attests to the recent intensification of these trends and processes (Lis 2012). As the influence and appeal of the political Right grows, so too the specific contours of alienation shift, spreading to encompass a spectrum of subjectivities inclusive of those who once enjoyed considerable political power. Here, *corruption* becomes a way of talking about estrangement from politics and the political elite – not only are we 'not like them,' but also their policies and practices are seen to benefit the select few gathered in the upper echelons of political office. "I see Bibi [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] on the television and it's embarrassing to see his body language – he's sitting on a chair and there is a row of gangsters behind him," Yael, an Israeli citizen originally from Australia, recounted as we spoke in her home in Jerusalem's German Colony. She continued, "It's about money and religion – they hide behind the cloak of religion, religion which is so full of righteousness. What can I do with all of that? Except for run away if it gets too bad."[31] Likewise, Dalia linked politicians with corruption during our exchange in Tel Aviv: "I'm pessimistic about Israeli politics, it's corrupted in a neglecting manner. It's not evil or fat-cats, but detached. They can't think of creative things. Everyone is *old* and they look to the way things used to work."[32] So too Dana, a self-professed "politically avoidant" interview participant in Tel Aviv, spoke of the political elite in terms which conveyed estrangement as we conversed in a Tel Aviv café: "There is no one to go

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[31] Interview in Jerusalem, 12 May 2011; handwritten notes.

[32] Interview in Tel Aviv, 7 April 2011; handwritten notes.

to. . . . Now that all the generals have died, like [Ariel] Sharon[33] and [Yitzhak] Rabin, the new generation is all white-collar crooks. It's a cynical notion, but these pictures of the ministers now look like the pre-Holocaust caricatures of Jews: hooked noses, fat bodies, beady eyes."[34] With politicians characterised as gangsters or crooks, righteous, detached and archaic, feelings of alienation circulate among citizen-subjects as they increasingly fail to see not only their interests reflected in state policies, but also their values mirrored by those who lead the country.

Yet even as Yael, Dalia and Dana differentiate themselves from Jewish Israeli politicians and politics through declarations of alienation, these actions and sensations remain enmeshed within wider frames of reference. Yael conveys a willingness to flee as she feels herself increasingly powerless against the money and religion of politicians; Dalia invests in her child and professes scant concern if Israel "blows up" as related above; Dana stopped reading newspapers at age 20 and now at 32 years old sees no one whom she can vote *for* rather than against – through conveying forcible estrangement, these practices of and claims to detachment seek to institute division. However, the phrasing of alienation-as-corruption points to a relation of *attachment*, an inescapable entanglement which implicates dissent, resistance and 'bad subjects' in power. Indeed Yonathan, Dana's former partner and the Tel Aviv filmmaker who earlier related how "new developments fuel old ideas," outlined his perception of this connection in response to a question of politics:

> I see [politics] as the expression of the currents in societies. You can collect political influence when you have a central movement to collect it in. Now all the corruption in movements is an expression of what is happening in society, it is a mirror. They are corrupt because we are. We are corrupted and people don't see that. Corruption is everywhere: in relationships, in work, in renting an apartment – it is expressed everywhere. Many times people aim their energy to change politics without looking at how society is taking part in it.[35]

Implicating himself and his society in the corruption which produces sensations and practices of alienation, Yonathan challenges the distinction imposed between 'them'

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[33] Subsequent to a stroke in 2006 former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon has been in a permanent coma, while showing brain activity in early 2013; in this passage the speaker – Dana – misidentifies his condition as "dead."

[34] Interview in Tel Aviv, 17 January 2012; handwritten notes.

[35] Interview in Tel Aviv, 21 January 2011; handwritten notes.

and 'us,' the political realm and its subjects. Importantly, the discussion of alienation articulated by the women above affirms the findings of much feminist scholarship, describing the normative relations positioning Jewish Israeli men as political knowers/actors and women outside the political sphere; yet a shift to the language of *cynicism* both complicates and clarifies hegemonic gender patterns. Invoked by Dana in her identification of contemporary politicians' images with pre-Holocaust anti-Semitic propaganda, cynicism conveys a tense relationship to politics professed by both women and men, stressing connectivity, overlap and enmeshment.

In contrast to alienation, yet bound within a shared frame, cynicism signifies entanglement with the object from which one feels distanced, divided or excluded. As Lori Allen (2013: 16, 27) observes among Palestinians living in the Occupied Territories, cynicism constitutes "a stance, attitude, mode of expression, and value judgement" which "[…] can be not only a way that power is reproduced and political stasis maintained, but also part of how people continue to critique and search, or at least hope, for something better." While cynicism may indeed reflect a situation in which "[…] the possibilities of thinking and freedom open up precisely when one cynically gives up on such values of ideals" (Asberg 2008: 2), during interviews in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem this sentiment conveyed knowledge of implication coupled with a felt inability to institute change. Oded, the Tel Aviv filmmaker who earlier related the construction of "real men" via military service, spoke directly of the links between corruption, cynicism and (in)action:

> […] Politics here is a great way to shift attention away from real issues. Like how we're being robbed by people who squeeze money from the country, who own it, who have their way with the country. Now we have the highest fuel prices in the world! In the world! And no one knows why. There is no substantial public transport here. In France everyone would go on strike and paralyze everything, they would bring the country down. Here it won't happen because it's a 'social issue' – "How can you compare this to the suffering of people in Sderot with missiles every day?" And when something happens politically, people stay home… because they have such cynicism. "What can we do? People are corrupt, and if we get rid of them more corrupt people will come! What can we do? I'm going to watch *Big Brother*…"[36]

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[36] Interview in Tel Aviv, 11 April 2011; handwritten notes.

A self-professed "former cynic," Oded locates the helplessness of '*Ma la'asot?'*
[What can we do?] within a wider frame of politics and alienation, demonstrating the
ways in which the absence of reflected interests and values still manages to bind
individuals with the collective. Unable to locate "social issues" – community matters
in need of attention and transformation, such as the cost of fuel or dearth of public
transportation – within the discourses and policies of 'corrupt' government officials,
concerned citizens remain in their homes along with those unconcerned or supportive
of the *status quo*, despite clearly feeling the situation in need of redress. Then beneath
cynicism lies a sense of *responsibility,* piqued by acknowledgement of implication yet
dulled by the conviction that action is futile.

Political Emotions

As cynicism defies restriction to a single category of 'men' or 'women,' this relation
complicates those prevailing gender norms which largely locate Jewish Israeli men
within the political and women without; here the realm of politics encompasses those
whose interests and values it reflects regardless of gender, while implying a
preference for stasis. Excluded – yet implicated – are men as well as women,
Ashkenazi as well as Mizrahi, Jewish as well as non-Jewish, each upon bases which
coalesce around hegemonic national narratives and ideals. Shaul, a 20 year-old
student of religion and philosophy active among the leadership of Jerusalem-based
Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity,[37] described new terms of political division thus:

> Politics has changed drastically in the last 20 years – the 'two states versus
> larger Israel' debate is gone, although Parliament still speaks in this language.
> But if you look at the political platforms, they are quite similar – *Kadima*,
> *Likud*, [Ehud] Barak's *Atzmaut*, and even [Avigdor] Lieberman too! We have
> one large Right-wing narrowly interpreting Zionism and then smaller
> ideological parties on both sides of it. The political discussion has shifted to
> an ethno-nationalistic majority versus a civil society-democratic minority –
> these are the new fault lines.[38]

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[37] Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity is a Jewish Israeli activist initiative supporting those Palestinian families
forcibly expelled from East Jerusalem's Sheikh Jarrah neighbourhood by settlers; for historical context
see page 43 of this thesis, footnote 17.

[38] Interview in Jerusalem, 28 June 2011; handwritten notes.

Pragmatic in delineation, in addition to its resonance what struck me in Shaul's account was the intensity with which he spoke, the way he almost spat words, expressed irritation and anger, and at times answered with obvious derision. In contrast to the frustration and despair which characterised many interviews, those who still felt themselves able to act politically came alive in their seats before me. "It took me a while and a lot of anger," Jerusalemite activist Meirav admitted as she recounted her path to feminism, now the basis of her political action. "I credit my anger. . . . I can be angry for ten minutes and say what I want, ok, but people won't let me do that – I'm not cute and harmless. So I got cynical. . . . People get cynical, they get tired." When I asked how she manages to avoid the cynicism of which she once felt herself a part, Meirav answered, "I don't! I go to the places that allow anger."[39] As she feels herself actively silenced, Meirav remains subject to the feelings of relative inefficacy which frame both cynicism and alienation, yet she works *through* her relationship to politics by means of anger and continued action.

Like Shaul's disposition, Meirav's account casts as exceptional the attributes of anger and action, a seeming paradox within a society whose militarisation pervades everyday life and interpersonal relations. Yet within the course of fieldwork interviews, the primary political emotions expressed by Jewish Israelis emerged as despair, disillusionment, shame and guilt – sentiments which reflect and reproduce aspects of the normative Zionist narrative. Importantly, these interviews did not situate sentiments of political depression *opposite* anger, but rather drew connections between extremes, completing and reaffirming the cycle of trauma.[40] Similar to Meirav who does not escape cynicism in her action, contradictions suffuse subjectivities and experiences, again complicating prevailing gender patterns. Shoshana, who arrived "late" from the United States to Mt. Scopus on the heels of the 1967 War, personified these tensions as we sat together in the cafeteria of Hebrew University in Jerusalem:

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[39] Interview in Jerusalem, 5 May 2011; handwritten notes.

[40] This accord between seeming contradictions in political emotion bears striking similarity to Palestinian contexts; as Lori Allen (2013: 26) writes, "[…] in Palestine cynicism is an emotion tied to political stasis, apathy, and hope, all uncomfortably combined and anchored in a political phase of perceived limbo."

[After the Oslo years] I grew more and more disillusioned. I probably became extremely pessimistic, *extremely*. I think probably the attacks from Aza [Gaza] after we pulled out… the attacks from Lebanon… From Aza it was pretty bad, but the thing from Lebanon – I know people from Beirut and my first reaction was "Flatten that country!" It took 20 years to get the army out, starting with the Four Mothers [*Arba Emahot*]. Then I said, "Wait, it's Zaher and Salim, [friends] in Beirut..." It gives you an idea of how angry I was. A lot of it is what happened to the Israeli Left. . . . But my son is much worse: he went from being an activist. It's true, he was a student at the time, there's some life-cycle influence. But he was at a meeting every week, then a meeting in Tel Aviv, every Saturday he'd go out. "To Hebron?! You'll get arrested!" – you don't know whether to be proud or worried! Now he's disillusioned. He's worse than me. He feels they're all liars! The Left, the Palestinians – everyone is liars.

It's very interesting. I went through a period of tremendous, tremendous pessimism. I began to think that there was no way of stopping [the occupation] – this is not why I settled in Israel, to have a bi-national state. Now I say that I am saving my strength for 'right to vote' demonstrations. After the Right-wing grew stronger, there are more things to make a two-state solution impossible – then there will be one state and we need to fight for the rights of Palestinians to vote. "What can we do? Isn't this ridiculous?" I said to a woman at the store. "You *do*!" she told me. "Why don't you come to Sheikh Jarrah? There are a lot of people from the university there." But I don't like that – it's like a performative social club… Whoever plans the demonstrations on Friday's doesn't have to make *Shabbat* dinner, that's for sure![41]

Appearing within a single narrative, alienation, anger and disillusionment clearly co-exist, compounding one another as they culminate in a cynicism which legitimises inaction. Pervading the political subjectivities of both Shoshana and her adult son, disillusionment transcends categories of gender as Jewish Israeli society is again divided, this time along lines of 'liars' and actors, though the moral boundary between the politically dominant Right-wing and that minority of "performative" Leftists appears uncertain. Vacillating between the solemnity of depression and the agitation of anger, Shoshana and her son settle somewhere between in the moral safe space of an ideological, if inactive, Left.

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[41] Interview in Jerusalem, 27 June 2011; handwritten notes.

Thus disillusionment, despair, shame and guilt complicate the streamlined image of a gender order which associates 'active' emotions with militarised masculinity and ostensibly 'passive' positions and sensations with femininity. Expressed by women and men alike, political depression pervades and seemingly gives shape to that group situated by Shaul opposite "the ethno-nationalistic majority." While the following chapters largely complicate such an easy distinction, this collective relationship to politics – one of alienation, cynicism and disengagement – indeed entrenches and reproduces particular norms and relations on levels more macro. In gendered terms, even as political depression transcends categories of 'men' and 'women,' the embeddedness of this position within existing relations of power ultimately reaffirms 'politics' as masculine. Unable to affect change in the realm of those "crooks" and "gangsters" of formal politics who appear almost invariably male, white and upper class, those subscribing to and expressing political depression collectively assume the attributes of femininity seemingly complicated by the very production of prevailing political emotions. That is, as both women and men experience despair, disillusionment, shame and guilt, the ways in which these emotions cross category boundaries serve not to revalue political sensations, but rather to *devalue* those who express them.

The Politics of Living

As prevailing gender patterns are both complicated and clarified through relationships to politics and political emotions, modes of everyday living become bound up with the desire for stasis and stability. As illustrated above, the complexity and contradictions of sensation, experience and belief overwhelmingly produce in women and men disenchantment, disengagement and investment in realms more immediate and intimate. As Lauren Berlant (2011: 259) writes:

> The depressive position, in [Melanie] Klein and [Eve] Sedgwick, is taken up by a subject who acknowledges the broken circuit of reciprocity between herself and her world but who, refusing to see that cleavage as an end as such, takes it as an opportunity to repair both herself and the world. But . . . such an arc and rhythm can also amount to attempts to sustain optimism for irreparable objects. The compulsion to repeat a toxic optimism can suture someone or a world to a cramped and unimaginative space of committed replication, *just in case* it will be different.

While in the narratives recounted above the realm of 'politics' often does not become the object of reparative action – rather small worlds emerge as a locus of action, as explored in Chapter Three – the breakdown of reciprocity indeed catalyses a form of suturing. Here the combination of relations, emotions and actions reflects a new mode of politics embedded within wider realities: the politics of living. Dependent upon replication and repetition oriented toward perceived normalcy and wholeness, the worlds created through political depression take shape through structures of gender, (re)suturing 'bad subjects' to the normative national fold.

Bound tightly with Holocaust narratives, *survival* characterises accounts of everyday life in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem and constitutes the practice against which visions of normalcy are desired and constructed. Yael, the 56 year-old Jerusalemite who earlier characterised politicians as "gangsters," detailed the extent to which survival pervades daily life:

> I do think it's amazing accomplishment, this state – it's a miracle, a miracle. I heard a sentence recently from a friend, an actress, who made a wonderful play about the Holocaust: "The truth is more important than the facts." Here what is the fight over? Land and entitlement to it. "It's mine. No it's mine! No it's mine!" I don't know how it's ever going to…

> It's quite amazing that life goes on, on so many levels here. It's like a frog in water and more gets added so he swims up to keep his head above water. Then more is added, and more… Life is going on! I think that the ultimate act of optimism is to continue having children, creating families. There are a lot of people in the West who don't have the urge [to have families], they think "What's it worth?" But here we are, in a more complex situation, more disheartening, and we continue on. You know, demographics are a very important issue here. Who is having babies – the religious and the Arabs. This will be important![42]

In this short statement, the Holocaust becomes a sub-textual frame through which to appraise successes of the state, contemporary practices of living, gendered imperatives for reproduction, and visions of a better tomorrow just beyond reach. Survival, then, becomes past, present and future, a practice and ethos which must be continually – and incompletely – transcended through acts of repetition as it renders the world

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[42] Interview in Jerusalem, 12 May 2011; handwritten notes.

intelligible.[43] This mode of living produces values of security, fraternity and modernity, as here a "fight" creates families and categories of 'us' within an economic frame shared with the West. Cyclically repeated as water is added again and again to nearly cover the swimming frog's head, survival melds with those narratives of trauma instilled through institutions of military, family, education, media and commemoration. So too survival draws upon and activates relations of political alienation, if not cynicism, as Yael leaves unfinished her thoughts about a resolution to the (political) argument over land and entitlement. Culminating in an expression of "optimism," this account of everyday survival momentarily resists dominant political emotions and in doing so implies those very "disheartening" sensations.

Thus Yael's account emerges as instructive in the ways that it gathers together the many threads of Jewish Israeli everyday life, enmeshing dominant values with overlapping institutions and popular appraisals of politics. Yet the precise content of her *optimism* is striking as here Yael foregrounds reproduction, pointing to ability of complexity to engender simplification and entrench those norms which render life most stable. As the (collective) act of "having children, creating families" constitutes an ultimate expression of optimism, for Yael the contradictions, subversions and potential transformations previously detailed in this chapter become streamlined and reduced, again melding with the normative narratives which position Jewish Israeli women as reproducers and men as protectors. Providing constancy amidst political, demographic and moral uncertainty, hegemonic gender norms emerge as the backbone of new normalcy and constitute that which makes immediate survival liveable. Again, this structure links directly to narratives, experiences and values derived from the Holocaust: "You have to make life in the hard places," Matan told me as he crushed another cigarette in the dish between us. "This life is going and building a community – other actions can be built on it because it's fun. Fun is part of life. Even in the Holocaust I'm sure they had fun. My grandparents made my mother inside the Holocaust so they had *some* fun!"[44] Extending beyond metaphor or discourse and into the physicality of everyday life, survival-borne drives to "make life," "build

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[43] Importantly, however, Ronit Lentin (2000: 219) points to tensions around the simultaneous embrace of a triumphal Holocaust narrative and the social rejection of its survivors in Israel: "By nationalizing the memory of the Shoah, deemed necessary in the process of establishing the state of Israel, and by centring its commemoration machinery around the un-written principle of an Israeli 'victory over the Shoah', Israel erased the very memory of the Shoah itself."

[44] Interview in Jerusalem, 21 June 2011; handwritten notes.

community" and even "have fun" possess material and normative dimensions – at its most triumphal, survival implies the biological continuation of life. Bound with cycles of trauma, narratives of survival and visions of normalcy, the hegemonic heteronormative gender order and its roles, relations, codes and norms become the basis of a community stable in its precarity, with new generations invested in its reproduction.

Conclusion

This chapter has detailed the entanglement of individual subjects with the relations of power, institutional structures and normative narratives which together crystallise forms of political disengagement, shaping new visions of normalcy and wider material realities. Yet this is not to say that diverse Jewish Israeli women and men exist passive sites for the inscription of power (see McNay 1992: 12), victims to the "brainwashing" detailed and feared by Ana as she observes her young son's education. Rather, this account of Jewish Israeli everyday life – the everyday of occupation – has begun to unpick a dialectical relationship between structure and agency, threading through the analysis an awareness of *responsibility*. While reflective of Michel Foucault's (1997) biopower in the sense that "massifying" relations of power and domination indeed function on the level of population, engendering control through normalisation and regularisation, the actions and perceptions of Jewish Israelis redirect attention to the role of the agential subject. As Timothy Mitchell (1991: 90) writes, "The power to regulate and control is not simply a capacity stored within the state, from where it extends out into society. The apparent boundary of the state does not mark the limit of the processes of regulation. It is itself a product of those processes." These mass-oriented modes of power then produce normalisation and regularisation of a population through its own design.

Thus as subjects good and bad are hailed and subjectified by ideology, discourse and even material practices, an eye must be kept to Louis Althusser's original claim: " […] the individual *is interpellated as a (free) subject in order that he shall submit freely to the commandments of the Subject, i.e. in order that he shall (freely) accept his subjection,* i.e. in order that he shall make the gestures and actions of his

subjection 'all by himself.'"[45] According to Althusser (1971: 55), for this free subject hailed through structure, practice and values there remains *choice,* as 'good' subjects regulate themselves while 'bad' subjects incur the weight of the repressive state apparatus – one chooses one's subject position. Thus the individual retains the capacity to act; she may be constituted and constrained by power, but she remains agential. Indeed, as Judith Butler (1995 cited in Davies 2006: 426) asserts, "[T]o claim that the subject is constituted is not to claim that it is determined; on the contrary, the constituted character of the subject is the very precondition of its agency."

Then to insist upon agency in the everyday of occupation is to call into question the *effects* of normalcy envisioned, desired and pursued, to tease apart the threads which together create a tapestry of belonging and constancy however precarious. To unpick values, cycles and meanings – those threads which colour, grant texture and render intelligible and liveable everyday lives in a context of violent conflict – is to begin to disentangle by insisting upon entanglement. This is not to simplify what is complicated nor to complicate what is simple (Roy 1998), but to draw upon a single structural thread – gender – which renders visible active participation in and dependency upon hegemony, along with investment in its preservation.

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[45] Emphasis in original text.

Chapter Two

Bordered Communities – *Gderot Hafrada* [Separation Fences]

An early start on a clear weekend day. We drive gloriously north on *Kvish HaHof*, the coastal road, away from Tel Aviv into the warm light of morning and the promise of open space. I have been in Israel-Palestine for just over five months and I feel tense as a guitar string, ready to release at a touch. But this morning I am freed by the promise of escape. Guy and I arrive to the parking lot at *Nachal Taninim*, or 'Crocodile Stream,' a nature preserve and bird sanctuary whose trails are popular among both twitchers – bird enthusiasts like ourselves – and families seeking fresh air and adventure. Told that the preserve is located "near to Caesaria," one of the wealthiest towns in Israel, I am surprised when in truth we enter the site via a gravel road beneath Jisr az-Zarka, an 'Arab town' so impoverished that it substituted for the Gaza Strip in the filming of a recent British television serial.[1] We turn into the preserve, passing a van parked alongside the dirt path as its driver languidly sets his lawn chair for the day's work. Clad in the electric yellow of a security vest, he glances quickly at our car and does ostensibly nothing to securitise, save perhaps to 'profile' our car – in a shiny silver Volkswagen, we pull into the lot without question or inspection.

Binoculars and bird guide in hand, Guy and I take to the trail, exchanging smiles with a Palestinian woman and her three children seated in the empty picnic area. I am buoyed by the thought of new avian and human encounters. We set about finding birds and flowers in the cultivated 'wilderness' before us, shuttering our ears against the soundscape of excited children arriving and emptying into the parking lot by the carload. It strikes me that tiny *Nachal Taninim* exists as a presumably *safe* space for experiencing nature – someone has gone before, investigated the area, built trails and infrastructure, opened the recreation site, stationed a guard and requested payment. Unlike in the deserts, mountains, canyons and forests of Israel, here families and twitchers alike can experience wilderness with the promise of security.

As Guy and I debate this point, we attempt to avoid the increasing stream of fellow recreationists whose presence strips our surroundings of their wild façade. Faced with the sudden influx of humanity, we bound off into the tall grasses and short trees

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[1] *The Promise*, aired by Channel Four in 2011.

seeking immersion in bird habitat, imagining ourselves alone. Upon emerging from the bush we immediately meet a group identifying a *pashosh*, the diminutive graceful Prinia, and arrive at the stream where Pied Kingfishers dive and dance. Now alone, we continue on the path toward Jisr az-Zarka, feeling relative solitude return once more as it seems that the others have turned back. Increasingly, the human-scape becomes Palestinian: we meet a man and his children fishing "for fun, no luck"; we pass a woman and child grilling meat nearby, presumably the fisherman's family; we come upon another group seated around a picnic table, their sheep and goats grazing on the grass; yet another family picnics in the tall grasses around a bend and the young children wave excitedly, calling "Shalom!" over and over. Eventually, Guy and I reach a clearing and Jisr az-Zarka stands before us – we see the school and hear children playing, we see the waste dump on the town's outskirts, we see homes and hear life.

The call to prayer sounds from the mosque's minarets as we walk past horses, crossing what I assume to be the preserve's official border where the open field stops at a berm and the manicured paths resume. Inside the preserve once more, the arches of ancient ruins loom large, their round stone forms rising against the grasses and blue sky. We stop and face only this direction. From this vantage point our view covers the ruins and Israel's ancient history, with Jewish Israeli families exploring between and amidst the layers. Here visitors consider 'other inhabitants' of Israel – Romans – former residents now devoid of connection to everyday life. However, current 'others' are alive and embodied, Palestinians who reside in the town behind us and fish the stream, grill meat and graze livestock, living on the preserve's margins should we choose to see.

Guy and I continue walking toward the parking lot, passing through a small creaky gate, likely an entrance for local Palestinians who will remain on the preserve's periphery. Beyond the gate we arrive at the security van and to the right of the parked vehicle an impromptu Palestinian parking lot has taken shape, marked by families with women wearing *hijab* and cars of an older, less shiny calibre. There are clearly different points of access and relationships to the land we 'share' on that warm March day – we pay and tour, with official guides and marked paths; they enter through secondary gates free of charge and use the land, yet remain suspect on its margins.

We join the road and meet a Palestinian family walking toward the preserve, as the woman covers her hair with a scarf while pushing a baby carriage. I smile and give my best "*Ahlan*!" [Arabic: hello] and she returns my greeting. This feeling of connection, no matter how minute, is gratifying. The woman continues to the parking area behind us, collecting her family as she goes, and we return to our car in the separate lot. I see then how strange this place looks, Israeli flag draped over the entrance to the information centre, parking lot full of grey, white and silver cars parked in rows, visitors with their families speaking Hebrew and looking touristic with backpacks, camelbacks, cameras, strollers, sunglasses and sunscreen. Though this scene unfolds directly beside the small Palestinian parking lot under the town of Jisr az-Zarka there is no deliberate mixing, not even a 'hello' offered to the woman with her carriage. Palestinians remain largely to the south, while Jewish Israelis keep to the north – it exists a different world, or rather two very different worlds within a single small space.[2]

That morning in *Nachal Taninim*, the divisions and unease pervading wider Israeli society became newly visible and palpable, suddenly somehow more alive in their concentration. Accordingly, through narratives of separation and entanglement, this chapter considers the ways in which Jewish Israeli and Palestinian lives remain actively woven together despite the conditions of protracted conflict which seemingly divide 'us' from 'them' and 'here' from 'there.' In looking to critical theories of space proposed by Juval Portugali (1993) and Doreen Massey (1994), social relations emerge as key to the understandings and experiences which shape division, exchange and belonging in Israel-Palestine. While ostensibly subscribing to a principle of separation advanced by the Israeli state as seen in walls, barriers and segregated communities (Weizman 2007: 161-184; Gordon 2008: 197-222), Jewish Israeli society remains dependent upon Palestinian 'others' for the material production of normalcy. In this, normalcy again arises not against or despite conditions of political violence and conflict, but rather *through* their very continuation. After first outlining multiple processes and practices of 'othering' through which 'strangeness' is socially marked and identified, this chapter challenges the claim that Jewish Israelis have become increasingly separated from Palestinians in their everyday lives. Instead, historical and contemporary accounts of enmeshment demonstrate the continued

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[2] Field notes, 19 March 2011.

reliance of Jewish Israelis upon relations of exchange with 'others,' whether through labour, maintenance or nourishment. Here, gender analysis makes visible how sustained modes of social interaction underwrite and structure seeming partition, ultimately rendering particular lives liveable.

The Social Relations of Space

In work on topographic space in the context of Israel-Palestine, Juval Portugali (1993) centralises "implicate relations" as a means through which co-existent separation and relation become possible. Here sociality and inter-subjectivity emerge as central to meanings, understandings and experiences of physical space, binding together collectivities while at the same time generating degrees of separation. Following David Bohm (1980 cited in Portugali 1993: 57), Portugali posits that the "explicate" realm of separate things – those "[…] entities and parts, independent of, and external to, each other…" – exists through the "unfolding" of the "implicate" order, where "'[…] everything is enfolded into everything.'" As Portugali (1993: xiii) writes:

> Implicate relations as a conceptual notion implies that space and society are indeed independent entities, but only within the limits of the explicate domain. At a subtler level they enfold each other, exist inside each other, and in this respect coexist in implicate relations. From this point of view space is not a passive entity, but an active actor in the theatre of social reality.

This active dimension of space importantly arises through its very sociality, as divisions unfold and totality enfolds, neither process remaining fixed nor finished.

Significantly, this emphasis on process, relationality and mutual inscription overlaps with critical scholarship by Doreen Massey (1994), a feminist geographer whose work emphasises the ways in which the sociality of space is in part structured by gender. While Portugali (1993: 57) asserts that unfolding, distinction or separation at the explicate level occurs through the articulation of hierarchically arranged "generative social orders" – "[…] code(s) according to which people socio-spatially order their lives" – Massey clarifies the contours and contents of these codes and orders. Here, space becomes infused with and shaped by specifically gendered and classed relations of power, while at the same time producing these very constitutive social hierarchies. In her work, Massey (1994) offers a critical intervention in hegemonic

conceptualisations which separate space from time, valuate time more highly than space and strip space of political potential. Like Portugali (1993), Massey (1994: 2) claims that space and society exist in reciprocal relation, drawing the social and spatial together in her conceptualisation of the spatial as social relations "stretched out." For Massey, the relationship between social relations and space is not unidirectional or linear, wherein social relations produce or constitute space; rather she points to the ways in which space "[…] is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result" (Massey 1994: 4) – here space and social relations are mutually constitutive. Importantly, within this thick, fluid, three-dimensional space Massey locates both politics and gender. In this, Massey considers how a series of dualisms in classical thought have fused the realm of time with politics and action – through ideas of History with a capital H and 'progress' – leaving space behind as a realm of stasis, absence and passivity (Massey 1994: 6). Subsequently, Massey argues convincingly that according to a further set of dichotomies, space has been coded as feminine – and time as masculine – in hegemonic Western thought. Yet following on her earlier line of argument Massey posits, "[…] if spatial organisation makes a difference to how society works and how it changes, then, far from being the realm of stasis, space and the spatial are also implicated… in the production of history – and thus, potentially, in politics" (Massey 1994: 254).

Following this reading of space, how might gendered relations both unfold and enfold in the context of Israel-Palestine? As Massey (1994: 179) argues, "From the symbolic meaning of spaces/places and the clearly gendered messages which they transmit… spaces and places are not only themselves gendered but, in their being so, they reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood." How does the gendering of space and place institute separation while depending upon entanglement, and with what implications for meanings, understandings and experiences of gender?

Degrees of Separation

In first looking to the explicate domain, various mechanisms of separation and distinction indeed arise from and circulate within Jewish Israeli society, concealing yet alluding to deeper relations of entanglement. Here, gender emerges as central to processes of spatial mapping, identification of 'others,' practices of racialisation and

valuations of culture or custom which ostensibly divide 'us' from 'them,' constructing a reality in which "[a]n average Jewish Israeli can live an entire life without personally knowing, let alone befriending, a single Palestinian citizen of the same country" (Mendel 2009: 29).

Mapping

As Portugali (1993: 156) argues, in order to make sense of the environments in which ordinary life unfolds, individuals create "cognitive maps" which facilitate interaction among particular constellations of community. Mutually inscribing the social and spatial, meaning and materiality, in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem these maps take shape explicitly through gendered and racialised valuations of safety, revealing specific terms of exclusion and belonging.

Sitting at a popular café in Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market, 25 year-old Meirav recounted her experience of the city's 'zones' or internal boundaries, the seams along which its topography and social fabric become enfolded and unfolded. A blogger and online activist who created a popular campaign against street harassment, Meirav understands and navigates her adopted city according to a sense of security:

> Personally, there are three neighbourhoods that I feel safe on a good day to walk in. For the average Palestinian man there are five. . . .
>
> You feel the neighbourhood boundaries when you crash into them – I can't walk on the East side alone. People know who is Palestinian or Jewish, it's more than history. Palestinian guys stare at your eyes directly and Mizrahi Israelis won't. I feel more threatened by the Palestinian guys. Someone from the university, an activist, came to the AI [Alternative Information Centre][3] café in the East of the city. This guy suggested that two girls walk to the café in the East! I didn't go. He probably thinks I'm racist, but he doesn't realize. I used to live in French Hill for three years – I've been called 'Jewish whore' enough. I was stalked, the group made my life hell. But I can't tell because what would people say? Even the police…. The police won't help French Hill students and also on the lines between. They won't help on the border line. So the liberal Leftist male activist won't believe me, the police I can't

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[3] The Alternative Information Centre is a Jerusalem-based Palestinian-Israeli joint activist organisation "engaged in dissemination of information, political advocacy, grassroots activism and critical analysis of the Palestinian and Israeli societies as well as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict"; see http://www.alternativenews.org/english/index.php/about-the-aic, accessed 7 June 2013.

tell – I was forced into silence because it's not okay to say what Arabs do to me.

For Meirav, encountering Palestinians in the spaces of annexed East Jerusalem activates experiences and memories of gendered and sexualised subjectivity, which now inform her understanding and navigation of the cityscape. Having lived on the 'border line' in the French Hill [Giv'at Shapira] neighbourhood, technically built over the Green Line in occupied territory, Meirav's subjection to gendered harassment translates to an appraisal of personal safety clearly rooted in social relations. Significantly, this precarity is distinctly racialised – Meirav relates feeling "more threatened by the Palestinian guys" as an *Ashkenazi* Jewish Israeli woman. Yet so too felt insecurity emerges as the product of multiple social relations as she expresses subsequent feelings of abandonment, misunderstood by the Jewish Israeli Leftists with whom she shares common politics and the police charged with her physical protection. Together, these patterns and dynamics intersect within the shared space of the city to compound Meirav's sense of vulnerability, producing a particularly *gendered* mode of insecurity. Later in our exchange, Meirav recounted a recent initiative on the Mount Scopus campus which explicitly spatialised these experiences of social relations:

> The campus safety discussion is zero in Israel. I was angry about campus safety at French Hill and the college suggested that *Im Tirtzu*[4] was organizing to escort women back to their rooms. That's how bad it was. I wasn't frightened enough to ask them for help, but I was close. Campus safety is known all over the world, but not in Israel. There was a '[prevention of] violence against women day' and the Left shut our mouths when we tried to do the most vanilla activist thing: we wanted to draw a map with areas that women shouldn't walk in. In the organisation we're all Left if not radical Left – we won't draw something racist, just what to expect [in the neighbourhoods]. There are different types of harassment in different places. But the Left on campus shut our mouth about it because they were afraid that it might hurt the Palestinians on campus – they weren't worried about [offending] the religious [students]. It was just a photocopied map![5]

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[4] Deemed fascist and McCarthyist by *Ha'aretz* journalist Gideon Levy (2010), Im Tirtzu is a Right-wing extra-parliamentary organization which "[…] works to strengthen and advance the values of Zionism in Israel" (see http://en.imti.org.il, accessed 2 January 2011); it does so in part through targeting academics, institutions and organizations deemed 'anti-Zionist' by its own valuation. Translated from Hebrew '*Im Tirtzu*' means 'If you will it', derived from Theodore Herzl's dictum regarding the creation of the state of Israel: *Im tirtzu, ein zo agada* – 'If you will it, it is no dream.'

[5] Interview in Jerusalem, 3 May 2011; handwritten notes.

This second narrative is immediately notable for the extent to which the extreme political Right presents itself as the protector of women while the Left sits paralysed by propriety, seemingly resulting in the preservation of the *status quo* and existing social relations. Importantly, the proposed physical manifestation of cognitive maps catalyses and clarifies seemingly latent tensions between race, gender, politics and security. While declaring herself and her colleagues "not racist," Meirav alludes to the ways in which these maps align with the city's many racialised zones as they purport to ensure (Jewish Israeli) women's safety – "Palestinians on campus" are the group ostensibly protected by Leftists at the cost of female students' security. In a move to perhaps illustrate her own sensitivity to prejudice, Meirav importantly notes the absence of concern expressed by Leftists vis-à-vis the impact of the safety map upon the university's religious students; political 'correctness' in this instance highlights further lines of division predicated upon social relations. However, ultimately the young women who Meirav sees targeted by street harassment remain vulnerable without safety maps to guide them through the city, entrenching the prevailing gender norms which deem women in need of protection. Mapped plainly here, the sociality of space indeed affects experiences and understandings of gender.

Yet those men deemed 'threatening' through Meirav's account also experience the gendered construction of city spaces, though differentially so. For Yoni, a 28 year-old Mizrahi Jewish Israeli gay activist, Jerusalem possesses a surprising degree of security despite the frequency with which he is mistakenly identified as Palestinian:

> My Ashkenazi friends have been harassed or beaten, but I'm a big, Sephardic man. When I go down the street I feel very safe. These Ashkenazi friends are white, a bit scrawny… it goes through the whole macho, manly thing…. I have an advantage that way – if you're a dark man and big, you feel safe in the city.
>
> KN: But what about when they check your ID?
>
> I feel safe then because I know it will be okay. The inspection operates through the idea that the person blowing up is an Arab – and he looks like me. I understand the holistic experience of going through it all the time. When they realize I'm a Jew it's alright, but for Palestinians there's more…[6]

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[6] Interview in Jerusalem, 3 July 2011; handwritten notes.

Safety in Jerusalem appears forgone conclusion for Yoni, even as his bodily appearance superficially identifies him as 'threatening' and 'other' to Meirav's white female body and clear Jewish Israeliness. Yet paradoxically, Yoni's very security rests in his physiognomy, as physical size and racialised perceptions of violence converge to insulate him from the homophobic attacks experienced by friends. Thus, while appraised against and within safety maps as dangerous, Yoni's brown male Arab body ultimately ensures his security, as upon inspection he is able to provide proof of national belonging. Here social relations again emerge in terms of contradiction and complexity, as layers of subjectivity shape individual experiences of shared space. Ultimately, the social relations of space as experienced by Yoni and his friends serve to entrench prevailing valuations of masculinity, as the "macho, many thing" retains primacy.

Through these two accounts, the explicate and implicate unfold and enfold through social relations embedded in space, place and time. While testifying to the drive for separation, Meirav's narrative makes visible the ways in which individuals and communities necessarily come into contact despite neighbourhood boundaries. So too Yoni's account highlights degrees of simultaneous enmeshment and distinction, this time locating encounter within the subjectivity of one person, a self-identified "Arab-Jew" often outwardly recognised as Palestinian. Here, space is understood in terms of (in)security, juxtaposing gendered and racialised understandings of safety within a shared cityscape. Seemingly left vulnerable is the (white) Jewish Israeli woman; left intact is the hyper-masculinised (ostensibly heterosexual) Jewish Israeli man. Thus social relations and space might indeed be understood as reciprocal, as gender constitutes a code through which individuals "socio-spatially order their lives" (Portugali 1993: 57).

Telling

As the spatial separation or distinction of 'us' from 'them' and 'here' from 'there' remains incomplete in narratives of safety, individuals and communities adopt strategies of identification on scales more micro, ways of identifying belonging in moments of encounter. Indeed, these mechanisms are highlighted by Meirav above as she claims that Mizrahi men act qualitatively *differently* from Palestinian men in shared streets and alleyways – eye contact becomes the telling sign of threat. Here

gendered bodies are read and decoded for sameness and 'strangeness' within space (Yuval-Davis 1997: 47-48; Ahmed 2000: 7-9, 21-37; Lentin 2000: 182-183) in the interest of preserving individual security and maintaining community cohesion, while at the time requiring the continued presence of that 'other' being. Again separation is problematised by entanglement; as Sara Ahmed (2000: 7) writes:

> Identity itself is constituted in the 'more than one' of the encounter: the designation of an "I" or "we" requires and encounter with other. These others cannot be simply relegated to the outside: given that the subject comes into existence as an entity only through encounters with others, then the subject's existence cannot be separated from the others who are encountered.

In his study of the relationship between bodies and violence in Northern Ireland, Allen Feldman (1991) explores a practice of corporeal identification first theorised by Frank Burton (1979) in the same context. For Feldman and Burton in their particular site of conflict, the human body is subject to "telling" or "the sensory identification of the ethnic Other through the reception of the body as an ideological text" (Feldman 1991: 56). Rather than solely serving to identify and compartmentalise the 'other,' acts of decoding actually *encode* the self, as belonging and cohesion arise through and against the presence of 'strange' bodies in a manner similar to Ahmed's assertion above. Reminiscent of the ways in which social relations take shape within space (Portugali 1993; Massey 1994), here physical bodies are read within particular places, a match or mismatch constituting the key criterion of valuation. As Feldman (1991: 58) writes of Northern Ireland, "The proper reading of the various signs of embodiment, including dress, insignia, and speech, creates a circuit that indicates the residential affiliation of the subject and thus his precise relationship or nonrelationship to the social space in which the subject is encountered." In this, bodies are either "in-place" or "out-of-place," with those not belonging potentially subject to violent encounter as the result of somatic and symbolic reading.

Within the incompletely segregated spaces of Israel-Palestine, 'telling' becomes an explicit practice indeed often bound with violence, as related by Yoni in his narrative above – "The inspection operates through the idea that the person blowing up is an Arab – and he looks like me." Here, clothing, posture and language are read alongside gender and race within highly charged spaces, as valuations of belonging

and strangeness carry palpable implications. Yet so too telling orders and regulates the everyday irrespective of bodily threat and harm, generating boundaries of geographic space and the moral codes of communities therein. Through the valuation of explicitly gendered and racialised human bodies in topographic space, Palestinians emerge as separate from Israeli Arabs, religious Jews are detached from their secular counterparts, and *Yerushalmim* [Jerusalemites] are judged against *Tel Avivim* [Tel Avivians]. Yet on the most basic level, in the context of Israel-Palestine telling attempts to differentiate the broader categories of 'us' from 'them,' 'Jewish Israelis' from their many 'others.' In the Jerusalem suburb of Mevasseret Zion, Ronit, a 57 year-old Ashkenazi scientist at a nearby university, made clear the difficulties and tensions which accompany practices of telling in her everyday life:

> I can't tell the difference between an Arab and a Jew from Morocco. My hairdresser is Arab – he has fifteen kids and six brothers who are all working together. They are very nice! Every day they go to work. They pass the checkpoint and come to work – their shop is completely full with Jewish women and Arab women. I go every two months to dye my hair…. I always take my work with me, some readings, but I don't work because I like to watch people. On the promenade, in the coffee shop, I watch people – I like to figure out the relationships between them. When I sit there are many Arab women who come to the shop, but they are very modern. 80% of them I can't say they are Arab, I can't distinguish. It's only when they start talking and I hear the accent that I know. I don't want to think like this![7]

In the gendered homosocial space of her (Palestinian) hairdresser, Ronit is unable to distinguish national belonging based on the 'modern' bodies of the women entering into the shop. These women presumably share her relative social class and appear recognisably Jewish in phenotype, dress and comportment; here language and accent ultimately become the markers of strangeness in what appears to be a shared secularised semi-private space. Though concluding here with a declared desire to cease in the practice of telling, during our exchange Ronit prefaced her account of the beauty shop with the statement "They [Arabs] are everywhere!" and followed with the admission, "I don't pity them – we all have hatred." Though seemingly contradictory, this cluster of sentiments possesses internal logic for Ronit as fear drives her to identify strangeness and threat in the bodies and language of these 'brown' bodies around her. As she decodes her fellow customers in the space of the salon, Ronit

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[7] Interview in Mevasseret-Zion, 20 May 2011; handwritten notes.

determines the meaning of their skin colour – Arab or Jewish – against their modern, secular dress, with curiosity disguising anxiety.

Importantly, this ambiguity is key to the *work* done by telling, as through repetition identities and communities of commonality are continually reaffirmed. Indeed as Ahmed (2000: 7) writes, "[…] in daily meetings with others, subjects are perpetually reconstituted: the work of identity formation is never over, but can be understood as the sliding across of subjects in their meetings with others." Thus, just as 'we' depend on the presence of 'them,' clarity requires a degree of murkiness and telling necessitates moments of misidentification. While Ronit's narrative above makes clear the prevalence of ambiguity, my own experience of learning to 'tell' is additionally instructive. In early May 2011, I was beginning the West Jerusalem interview sessions, shifting from the familiarity of Tel Aviv to the unknown of Israel's capital city. As night fell, I sat on a bus from travelling from the Jerusalem central bus station to Tel Aviv, exhausted and ready to be home. Our vehicle began to slow and pulled to a halt at the highway bus stop just east of Abu Gosh, a Palestinian town near to Jerusalem. The driver opened the doors, allowing two passengers to board the bus as was customary on this route; both young men sat down in empty seats and we entered the main road, resuming our travel. While I had been nearly asleep when we stopped to collect the passengers, now I was wide awake. One young man, no older than his early 20s, had chosen the seat in front of me, searching through his pockets as he settled in for the ride in the darkened bus. I had not scrutinised this man as he boarded the bus, but now my heart raced, my eyes widened and my palms began to sweat – what was he looking for? I made a snap judgement upon seeing the back of his head, recognising his darker skin and hair as ethnically and racially 'other' to the majority of passengers on the bus; that he boarded near a Palestinian village increased the likelihood that he was Palestinian. Had he been dressed in the dull greens of an IDF uniform I would have quickly judged him Mizrahi Jewish Israeli, but this young man wore a thin grey coat and fashionable jeans, common attire for Palestinian men of his age. I regarded him as best I could from behind, attempting to determine whether he was Jewish Israeli or Palestinian, valuating his body in the space of the Israeli bus as he extracted a smart phone from his pocket and began listening to music.

Feeling terrible guilt, I berated myself for my own clear racism, for the extent to which I had absorbed prevailing fears and the techniques of their reproduction.

Disturbed by my prejudice and calmed by the seeming misplacement of my suspicion, I settled back in my seat. "Anyhow, if he was going to blow up the bus, he would have done it by now," I told myself. It was the location of his aged, gendered and racialised body within layered space that both frightened and reassured me – a young Palestinian man on a bus became less threatening as that vehicle passed locales imagined to be strategically or symbolically significant.

I sat in self-disgust, sinking into something close to sleep when suddenly the young man in front of me stood – my heart plummeted instantly. Had I been right in my earlier suspicion? What was he *doing*? Looking only at the floor, the young man removed his coat and sat down, more comfortable now wearing a t-shirt in the warmth of the bus. I felt ashamed. I realised that for me, 'how I experience the occupation' – a question posed to interview participants – was in part through guessing ethnicity, *learning to care* about national belonging and religious affiliation, starting to fear otherness and ambiguity, reading "political transcription[s] of the human body" (Feldman 1991: 57). In Tel Aviv, we disembarked at the Arlozorov bus station and I descended the steps behind the 'suspicious' young man; he dialled a friend and spoke in perfect Hebrew, far better than my own, walking into the night seemingly sure of the city and his belonging within it.[8]

Blackness and Racialisation

As clearly illustrated in the above accounts of mapping and telling, race is central to the identification of 'others' or 'strangeness' in relation to and importantly within the Jewish Israeli community. Complicating Oren Yiftachel's claim that ethnicity structures rights and governance in Israel-Palestine, David Theo Goldberg (2008: 42) argues, "Palestinians are treated not *as if* a racial group, not simply *in the manner* of a racial group, but *as* a despised and demonic racial group." In developing and substantiating this argument, Goldberg makes visible how prevailing theories predicated upon ethnicity and nationality offer explanatory frameworks which elide the explicit status of Palestinians as a "subjugated race" (2008: 43). From "Palestinianising the racial" to "racialising the Palestinian," Goldberg convincingly argues that *race*, rather than ethnicity, underwrites the production and maintenance of

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[8] Field notes, 5 May 2011.

power relations in Israel-Palestine. As in my account of the bus ride to Tel Aviv, gender remains inextricable from racialised practices of differentiation: "… the figure of the Palestinian, of the threatening suicide bomber, of a refugee rabble reducible to rubble, is overwhelmingly male, supported by women considered, unlike their military-serving Israeli counterparts, too weak and too late to do anything about it" (Goldberg 2008: 31). As seen in the above narratives, it is the colour of skin – the ostensibly phenotypical *race* – which sets processes of mapping and telling into motion. Here, categories of Mizrahi Jewish Israelis, Palestinians and indeed 'Israeli Arabs' collapse into each other, leaving 'tellers' to grasp for further readable signs and symbols of belonging.

Again, Yoni's experiences as a self-defined "Arab Jew"[9] shed important light on the tensions and complexities, this time with respect to active processes of racialisation:

> KN: So I'm curious about something. As someone who identifies as an Arab Jew, do you get stopped or mistaken for a Palestinian ever?
>
> Yoni: All the time. I'm stopped all the time for my ID, all the time. At the Central Bus Station in Tel Aviv they stop me and I've finally asked them to stop it, but I understand why they're doing this. And it's one one-thousandth of what… [Palestinians experience]. During the time when I was a soldier, on leave I'd wear my uniform really sloppy and of course that looks suspicious, an Arab dressed this way, so they'd stop me. Once in Tel Aviv two guys jumped me, they said, '*Mamatsav, achi? Ma shlomcha?*' [What's up, brother? How are you?]. '*Achi…*' [Brother] But they said it harshly – they didn't want to know how I was, they wanted to hear my accent to see if I was Arab. Sometimes I'm tempted to do the accent – but it's not worth sitting fifteen hours in jail… One time at the Rishon LeZion train station there were two guards – one was really hot so I was checking him out. But it looked to them like something else, they were afraid that I would blow up! How do I explain this to them? "It's not what you think! I'm not going to explode *that* way, but maybe another way!" What would they rather?

Here Yoni recounts the experience of telling from the position of one 'told,' importantly highlighting his relative privilege while conveying the sensations which accompany being read as Palestinian. For Yoni, racial and national (mis)identification

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[9] The adoption of this label is uncommon among Jewish Israelis of Middle Eastern origin, as 'Jewishness' and 'Arabness' have been popularly constructed in antithetical terms (see Shohat 1988, Massad 1996 and Pappe 2010: 160); as such, Yoni's self-identification as an "Arab Jew" may be read as overtly political.

are read through his gendered male body, a suspicious form presumed to be heterosexual in its threat to Jewish Israeli lives. As we spoke in his Jerusalem apartment, Yoni continued to reflect upon perceptions of his racial identity:

> If I sit on a bus of Palestinians here, you can't tell and I *like* this. This is who I am. At the university, everyone is white… or maybe I should say that I'm one of the only 'coloured' people there. And I can feel this. People say to me, "But Yoni, you're just dark," as if this means I'm not Arab.[10]

Drawing distinctions between 'darkness' and 'Arabness,' Yoni's (white) university colleagues make clear how popular conceptions of race underwrite valuations of threat and belonging, as his specifically *coloured* male body undergoes differentiation. At his university, Yoni founded an organisation of Mizrahi Jews which openly uses the term 'Arab Jew,' rather than ostensibly less political labels. Though those who know him more intimately assure him of his Jewish 'darkness' rather than Palestinian "Arabness," Yoni actually embraces the latter label, understanding precisely the work done by his Palestinianised 'blackness,' the ways in which it might offer an alternative space of belonging and site of resistance.

Similarly to mapping and telling, racialisation and qualities of blackness serve not only to divide the broader categories of 'us' from 'them,' but also to distinguish degrees of inclusion within the Jewish Israeli community. As Ronit Lentin (2000) demonstrates through her gendered analysis of Israeli society and the Holocaust, or *Shoah*,[11] stigma operates within a given society "[…] as a way of categorising and socially grading individuals and groups. . . . Society establishes the means of categorising, and grading is measured by ideal standards completely beyond attainment for almost every member of society" (Goffman 1968 cited in Lentin 2000: 170-180). Importantly, Lentin (2000: 181) argues that "[…] stigmas . . . tell normals not only about their normality, but also about their own weaknesses." While for Yoni, Jewish 'darkness' rescues him from Palestinian abjection, this lighter reading of race must be understood in conjunction with other criteria of social belonging – Yoni is young, fit, handsome and confident, describes himself as macho when needed,

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[10] Interview in Jerusalem, 3 July 2011; handwritten notes.

[11] Lentin (2000: 3) intentionally uses the term '*Shoah*' rather than Holocaust, stating, "'Holocaust' derives from the Green *holocauston*, meaning 'whole burnt', referring in Septuagint to sacrifice by fire as distinct from the Hebrew term for sacrificial offering, *olah*. Many Jews, aware of the Christian notion of a Jewish cavalry and sacrifice, reject the term (Young 1990: 87)."

completed mandatory military service and was soon to begin studies at Masters-level studies in Paris. In this, Yoni may be marked as 'normal.' Even Yoni's non-normative sexuality – potentially read as a sign of "weakness" within a context characterised by "military-masculine hegemony" (Lentin 2000: 178) – might be seen as a reason for social inclusion, as "homonationalism" increasingly binds particular gay and queer subjects to Israeli state and society.[12] Yet for other Jewish Israelis, there are far fewer opportunities for rescue from blackness and racialisation.

Often referred to as 'black hats' in popular (secular) Israeli discourse, Orthodox Jews face a similar contempt to the aggregate category of 'Arabs' with whom they share the spaces and places of Israel-Palestine. Both communities are denounced for living off of the 'welfare state,' contributing little labour or taxes and 'exemption' from mandatory military service (Shafir and Peled 2002: 126-127, 143-145, 324-248).[13] Indeed, as *Ha'aretz* journalist Gideon Levy (2011b) wrote of the uproar at increasingly public practices of gender segregation among the Israeli Haredi community: "This struggle is also characterized by generalizations about Haredim, every one of whom is a parasite and an exploiter, a black and benighted community, without any shadings of color [*sic*] – just like the Palestinians, who are all bloodthirsty people who want only to destroy Israel. That's how it is with racism." Neta, an Ashkenazi woman in her mid-60s living in West Jerusalem's Katamon neighbourhood, relayed similar perceptions of religious 'blackness' and stigmatisation thus:

> I accept most people, religious too – I have no problem with religious people. I heard from the *kibbutz* people "How can you live in Jerusalem? There are black people – in Mea She'arim [an ultra-Orthodox neighbourhood], in dress not skin colour – how do you live with them?" To me, you know people with black clothes have different faces, different characters. I see the person first, then whether they are religious, Arab, or whatever…. I have a friend in Eli, she went from being on the *kibbutz* to religious to a *mitnachelet* [settler]. Her

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[12] As Jasbir Puar (2013: 336) writes, "In my 2007 monograph *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* . . . I develop the conceptual frame of 'homonationalism' for understanding the complexities of how 'acceptance' and 'tolerance' for gay and lesbian subjects have become a barometer by which the right to and capacity for national sovereignty is evaluated." This concept is further discussed with respect to Israeli state and society in Chapter Three of this thesis.

[13] Due to security concerns Palestinian citizens of Israel are in effect deemed ineligible for service in the IDF; until 2012 ultra-Orthodox or Haredi Jewish Israeli men were able to claim legal exemption from mandatory conscription based on the Tal Law, which permitted deferral of service for students at *yeshiva* (an education institution focused on the study of religious texts). See Shafir and Peled 2002: 126-127, 143-144 and Harel 2012.

name is Danielle. We're still friends! When I worked at the television station, they were looking for more researchers so I offered my friend – she had no experience, but she was very nice and intelligent. I didn't say she was religious because it wasn't important, it had no connection to the work. My boss, also a woman, said "Ok, invite her! Where does she live?" "Eli." "What, she's from a settlement?" I said yes. "Does she dress like a settler?" "Yes – what's the problem?" My boss was open enough to meet Danielle and loved her. The dress question – they don't ask me about how *I* dress. I don't think it's a big issue. Many people look at Danielle when she comes – she said that she feels like a Negro [*sic*] who comes to the wrong bus. But because she's so charming, a genius with relationships, many people love her in the end. They see behind the dress.[14]

In this instance a female body is symbolically inscribed and decoded, marking a woman not only as religious, but also gleaning from her the particular mode or degree of religiosity. Perhaps dressed in long flowing skirts with her hair covered in a knotted scarf, vestment becomes the discernable marker of belonging as 'settler' status is read upon Danielle's gendered body. A shade of black apart from those living within Jerusalem's municipal borders in Orthodox Mea She'arim, Danielle becomes further darkened by her visible identification with the religiosity of the 'ideological' settlement movement.[15] However, she rescues herself from this double blackness by charming her co-workers, though qualifying this ostensible inclusion by relating how she still "feels like a Negro who comes to the wrong bus" as she enters the workplace. While both Yoni and Neta again substantiate the significance of space and sociality to practices of telling, racialisation additionally draws attention to the shifting contours of belonging. Here exclusion might be navigated and inclusion differentially extended, as Jewish Israeli society not only attempts separation from Palestinian 'others' but also internally categorises and divides itself.

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[14] Interview in Jerusalem, 4 May 2011; handwritten notes.

[15] Within Jewish Israeli society popular discourse reflects a perceived distinction between 'ideological' and 'economic' settlers, as the latter are seen to reside in occupied territory due to the lack of available housing within Israel's borders. As an acquaintance claimed of Har Adar, a *de facto* illegal settlement, "It isn't really a settlement because it isn't ideological – people go there to build houses, big houses! When people want to move out of the city, to have open space, this is where they go." Field notes, 2 May 2011.

'What They Do to Their Women'

While mapping, telling and racialisation actively divide and unfold while at the same time relying upon entanglement and enfolding, so too these acts of differentiation reveal the construction of moral codes believed to further separate 'us' from 'them.' In this, specific individuals and groups become the markers of collectivity, guarding the boundaries of community. As feminist scholars have convincingly demonstrated, in addition to biologically, culturally and even ideologically reproducing the nation, women are often ascribed this symbolic position (Yuval-Davis and Anthias 1989; Kandiyoti 1991; Yuval-Davis 1997: 23; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002: 334). Indeed, Nira Yuval-Davis (1997: 46) makes this connection explicit, arguing that in their fraught position at the limits "[w]omen, in their 'proper' behaviour, their 'proper' clothing, embody the line which signifies the collectivity's boundaries."[16] Yet at the same time as they become symbols of the national collective, women simultaneously embody its external 'other(s),' existing both within and without the polity (Kandiyoti 1991: 433-435; Yuval-Davis 1997: 47; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002: 335). Familiar yet somehow foreign, specifically *gendered* bodies come to symbolically, discursively and materially represent that which makes us who we are, just as they suggest who we are not.

With regard to Jewish Israeli society, particular women are positioned as boundary markers or border guards, indeed serving to identify, maintain and reproduce 'us' in accordance with existing social hierarchies. Importantly, not all women represent the collectivity equally; rather these figures have been constructed as largely secular, Ashkenazi, middle-class, heterosexual women who represent both tradition and modernity, custom and progress. However even as this boundary work appears largely internally focused, 'their' women are also read as symbolic texts, whether through corporeal semiotics or cultural practices, differentially reflecting the moral orders of both communities. As with processes of mapping, telling and racialisation, the 'othered' collective may exist internal or external to Jewish Israeli society, with seemingly stark lines separating categories of religious from secular Jewish and

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[16] While in his theorisation of 'telling' Feldman (1991: 69-70) briefly highlights gender – describing processes of discursive feminisation and posthumous masculinisation that accompanied violent encounter in Northern Ireland – Yuval-Davis importantly moves to centralise the role of gender in practices of boundary maintenance, drawing attention to the cultural, symbolic, biological and discursive modes of reproduction which consolidate and mark communities.

'Israeli' from 'Arab.' In keeping with the work of Yuval-Davis (1997: 42), though irreducible to one another, culture and religion often constitute the basis for these judgements read upon the bodies and comportment of 'other' women. Popular perceptions of '*what they do to their women*' thus identify ostensibly irreconcilable cultural and moral disparities, marking gendered bodies as objects of pity, as their symbolism as 'border guard' is now read 'victim.'

Significantly, the construction of morality and depravity through the bodies and treatment of women bolsters wider political arguments, particularly those regarding the protracted peace process and the impossibility of political change. Hila, a 68 year-old artist and former archivist at the Knesset[17] who lives in Jerusalem's Arnona neighbourhood, collapsed perceptions of Bedouin and Palestinian women as she related the intractability of conflict:

> What if there is peace for us? Is it possible? I'm pessimistic. Two nations want the same country – there can't be peace. I think there can be if there wasn't the extreme political Right in Israel and not the Hamas extreme on the other side. Also if they [Palestinians] give their women equal rights. It's culture, it will take time for them to want to be a democratic country and give human rights to their people. The Bedouin in Israel, if a woman wants to go to visit places in Israel, they prepare her journey. In the morning the woman goes to the bus and all the men came with rifles and shoot her – they don't allow her to go on the journey! Or if a Bedouin woman wants to work, they make a place for [selling] carpets and the men burn it. Why? The women earn money, they help the family – why burn it? They don't want her to earn money, they don't want an independent woman in any way. With a mentality like that how can there be peace between us and them?

Projecting her understanding of the gendered power relations specific to Bedouin communities inside Israel onto the aggregate category of 'them' (*read*: Palestinians), what Hila identifies as the 'typical' treatment of any Arab woman suffices to legitimate the continuation of the tense political *status quo*. Through gendered terms, Hila situates the ideals of democracy, human rights, independence and the capacity to accumulate capital opposite "their mentality," as the treatment of women comes to constitute a major political obstacle alongside claims land and the problematics of growing extremism. Later in our exchange Hila raised the issue of honour killings,

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[17] The Israeli Parliament.

linking this phenomenon to both her parents' experiences in nascent Israel and Palestinian statelessness:

> My parents made a revolution, against their own parents they came to build a country. The Palestinians were asleep, very primitive. There wasn't a nation or country of Palestine, there were people who sat here under the Turkish and the English. Then they wake up and want to be a nation? I understand, but it was too late. The state of Israel already was. You can see until today that they work in the field with very primitive [instruments]. It will take time until they are more educated, liberal and democratic – they still murder their daughters. So many murders. Because they think she looks at another man, because she doesn't listen to her brother or father, they kill her. For 'honour.' It's not 'honour,' it's murder – it's awful to kill your daughter. When they change the mentality there will be peace. Until then I don't think so.[18]

Raising the spectre of differential "mentality," Hila ascribes moralistic labels of civilised and primitive, active and passive, assessing the prevalence of justice and murder through the figures of women. Peace remains at a far distance as 'we' wait for 'them' to become *more like us,* while simultaneously initiating the very policies and practices which pre-empt the possibility of greater similarity. Rather than solely an issue of development or 'culture,' the use of "primitive" tools of the field in large part arises through the immense social, political and economic constraints imposed by Israel through continuing control and oppression (Roy 1995, 1999; Hever 2010, 2012). Yet more readily instrumentalised are the female border guards, whose seemingly rampant violent deaths symbolise a collective dearth of morality, law and civilisation.

Deemed neither country nor granted nation, in this narrative the space populated by Palestinians exists in both historical and contemporary times as 'backward' and 'primitive,' infused with and constructed through gender relations which serve to illustrate the extent to which Israel – imbued with state and nation – remains distant and progressively 'other.' Possessing the education, liberalism, democracy and mentality which ostensibly elude Palestinians and preclude the possibility of peace, Israel as a space and Jewish Israelis in their social relations gain positive substance through *what they are not.* Again, this process of differentiation reflects not only outward, but also inward as related by Rachel, a 28 year-old secular Ashkenazi

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[18] Interview in Jerusalem, 5 May 2011; handwritten notes.

filmmaker in Tel Aviv: "In terms of women, I think of the other side and what they have to live with – they have no rights, they have to have children, their husbands treat them badly…. Really, Palestinian women and Hasidic women are in similar situations."[19] In collapsing the experiences of Palestinian and Jewish religious women, Rachel's community takes shape through two 'others' marked as aberrant by the treatment of 'their women,' providing narrower contours of 'us' and 'them' while validating our superior morality.

Collectively, the gendered techniques and processes of identification recounted here – mapping, telling, racialisation and *what they do to their women* – constitute a 'common sense' system of classification through which strangers are individually and collectively 'othered,' separated from the community in terms both spatial and social. Then the reciprocal relation between space and society advanced by Massey (1994) and Portugali (1993) importantly extends beyond a given location and its internal relations or society; rather, here the convergence of multiple spaces and social relations grants discursive shape and material substance to community and place. Drawing upon topographic space, race, culture and religion, gendered bodies are decoded for various degrees of belonging, with women coming to signify the perceived irreconcilability of moral orders which maintain 'us' against the tide of 'them.'

The Tangled Webs We Weave

Across the geographies of seemingly divided space traverse identifiably raced and gendered subjects, generating the valuations of safety and harm, 'here' and 'there,' 'us' and 'them,' as detailed above. However, separation is clearly incomplete as the production of space and social relations relies upon the continuing presence of the ostensibly inverse or obverse; here, borders and boundaries emerge through processes of inclusion made possible by active exclusion. Thus despite the pursuit of spatial and social division by the Israeli state and Jewish Israeli society, everyday life – its meanings and material conditions – remains contingent upon relations of entanglement, if rendered largely invisible. In this, Jewish Israeli normalcy exists

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[19] Interview in Tel Aviv, 25 November 2010; handwritten notes.

explicitly through the presence of 'othered' populations and territories; built neither 'around' nor 'in spite of' occupation, conflict and domination, everyday life takes shape *because of* these very processes, policies and practices. Marked by a history of permeability, the boundaries between 'here' and 'there' remain necessarily porous in order to sustain the material conditions of normality as imagined, pursued and constructed by Jewish Israelis. Much like the role of 'strangers' as explored by Ronit Lentin (2000: 182-183) with respect to Holocaust survivors in Israel, here "a union of closeness and remoteness" defines an 'inside' through its outside, 'normal' through interaction with 'strange.' Again taking shape through experiences and understandings of gender, encounter and entanglement thus make possible Jewish Israeli everyday life while at the same time granting structure, texture and content to 'Israel' as if distinct from 'Palestine.'

According to Lorenzo Veracini (2011a, 2011b: 5-6) and Patrick Wolfe (1991), '*non-encounter*' describes the infrequent moments of contact which characterise social relations between settlers and 'others' in contexts of settler colonialism. In conditions of non-encounter, instances of social or interpersonal exchange are rendered nearly non-existent as a given settler colonial project attempts "[…] to supersede its own systems of operation… to cover its own tracks, to erase" (Veracini 2011a). Disavowing both founding violence and indigenous presence (Veracini 2010: 84), colonial 'contact' is imagined to occur solely between "man and land," effectively erasing the history and presence of those 'others' sharing in space and residing in place. As a settler colonial project indeed proceeds in Israel-Palestine (Rodinson 1973; Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Shafir 1999; Lentin 2000, 2008; Abu El-Haj 2001; Veracini 2011a; Pappe 2012; Wolfe 2012), these logics and practices of 'non-encounter' at first appear to resonate – from social segregation to material walls, fences and checkpoints, as on the explicate level contact between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians can be understood as limited at best. Yet here too division remains underwritten by entanglement, as narratives of encounter complicate principles of separation (Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008) while at the same time reproducing their foundational claims to difference.

As David Theo Goldberg (2008: 31) asserts, "Israel cannot live with the Palestinians, purging them persistently from green-line Israel, but cannot live without them, conceptually as much as materially, existentially as much as emotionally." Through building, maintaining and feeding (Jewish) Israel, Palestinians remain sewn into the fabric of everyday Jewish Israeli life, creating the material conditions for normalcy and binding the space of Israel-Palestine.

Dating to the first formalised waves of Jewish settlement in Palestine,[20] Palestinian labour has in part realised the task of building Israel with construction trades filled by men from within and without Israel's internationally recognised borders (Shafir 1999; see also Shafir and Peled 2002: 325; Gordon 2008: 65; Hever 2012: 15, 127). In the years following the economic restructuring and violence of the 1980s and early 90s, the number of permits drastically declined for labourers seeking entry from the occupied Palestinian Territories, ceasing entirely for those living in the Gaza Strip (Shafir and Peled 2002: 324-328; Hever 2012: 125-126).[21] Yet construction-based narratives of encounter between Jewish Israelis and Palestinians within Israel extend from historical memories through present day practices, as 'they' cross the border from 'there' helping to raise 'us' 'here.' Neta, the Jerusalemite woman whose settler friend remains subject to racialisation in the workplace, contextualised and recounted an early experience of Palestinian labour thus:

> I have two memories from my childhood about Arabs – they really affected me. The first was when I was between three and five years old. The village where I lived, before '48 it was an Arab village and for some reason some of the houses were left. When the Arabs ran away, the soldiers occupied [the houses], but sometimes people didn't run away or they came back. It went to the court to see which they did – if it's proven that they ran away, they lost the house.

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[20] In his work Gershon Shafir (1999: 83-90) outlines Israel's transition from pure settlement colony to ethnic plantation colony, problematising analyses of Israeli society which divide its history into pre- and post-1967 eras. While Shafir (1999: 83) explicitly states that "no preconceived notions but trial and error led the Zionist institutions to develop their method of colonization [*sic*]" prior to the First World War, he critically traces colonialism to the earliest Zionist immigrants who arrived to Palestine in the First Aliya beginning in 1882.

[21] As Shir Hever (2012: 126) notes, "Prior to the outbreak of the first Intifada, 32% of the West Bank workforce and 57% of the Gaza workforce were employed by Israeli employers, and work in Israel was the biggest source of income in the Palestinian economy. Currently 0% of the Gaza workforce is employed by Israeli employers, and 12.6% of the West Bank workforce is employed by Israeli employers (3.2% in the colonies)."

> In the village one Arab family stayed forever, the court found that they didn't run. Another [family] was waiting for the court, so they lived in the middle of the village, in two or three houses, until the court decided that they had to leave because they left and returned. I was there at the time when the soldiers or police took them from the house. The women cried. On one side they took them out, and on one side the bulldozer…. I think the whole village came to see. This really affected me.
>
> The second time I was older, between eight and nine years old – it was in the '50s during *mimshal tsvai* [military government].[22] During that time the Arabs in Israel couldn't move…. Before they could move, but they needed a permit – like now. My parents were putting more rooms in the house and there were Arabs working for us. Suddenly the police came to check if they have permission – some ran or some had permission. One of them hid in the bathroom of our house, it wasn't being used. He was hiding and the police didn't find him, and my parents didn't tell. I remember when the police left he was shaking, he was so frightened. My parents had to explain why this old man – he wasn't old, but I was young – why he has to hide.[23]

Recalled here at length, Neta's account is significant not only for highlighting the presence of Palestinian labourers within a Jewish Israeli home during the 1950s, but also for the arc from dispossession and destruction to active construction. Her narrative is suffused with tension – the police, courts and military appear in her memories as entities which act against the interests of Palestinians and Jewish Israelis alike – yet it additionally demonstrates the extent to which gender is integral to understanding encounter. In what was formerly a Palestinian village, Neta clearly remembers the tears of the Palestinian women as families were pulled from their homes, with bulldozers simultaneously beginning demolition. The gender of soldiers, police and demolition crew – those *de*-constructing Palestinian homes and presence – can be assumed (Jewish Israeli) male, yet it is the (Palestinian) women and their emotionality which enters the weave of Neta's memory. She recounts a similarly feminised vulnerability in the subsequent narrative, though this time embodied by a Palestinian man in the face of near-certain persecution. He enters Neta's Jewish Israeli home with other (male) Palestinian builders, helping to raise the space of the

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[22] From 1948 through 1966 Palestinian citizens of Israel were subject to rule by 'military government,' during which time their rights were largely suspended through the imposition of restrictions on freedom of movement, blocked entry to the Jewish labour market, and placement under surveillance and military law (Shafir and Peled 2002: 89, 111-112).

[23] Interview in Jerusalem, 4 May 2010; handwritten notes.

family in a role which corresponds to gendered and racialised norms in the context of Israel-Palestine: building is cast as a 'man's job,' in practice often a *Palestinian* or lower class man's job. Importantly, Neta recalls the physicality of the builder's fear, requiring explication as a child unaware of the power relations which could produce in a man – importantly, an older man – the seemingly feminine need to flee and quake.

In building the spaces of Jewish Israeli families, the coupling of security concerns with the entry of male Palestinian labourers is not unique to Neta's childhood memories, nor is it specific to the era of 1950s Israel. During the same exchange, Neta recalled more recent instances in which encounter occurred through gendered and racialised relations of construction:

> One of the times we built this house some of the workers were Arab. My daughter asked me, "You aren't afraid alone with the Arab workers?" I'm not, but my daughter is. Maybe for her, if you're born into an *intifada*, the first thing you know about Arabs is something bad. I lived in the Galilee, I knew a lot of Arabs, Israeli Arabs, when I was young. It wasn't a war and I didn't think about them as enemies – so I stayed inside the house even when the Arab workers were there with me. At the time of the *intifada* people were telling me, "Don't put them [Palestinians] in your house!" Now I think that maybe I was stupid, but I don't think that Arab people are more dangerous than others. But my daughter is scared.[24]

A capable woman, Neta has rebuilt her Jerusalem home by hand a number of times – sometimes alone, often with her husband and occasionally relying upon outside assistance. In this second narrative, she recounts her continuing willingness to employ Palestinian builders and her ease in their presence, juxtaposing this with the palpable fear expressed by her daughter. Though bound by close relation as mother and daughter, these women matured in different locations during specific historico-political moments; these contexts then shape their experiences of encounter. Importantly, beneath the anxiety of Neta's daughter lies a recurring theme, that of (en)gendered danger. Drawing upon themes familiar from narratives of threat and protection in other colonial contexts (McClintock 1995; Stoler 2002), race again informs the terms of encounter in Israel-Palestine. Here, the sexualised male Palestinians present a danger to the young (Ashkenazi) Jewish Israeli woman, as gendered bodies symbolically replace nations.

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[24] Interview in Jerusalem, 4 May 2010; handwritten notes.

Yet in the space of a Jewish Israeli settlement proximal to Palestinian villages, gendered, sexualised and racialised fear becomes supplanted by 'knowledge' gleaned from more frequent interaction and exchange; again here encounter arises through labour practices, with the male Palestinian worker central as catalyst. Located just above Abu Gosh, a Palestinian town inside Israel's 1949 Armistice Agreement borders, the village of Har Adar sits on a hilltop east of the Green Line. "It's technically over the Green Line – I guess we're 'settlers!'" 45 year-old Keren said laughingly during our interview at her workplace in Jerusalem. She continued, "But the fence goes around us and keeps us on the Israeli side, it cuts across the [Green] Line and encircles us." During our interview, Keren narrated this liminality as a preface to recounting her experiences of Palestinian labour:

> In this country you're always 'in' or 'next to!' This isn't really freedom, you're not really 'out there.' You have to watch your kids all the time, even when they're watching television. I see a lot of new couples with kids living in either small apartments in the city or in a bigger place between villages. There is a lot of fear… but also there is no fear because people need to live, they want something better – so they go [to live in the settlements].

> I should tell you that I know a lot of the Arab side of all this. We built our Har Adar house ourselves…. In Har Adar you sign up on a list and they bring [Palestinian] workers from the next village with permits to work only for you – they can't be anywhere else.

Keren paused to laugh, continuing:

> By law, [Palestinian] workers aren't allowed into Israel, but they are allowed into Har Adar! You can end up being friends, like we were friends with the electrical man. If he wasn't living in Qatane I'm sure he would be an artist, he's soft and gentle. But he needs work, so he's an electrician. He has five kids, which is little for them – most of them have 10 kids and more than one wife! It's so different where we live and where they live. I don't know any Arab women because only the men are allowed in [to Har Adar]. The roof guy became a friend of my husband – when my husband was in Tel Aviv he would buy materials for this guy for his other projects. One day he told my husband that he was thinking about taking another wife. What do you say to that?

> KN: What was your husband's reaction?

> Keren: Well, he's American so his reaction was different – I can only imagine what it would have been if he was an Israeli man! But this is a conversation *at our house*! [The roofer] never calls first, he's always just stopping by and

coming for coffee. It's not like when I was growing up and people would stop over - there's an 'Arab' knock at the door. It's a different kind of knock. If I open the door he stays out of the house even if my husband is home. I know that if he wants coffee I have to go upstairs or into my room, otherwise they'll have to take coffee outside. Politically it's very difficult.[25]

Related at length, Keren's account initially moves from a consideration of family safety to an acknowledgement of fear, terminating with a statement of necessity and felt frustration. Strikingly, Keren proclaims familiarity with the "Arab side," a familiarity enabled by the relaxed labour codes which facilitate the construction and growth of her settlement community. Keren cites the exceptionality of Har Adar in this regard and articulates how Palestinian workers permitted entry to the settlement from villages in the West Bank are overwhelmingly male. Yet rather than recounting gendered or sexualised physical threat, she details her feelings of political discomfort as she senses the imposition of what she perceives to be Palestinian (*read*: Muslim) moral codes and gender norms upon the space of her home and private life. Harkening back to '*what they do to their women*,' Keren feels herself in an awkward position as she tries to relate to the Palestinians with whom she comes in contact, ultimately supporting her husband's friendship, while at the same time finding the prospect of multiple wives and gender segregation a personal affront. Warned by the tell-tale "Arab knock," Keren chooses her degree of engagement with the anxiety accompanying the Palestinian roofer's appearance in the space of her Jewish Israeli home. Yet rather than ending on the precarious note of fear, security and necessity borne of labour practices and government policies, Keren's account importantly replaces this tension with larger questions of morality and custom.

In these narratives of labour-based encounter, recurring themes centre around the entrance of male Palestinian workers into the space of the Jewish Israeli family. Whether perceived as threatening to sexual, personal and communal security or the bearers of repressive gender norms and moral codes, these Palestinian labourers remain nameless and largely faceless, with details related in absence. At the same time, their low-cost labour remains essential to the construction and growth of Jewish Israel, its territorial expansion and even its claims to moral supremacy. Importantly,

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[25] Interview in Jerusalem, 2 May 2011; handwritten notes.

here families become the locus of insecurity, as they comprise the frames in which scenes of encounter unfold.

Who Maintains Us? Keeping Israel Tidy

In the realm of maintenance, Palestinian workers again enter the spaces of Jewish Israel in ways consistent with the perceived gender norms of both 'here' and 'there.' Whereas Palestinian men appear at construction sites largely separated from their Russian, African, Asian and Jewish Israeli counterparts, Palestinian women labourers often clean private homes *in the stead* of 'other' women, namely Eastern European and Asian. Rather than strictly predicated upon the ostensible division between 'public' and 'private' – where men maintain the former and women the latter – labourers tasked with cleaning and tidying Israel often blur the margins of these spheres.

As recounted during interview exchanges, normative patterns of gender often prevail even within the blurring of boundaries – here Palestinian men enter the private domain of the Jewish Israeli family via maintenance in positions as gardeners, plumbers, mechanics and day-labourers, while Palestinian women appear largely as domestic cleaners. As in instances of encounter enabled by construction, with the arrival of male Palestinian workers security concerns rise to the fore. Sonya, an elderly activist living near to Tel Aviv in Jaffa, related how the onset of military occupation in 1967 intersected with labour practices in the family domain:

> Our farm was the last on the road before the *moshav's* collective orange grove. The Palestinians were brought in every morning to work in the communal orange groves, and at 2 or 4pm they would come back from the groves and gather on our lawn. They would wash up using our spigot for watering our lawn, they would spread out their prayer mats, pray and eat lunch. They never left any dirt. They took everything with them and left the lawn as clean as they found it. They never made any problems. My youngest daughter would even come home from school and let herself into the house alone and there were no problems. I had no fear. We felt that everything was alright – I really thought that the occupation was ok, it was alright.[26]

Though Sonya protests that she experienced "no fear," her sentiments clearly highlight the extent to which, as a Jewish Israeli mother of a school-aged girl, she was

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[26] Interview in Tel Aviv, 31 January 2011; handwritten notes.

expected to feel a sense of danger as the day-labourers sat literally on the edge of the private sphere constituted by her family home. Sonya's delineation of positive qualities demonstrated by the Palestinian workers – clean, tidy and well behaved – points to the un-articulated characteristics commonly attributed to these men: filth, chaos and trouble. With their presence further regularised through good comportment, not only did the Palestinian day-labourers maintain the village's orange groves at a low cost, but also their conduct granted legitimacy to early Israeli claims that the occupation was in part a *mission civilisatrice*.[27] Perched on the boundary between public and private, here the innocuous presence of Palestinian workers signals the degree to which labour practices normalised disparate relations of power in the years immediately following 1967, as the dangerous 'other' (man) was rendered impotent through his capacity for maintenance.

In the present day, labouring Palestinian women differentially maintain Jewish Israel and enter deeply into the private realm of the family. As noted by Keren in her narrative above, Jewish Israeli contact with Palestinian women from the Occupied Territories is often less frequent than with men from the same areas. Here, hegemonic gender norms collude with the policies and practices of occupation to further limit the mobility and opportunities afforded to women living in the West Bank, Gaza Strip and East Jerusalem (Abdo 2011). Yet even as restrictions prevail, Palestinian women living within and without Israel's internationally recognised borders contribute to the informal economy through the provision of domestic labour, further normalising the relations of occupation.[28] In the instances in which Palestinian women enter the spaces of Jewish Israeli families encounter occurs largely between women, at times highlighting perceived commonalities. Keren, whose home in Har Adar was constructed in large part through (male) Palestinian labour, additionally spoke of her house cleaner:

> I have a lady who helps to clean the house, an Arab woman, once a month. She lives inside the border in a village near Abu Gosh. Recently she was

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[27] As Sonya recalled during our interview, "[After 1967] we heard that they were earning more money than before, that it was good for them. It was called 'the enlightened occupation,' as I'm sure you've heard it called. Everyone talked about 'the enlightened occupation.' We were perfectly satisfied with it – it seemed like a good thing." Interview in Tel Aviv, 31 January 2011; handwritten notes.

[28] Importantly, Palestinian women living in the West Bank may steal the border and separation wall in order to work illegally as cleaners inside Israel; a 2012 documentary entitled *White Night* (directed by Irit Gal) portrays these acts of border crossing, along with their attendant rewards and risks.

asking me "Are the *matzas*[29] in the stores now?" They love *matzot*! Her kids love it and she was anxious to have it. She tells me that her kids buy dresses for Purim too – her daughter loves *Purim*.[30] She said that this year she bought so many masks for them! They don't have a holiday for kids to dress up, for Muslims. It's too bad. So she waits for *Purim* and *Pesach* each year! Her family visits sometimes from Jordan – they're originally from Jordan, I think. They come to stay and tell her that she has become 'too Jewish.' They don't see it with a good eye that she is close to this country. She's big in body, but she has big fear. I feel that she needs it more, the money – she needs the money more than I need her help. I guess it's a contract by heart between us.[31]

While the cleaner she employs lives within Israel's recognised borders – deemed 'Arab' rather than 'Palestinian' – Keren's narrative situates this woman clearly in the realm of the 'other,' deserving of pity as she appears repressed by religion and castigated by family. Here '*what they do to their women*' enters the realm of 'our' women as Keren responds emotionally and materially to the perceived privation and fear of her employee, to the extent that she concedes an indulgence in domestic labour rather than its necessity. As Keren enters into a "contract by heart" with the Palestinian cleaner within the space of her home, the encounter indeed occurs between women and appears to engender solidarity, though the relationship remains suffused by power and paternalism. Living in a Jewish Israeli settlement east of the Green Line, Keren employs a Muslim Palestinian woman from inside Israel – though for the sake of conscience the woman's family may be "originally from Jordan" – and maintains the relation of domestic labour largely in an act of sympathy; yet the ostensibly pitiable conditions of the cleaner's life and labour in part make Keren's existence both liveable and normal.

Yet the entry of Palestinian women labourers into the space of Jewish Israeli families cannot be typified as an always sympathetic encounter, particularly as exchanges between women remain framed by relations of power which extend beyond shared gender. Upon entering the home, female Palestinian domestic workers are not automatically deemed 'neutral' based on biological sex; rather national, race and class

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[29] *Matza* (plural: *matzot*) is an unleavened bread traditionally eaten by Jews during the holiday period of Passover, or *Pesach*.

[30] Celebrated with costumes and parties in a manner similar to Halloween, *Purim* is a Jewish holiday commemorating the deliverance of the Jews in ancient Persia.

[31] Interview in Jerusalem, 2 May 2011; handwritten notes.

belonging additionally inform the judgement of threat. In the instance of domestic labour, appraisals of danger and safety are importantly not limited to the physical, but extend into other aspects of personal and communal security. After a long afternoon of shopping together outside Tel Aviv, my friend Ilana mentioned her house cleaners in passing. We had just removed our bags of goods and locked the car doors in the parking garage, running back to the vehicle in order to double-check the locks. Ascending to her flat in the lift, Ilana told me that recently quite a few cars had been stolen from this new development where her family now lived; in fact, on the previous Saturday a car was stolen from the lot, replaced by the company hours later, and then stolen again! I asked whether she knew whom the thieves might be and she replied with eyebrows raised, "They come from Qalqilya, Taybeh – these are our neighbours." I responded that perhaps her neighbourhood should hire a roving security guard if theft is such a frequent occurrence, but Ilana said that, no, this would be expensive; though prized, security can be cost-prohibitive. As we unpacked our bags and boxes in the flat upstairs, I asked Ilana whether she had the next day 'off' from work, which garnered a sharp look as Ilana does the majority of the housework in addition to caring for her children and working full time. Rather than having free time, one of the items on the next day's list was the arrival of two cleaners recommended by a friend – Ilana told me that she had hired both as "two can do the work of one in half the time for the same price." Yet despite this savings, Ilana relayed how she felt compelled to stay with the women while they cleaned, claiming, "You can't trust anyone." I then inquired as to where the cleaners were from and Ilana replied, "Tira or Taybeh – I can't remember which."[32] In this instance, the theft of the cars becomes bound with the presence of the domestic workers in Ilana's house, as the individuals in question – thieves and cleaners – share a point of geographical origin in the West Bank. In making this association, Ilana explicitly calculates the value of her time against that of the items potentially stolen in her absence, as security here relates to the sanctity of home and the objects within. As with the entry of male Palestinian workers into the home through construction, this encounter is one of seeming necessity coupled with vulnerability, now a question of material property rather than physical or sexual threat – gender is no guarantee of solidarity.

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[32] Field notes, 6 April 2011.

Thus through the enmeshment of gender roles and norms with racialised relations of power, cheap Palestinian domestic labour consistently enters into the Jewish Israeli home, maintaining the material conditions of normalcy. Yet clearly this normality retains aspects of insecurity, reflecting the larger political realities in which experiences and understandings of encounter remain embedded. As with building and construction, here gender structures modes of contact, determining entry to space and shaping the conduct of relations therein. While at times opening sites of imagined solidarity – as shared space may indeed impact social relations – these ostensibly neutral exchanges ultimately entrench the sense of threat fostered by hegemonic discourses. Whether resting on the margins of an orange grove in historical memory or entering deeply into the private realm in the present day, the presence of Palestinian men and women reproduces not only the material conditions of normality – bountiful harvests and clean homes – but also the normative precarity central to Jewish Israeli society.

Who Feeds Us? Nourishing Israel

While the Jewish Israeli family frames encounters made possible through construction and maintenance, these experiences of exchange and understandings of contact clearly blur the constructed division between public and private spheres. So too narratives of nourishment and sustenance span this porous boundary, further illustrating the extent to which ostensible separation remains underwritten by entanglement, the explicate made possible through the implicate. Here the reciprocity between space and social relations shapes not only patterns of gender, but also gives rise to dynamics of resistance and complicity, building upon the complexity of imagined solidarity as recounted above.

Importantly, the family remains central to those narratives of nourishment which unfold both within and without the space of homes and domesticity. Whether experienced or desired, within Jewish Israeli society nourishment remains bound with norms of intimacy and reproduction, recreating the conditions for sustenance, life, community and survival pursued against a backdrop of trauma and privation; indeed, Ronit Lentin (2000: 17) retrospectively observes this dynamic in childhood experiences with her own grandmother, noting "[t]he compulsive attitudes to food, feeding us too much, worrying when we did not eat enough." Nourishment thus

emerges entangled with security – this time in the form of full bellies – as food practices differentially recreate the precarity underwriting Jewish Israeli society. Speaking once more of her position atop the hill in Har Adar outside Jerusalem, Keren conveyed this intimate relation through the figure of her daughter:

> KN: How do your children react to the conflict? To living so close to the fence?
>
> Keren: Well, each kid reacts differently. My daughter is really into fantasy – it's a kind of running away. I was like this too growing up. "We live here now, but not forever" – maybe it's a Holocaust thing or a Jewish soul. I always thought I would live somewhere else, in a better place. But I've travelled around and now I think there isn't a better place. I try to tell her that, but…. For her *bat mitzvah* we're taking her to Ireland. She said that she wants to go to the land where all her dream writers write… she wants to fly away. Har Adar is like that, it's an in-between place, especially for her. It's like being on the border of the sea, but you can't go there. We look over the fence and I *know* there are great *hummus* places there, I just know it! But we can't go.[33]

This passage is notable for Keren's admission of her daughter's dream of escape, along with the extension of that desire to wider society – not only are national narratives shaped by historical experiences of the Holocaust, but so too are collective emotions and imaginaries. Significantly, the account is brought 'down to earth' or 'back to reality' by recognition that escape is necessarily ephemeral, as tomorrow's trip to Ireland remains embedded in the political reality which separates 'here' from 'there' and explicitly divides 'us' from nourishment. In her account, Keren clearly relays familiarity with the cuisine attributed to her Palestinian neighbours, desiring the quality and authenticity of their *hummus*, absolutely certain of its presence 'there' beyond the fence. Importantly, although her stated desire is to consume – craving *hummus*, the object of consumption – encounter is implied by the wish to "go," even if absent or denied. Speaking in the 'we' of family, this nourishment just beyond reach comes to stand for security on two levels: a political promise denied and a state of being pursued. Were Israel-Palestine 'safe' *we could go there*, a Jewish Israeli woman and her daughter; in the meantime, *we remain here*, safe behind the fence.

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[33] Interview in Jerusalem, 2 May 2011; handwritten notes.

Yet at the same time as desires for nourishment entrench the primacy of security – and with it hegemonic gender norms – so too modes of encounter might generate resistance, differentially structuring space and social relations. Through a narrative which again invokes 'their food, there' Ron, a 36 year-old musician and journalist from Tel Aviv, associates contact with Palestinians with his own position as an 'outsider' among Jewish Israelis. Often picking up odd jobs in order to support his artistic pursuits, Ron related the ways in which actualised encounters may produce resistance:

> For a while I was working in Roche Ha'Ayn – actually it was Kfar Qasem [a Palestinian town in Israel] – in the orange industry. It's on the land of Kfar Qasem, but the area belongs to Roche Ha'Ayn, which is a Jewish town. The area in Roche Ha'Ayn looks like a shopping mall, it's very Israeli. It's amazing – it's on the Green Line, but it's like a cliff. On the other side is the Occupied Territories…. it's like being in Ariel [a Jewish Israeli settlement in the West Bank] looking out. But there isn't any cliff, that's the point. The Israeli side looks like a mall, but the industrial area of Kfar Qasem is all garages, it's very poor. There are *hummus* places in Kfar Qasem, so I would eat there at lunch – it's literally just down the road. It was such a difference going from this mall, corporate environment to the *hummus* place! It was very interesting, very exciting.
>
> KN: How did the people you work with react to you going for *hummus* down the road?
>
> Ron: People already thought I was a weirdo, so…. This was during the Lebanon operation [in 2006] and for some stupid reason I got involved in talking about it with someone at work. It was totally useless. The guy almost hit me! There were young people who would come to work with us and they'd work for a day, a couple of weeks, and leave. There was one guy, Amir, who was really quiet. He was sitting near the computer with his head down, not showing his face. One day I said hello to him and I realized that he was an Arab. So this violent guy said in the room, standing next to this guy, that he hates Arabs. I tried to…. The guy was trying to piss me off.[34]

Recalling Keren's imagery of a fence forcibly instating social division, Ron relays the construction of a metaphorical 'cliff' dividing Jewish Israel from Palestine, this time through scenes of industrial materiality. Positioning his body as catalyst, Ron actualises encounter through his pursuit and consumption of *hummus*, creating

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[34] Interview in Tel Aviv, 28 April 2011; handwritten notes.

moments of contact which prompt exchange; notably, as opposed to Keren's ostensibly feminised passivity and longing, Ron *acts*. In this, like Keren, Ron performs his normative gender role, resisting one set of power relations while reaffirming another. Yet in keeping with the complexity of gender norms and constructs in Jewish Israeli society, Ron's actions fail to fit the parameters of hegemonic masculinity. Labelling himself "already a weirdo," Ron's border crossing "just down the road" is framed by his apparent strangeness vis-à-vis the Jewish Israeli men with whom he works. Ron belongs to 'us' – Jewish Israeli society, national identity and space – but remains an 'other' within, even as an altercation with a macho Jewish Israeli co-worker allows him to perform protective and aggressive masculinity. Again, despite the resistance implied and performed in his pursuit of nourishment and exchange, in some ways Ron's actions are profoundly normative. Here political encounter is reaffirmed as the domain of men and conflict; Kfar Qasem remains located 'there' beyond a cliff, 'poor' and 'other'; and Amir – the lone Palestinian present in this narrative – is constructed as feminised and in need of protection, catalysing Ron's performance of masculinity.

In the narratives recounted above, nourishment yields encounters typically removed from intimate personal contact, more remote than the accounts of builders, cleaners, gardeners and plumbers who enter into Jewish Israeli homes. Indeed, within Israel's borders food-based contact occurs most visibly in city streets and restaurants, where Palestinian labour makes possible a thriving Jewish Israeli culinary culture in part associated with Arab cuisine assimilated into the category of "Israeli food."[35] As *hummus*, *falafel* and chopped salad remain prime sites of (national) contest (Stein 2008: 97-127; Kamin 2013; see also Dean 2013a, 2013b), Palestinian men continue to staff Jewish Israeli kitchens in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, whether in pizza parlours or establishments known for 'Arab' cuisine. While the fusion of cultural practices and products might be seen as a potential road to 'peace' (BBC 2011), labour, exchange and encounter remain embedded with the relations of power and privilege specific to Israel-Palestine. Gender again emerges as a central element of structure, as while those labouring in the kitchens of the Jewish Israeli public realm

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[35] Importantly, while some 'Arab' or 'Middle Eastern' cuisine may have arrived to Israel through emigration from diverse Jewish communities in the region, the incorporation of distinctly *Palestinian* dishes into 'Israeli' cuisine constitutes an act of colonial appropriation. Thanks to Ronit Lentin for emphasising this.

are largely Palestinian men – presumably with security clearance – while within the private space of the domestic Jewish Israeli *women* often reproduce this fare and craft.

In these private practices and spaces, the reproduction of Palestinian cuisine may become a mode of opposition, an expression of desire and a performance of precarity, simultaneously resisting, reflecting and shaping hegemonic narratives and relations. On 10 May 2011, Jewish Israelis marked 'Independence Day' [*Yom HaAtzmaut*] as many Palestinians prepared to commemorate the '*Nakba*' [Arabic: catastrophe] five days later, bringing to a close the intense two-week cluster of holidays which includes *Yom HaShoah* [Holocaust Remembrance Day] and *Yom HaZikaron* [Memorial Day]. Observed annually with fireworks, parties and barbeques, on Israeli Independence Day I was invited to attend a themed gathering at the home of a wealthy older couple outside of Tel Aviv. Themed 'What Made Us Laugh in the First Ten Years, 1948-1958,' guests were asked to bring stories, art work, recipes, poems, songs and letters to share with those assembled, actively (re)creating historical and collective memory. Between landscaped gardens, yellowing propaganda posters and tables laden with a bounty of dishes, I engaged with the aging upper crust of (Ashkenazi) Tel Aviv Leftist intelligentsia, meeting artists, academics and collectors. "Do you see her?" I was asked as my eyes followed a finger extended toward a particularly elderly attendant, her face strikingly stern beneath a floppy hat. "She was in the *Palmach*[36] – she even killed an Englishman!" It seemed time for a glass of wine.

At lunch, amidst the many platters of salads and sauces there appeared a heaping dish of rice and chicken, shaped like a massive upside down pot. "Oooh! What's that?" a woman behind me asked our smiling hostess. "Something Arabic," came the answer – this was *makloubeh*, a Palestinian dish now served at an Israeli Independence Day celebration. How was the symbolism lost on those around me? Throughout the presentations of 'what made us laugh,' gestures had been made toward (absent) Palestinians and Palestine, as many speakers demonstrated their Leftist politics through the particular photographs, narratives and letters chosen. "Oh wow," the first woman continued, clearly delighted by the dish, "I haven't had this since the time

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[36] The *Palmach* was the elite fighting unit of the *Haganah*, the Zionist pre-state paramilitary organisation which would later become the Israel Defense Force (Shlaim 2000: 22, 34).

when I was in Neve Shalom!"[37] Aghast, I too filled my plate with the delicious dish, aware that I was consuming Palestine with those around me.[38]

Though notable for the apparent hypocrisy in eating *makloubeh* among a group of Jewish Israelis on Israeli Independence Day – a contradiction which, like many, sits all too easily – this narrative highlights a differential way in which Palestinians and Palestine nourish Jewish Israelis and Israel. Here encounter is again distanced or displaced, as no Palestinians ate with us at the celebration; rather the preparation and presentation of this dish within the space of a home nourished the political identity of our hostess and her assembled guests. As Palestine gave rise to Israel – celebrated on Independence Day – so too the presence of and continuing conflict with Palestinians makes possible a Jewish Israeli political 'Left.' The collective consumption of *makloubeh* becomes a way of speaking about and illustrating personal politics, wherein modes of prior encounter are animated and demonstrated through familiarity with Palestinian cuisine. Also known as 'Wahat al-Salam' or 'Oasis of Peace,' Neve Shalom is significant to the narrative and its political work. In highlighting her knowledge of both cuisine and village, this guest signalled the general contours of her politics, as did the hostess when choosing to serve the dish. Yet more significant than the positions conveyed and encounters implied is the exact phrasing of the guest's recognition – her surprise and delight relate a sense of temporal distance. Not having eaten *makloubeh* since her last trip to Neve Shalom, the intensity of this reaction makes clear that prior consumption and contact are happy *memories*. Why has she not gone back? As we all sat chewing and gushing over the deliciousness of this prized dish, the assembled guests participated in a kind of remembrance made possible through infrequent encounter – many recalled and again desired both cuisine and contact, yet knew the limits seemingly imposed by 'conflict' and the distance of 'peace.' In this, Palestinian food reaffirmed precarity among these Jewish Israeli leftists, brought into the sanctity of home and literally to the table by a Jewish Israeli woman. Unable to freely meet and eat due to a wider political reality, *makloubeh* ultimately nourishes a longing for normalcy.

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[37] Often the site of Israeli-Palestinian dialogue initiatives, Neve Shalom is a bi-national village in Israel.

[38] Field notes, 10 May 2011.

Conclusion

Through nourishment, cleaning and building, by moral codes, racialisation, telling and mapping, space and social relations emerge as mutually constitutive in the context of Israel-Palestine. On the explicate level divisions and separation prevail in both social and spatial terms – cities are carved into folds and zones; belonging is read upon bodies as physical texts, assuming meanings of blackness and whiteness; and morality, progress and readiness for 'peace' are marked by perceived cultural codes and custom. In this, a society divides itself, creating and reflecting hierarchies of power and privilege; here a particular kind of biopolitics takes shape. Making visible the ways in which "relations of subjugation manufacture subjects" (Foucault 1997: 265), the modes of division and differentiation cited within this chapter actively create an 'us' and along with it a 'here,' spatially bordered and symbolically guarded.

Yet so too the reciprocity between space and social relations reveals how 'we' remain dependent upon 'them,' 'here' upon 'there,' as power and norms require maintenance and repetition. In keeping with Foucault (1997: 246), within a given society biopolitical mechanisms of social regularisation " […] establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis"; in this, 'regular' must be continually recast against the ostensibly *irregular*, an inside made possible through its outside. Thus Israel takes shape through Palestine, as we are fed, tidied and built through the physical, emotional and symbolic labour of 'others.' On the implicate level entanglement prevails, catalysing processes and practices of boundary making as division emerges underwritten by relation.

As the explicate thus both fashions and relies upon the implicate, gender comprises a key aspect of subjectivity and society, structuring those experiences and understandings which regularise and massify, divide and connect. Gender not only provides the central valuation of public/private which ostensibly separates politics from intimacy, but also frames the normative narratives of (in)security which give rise to collectivity. Read on bodies, in space and through encounter, hegemonic patterns of gender directly maintain 'us' as separate from 'them' and 'here' as divided from 'there,' while at the same time providing discursive and material threads which bind seeming opposites together. In following Massey (1994), as gender actively shapes space and social relations within Jewish Israeli society, so too norms, codes and roles

emerge; in this, the meanings of spaces and places in Israel-Palestine indeed "reflect and affect the ways in which gender is constructed and understood" (Massey 1994: 179). Through space and social relations public and private are actively encoded as masculine/feminine, rendering politics a sphere of male influence and intimacy a feminised domain in need of protection. Thus the spatial and social construction of gender reaffirms the normative precarity so central to Jewish Israeli society, appealing to security and casting normalcy just beyond reach.

Chapter Three

Gardens of Perhaps – *Chaim Normalim* [Normal Life]

> Fresh flowers of perhaps once grew
> in a landscape dewy and warm,
> and I the best of gardeners knew
> how to foster and keep them from harm.
>
> Night after night, a sentinel
> I kept watch tirelessly
> to protect my buds from the cold wind,
> the wind of certainty.
>
> But finding out my secret, the wind
> coldly outwitting me,
> turned my garden of perhaps
> into a cemetery.
>
> -   Ra'hel, 'Flowers of Perhaps'[1]

Standing in Ronit's garden, I looked out over the rolling hillsides of brown, grey and green that compose the pastoral scenery of Mevasseret-Zion, a suburb outside West Jerusalem. Upon arrival to the day's interview I had been ushered warmly through a locked glass gate into a bright and spacious home, a welcome contrast to the blocky homogeneous stone exteriors which together rose like a fortress above the valley below. Led through the home and into the garden space beyond, I was struck first not by the stunning view but by the massive fence which enclosed the yard completely – standing nine feet tall, the mesh fence was topped by a 'y'-shaped frame from which a fanned extension projected toward the valley. Definitely a security fence of sorts, the first association that sprang to mind was a prison compound, minus the concertina wire and with the addition of an incredible view. "I built this for the cats, to keep them inside," Ronit explained with a laugh as she began our tour of the garden. "I have five cats at home who I want to keep in – and I want to keep the weasels out!" I smiled and we walked toward the flora, as house cats' wary eyes shined from behind a thicket of leaves and stems.

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[1] Ra'hel 2008: 49

Moving around the garden, Ronit introduced me to trees of cherry, almond, lemon and clementine – 300 oranges harvested in the previous year! – then on to graceful stems of white calla lilies, cheery pentas whose pink and red flowers attract butterflies, and fading purple and white anemones which mark the arrival of spring. The garden was bursting with flowers and trees, providing an ornate display against the ascetic nudity of the brown hills and their lines of stone. Together we stooped to inspect a small door cut into the fence through which Ronit fed the street cats, along with the occasional weasel. Though banned from the garden sanctuary, Ronit felt compelled to care for these creatures at a comfortable distance. Gazing across the hills once more I was moved to comment on their beauty: "Gosh, the West Bank is just so striking – it's unreal." Ronit smiled and gestured to the valley as she replied, "No, the Green Line is quite far from here. This is Israel." Stepping back into the house past the buds, blooms and branches I felt confused, certain that Mevasseret-Zion was located on or near the 1949 Armistice Agreements border line – later I would learn that 'near' and 'far' possessed relative meaning: "The Green Line is not close to here," Ronit reiterated, "But it's not like it is in another country…" Indeed, it bisected the valley below.[2]

In the calm and cool of Ronit's garden, the reality of conflict is held 'far' while the sanctuary of home and the realm of beauty are kept 'near,' though each possesses a window to the other. Here buds indeed grow safely, fostered and kept from harm under the protective watch of a sentinel – a gardener of flowers, a cultivator of security and a protector of a world unto its own. Yet ever visible beyond the fenced perimeter exists a wider world looming on the horizon, seemingly empty yet posing threat and promising danger metaphorically dressed in weasel's clothing. Entwined discursively, materially and emotionally, these worlds cannot decouple as the garden sanctuary – a site of desire and imagination, 'perhaps' what life might be – relies upon precarity, with lush abundance appearing in stark contrast to hills of scrub and rock. Thus even in the warmth of May the cold wind slips long fingers between the mesh of Ronit's fence, prying at her garden while creating the conditions of its possibility.

Following critical scholarship of power in the everyday (Mitchell 1990; Abu-Lughod 1990; Navaro-Yashin 2003; Chalfin 2008; Hoffman 2011; Ochs 2011; Richter-Devroe

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[2] Field notes, 20 May 2011.

2011), this chapter explores the sites and practices of normalisation which make Jewish Israeli everyday life possible in a context of sustained conflict and political violence. In doing so, the wider relations shaping Israel-Palestine emerge as most effectively produced and maintained precisely where they seem barred, absent or least visible. Here, everyday moments and sites of least resistance demonstrate exactly how normalisation *works*, how in becoming hegemonic specific boundaries blur to bind normalcy with on-going conflict and create a relationship of mutual dependency. Importantly, gender roles and relations emerge as the primary thread weaving the personal with the political, the intimate with the public and the everyday with domination, facilitating the production of normalcy explicitly through the continuing presence of violence. Looking to the level of family and the construction of 'small worlds' or 'elsewheres,' this chapter uncovers gendered mechanisms which reproduce the normative precarity of Zionism and in doing so ensure stasis. As gender shapes mechanisms of normalisation along with sites of action and investment, intimacy emerges central to a *sense of* normality desired, pursued and performed, providing relational ties which bind communities of varying size and composition.

All in the Family

> Israelis are descendants of a long longing to normality, to live your personal life. Not who is wrong or right, what I do that defines me as a person… Just living a quiet life is a *longing*. It's why they established the state of the Jews. So you don't have to think about what to do to make things better. It's a way to analyse collectively – longing for a normal life is thousands of years old.
>
> It's tiring. If you are a person with a consciousness for the collective there are so many wrong things – on all levels and on all sides – that you just can't deal with. If you give a little contribution, no one will notice. So what's it for? I can go to the park with my kid and at least my kid will be a good person.[3]

Summarily binding normality, stasis and power in a familiar site of the everyday, Dalia spoke these incisive words late at night in her Tel Aviv flat alongside her partner, Avi, as their daughter slept in an adjacent room. Rich with commentary about shared history, state building and community, Dalia's account of desired normalcy

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[3] Interview in Tel Aviv, 7 April 2011; handwritten notes.

reflects the process of negotiation and compromise set into motion as the pursuit of political ideals seemingly meets with little or no substantive return. A 35 year-old self-proclaimed Leftist "couch activist" of Russian origin, Dalia actively invests in 'the collective' primarily through online activism, committing her time and energies in a manner which best suits her estimation of personal efficacy. Here, even as belonging ideally yields freedom from "think[ing] about what to do to make things better," Dalia's collective simultaneously demands continued attention and individual contribution, remaining subject to "so many wrong things" in need of redress. Caught between a longing for inaction and the necessity of participation, Dalia chooses the path of seemingly less resistance and greater benefit: everyday investment in her family.

The position of the family in literature around Israel-Palestine remains contested, often cited as central to state-building and nationalist projects (Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997; Herzog 2005 [1998]; Johnson and Kuttab 2001; Kanaaneh 2002; Halperin-Kaddari 2004; Jacoby 2005), and at the same time yielding accusations of overemphasis turned cultural reductionism (Abdo 2011: 3). Within Jewish Israeli society, the family exists a significant institution particularly due to its location at the nexus of multiple borders, facilitating the transmission of ideology while comprising a central unit of support and belonging. In this, the family emerges as a point of confluence, a central location of boundary collapse wherein individuals come to understand and negotiate the intersection of everyday life with wider political realities, as depicted in Chapters One and Two. As a site and institution wherein tensions intersect, this conceptualisation of the family seemingly counters the image of 'domestic' or 'private' as bounded and characterised by depoliticisation and feminisation. Yet the Jewish Israeli family additionally constitutes a primary locus of normalisation – understood here as the process through which "[…] an undesirable situation (event, condition, phenomenon) is unrecognized, ignored or made to seem normal" (Cohen 2001: 51) – importantly producing modes of ostensibly depoliticised normality seemingly in contrast to the politics and violence of reality.[4]

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[4] Relatedly, Juliana Ochs (2011: 122) demonstrates how among Jewish Israelis during the second *intifada* "[…] fantasies of the home as a retreat reinforced a politics of normalization and the belief that conflict is sustainable."

As described in Chapter One, in accordance with the nationalist family-oriented gender norms which privilege heterosexuality, Jewish Israeli women continue to bear the expectation of reproduction in biological and cultural terms (Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997; Herzog 2005 [1998]; Cockburn 1998; Halperin-Kaddari 2004; Jacoby 2005; Segal 2008) while simultaneously marking the borders of both tradition and modernity (Kandiyoti 1991; Lentin 2004),[5] producing the national community materially, ideologically and symbolically. Due to their embeddedness at the intersection of family and nation, Jewish Israeli women become deeply implicated in the production of normalcy, actively tending and shielding buds against the cold wind. Here, women-as-mothers shoulder the responsibility of creating normalcy in situations of seeming *abnormality*, perhaps seen most clearly in relation to militarism – it is often mothers who wash dirty military fatigues with loads of regular family laundry, deliver home-cooked meals to military bases when conscripted sons and daughters are denied leave, and perform 'home' in the form of favourite meals and family gatherings when their children-soldiers are granted time off-base.[6]

Thus Jewish Israeli women are uniquely situated to reflect upon the production and maintenance of normality, as they provide the sense of constancy and familiarity imagined to underwrite 'ordinary life,' albeit a particular vision. Seen pushing the latest European pram down Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv, the image of the 'modern' Jewish Israeli woman-as-mother combines with that of feminists protesting against sexual harassment outside the art museum, revellers marching through the city's rainbow-clad streets during the annual Pride Parade, and young female recruits training for deployment in military combat units. Together these gendered norms, roles and relations bolster state and societal claims to 'liberalism,' 'modernity' and 'democracy,' producing a sense of normalcy 'as if' elsewhere European or American. Yet even as the Pride Parade's celebration of identities and sexualities seemingly destabilizes the normativity of heterosexuality,[7] this specific imagination and

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[5] While not specific to Israel-Palestine, Deniz Kandiyoti's (1991) reflections on the contradictory implications of nationalist projects shed critical light on the complex position of Jewish Israeli women within Israeli society as markers of both 'tradition' and 'modernity,' 'authenticity' and 'progress.'

[6] As there exist legal exemptions from mandatory military service in the IDF based on religious belief and practice, these observations of militarism extend primarily to secular Jewish Israeli families.

[7] Much critical scholarship details the extent to which the inclusion of non-normative sexualities by Israeli state and society acts to mask practices and policies of occupation, discrimination and colonisation. In a manner similar to "homonationalist" projects (Puar 2007, 2008), 'pinkwashing' in

performance of normalcy implicates *race* (white), *class* (middle or upper) and *geopolitical location* (Europe, the United States). Thus while purporting to engage primarily with 'Jewish Israeli women' and the 'Jewish Israeli family,' the cases related in this chapter necessarily reflect hierarchies of privilege operating within relations of domination – clearly not all women and families equally mirror, access or shape prevailing visions of normality.[8] Rather, some dominate even within domination.

Ruptures and Repairs

In the context of Jewish Israeli society, processes of normalisation function to their remarkable degrees of efficacy due precisely to their intimate dimensions, the ways in which they join the personal with the political and in doing so generate tension. In a society stratified across and fragmented by complex divisions,[9] the perpetuation of normalcy entails seemingly passive assent to bargains with power, such as 'knowingly not knowing' (Cohen 2001: 24) so that one might lead an 'ordinary life' in a context of conflict. Yet just as both active and passive consent secure hegemony (Gramsci 1971: 333), so too normalcy arises as the product of actions taken and withheld. Here specific mechanisms emerge which ostensibly prevent the rupture of order and

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Israel produces and solidifies national consensus through the selective extension of belonging to non-normative sexual identities; see Kuntsman 2009, Hochberg 2010 and Puar 2011. Importantly, Jasbir Puar (2013: 337) differentiates between homonationalism and pinkwashing:

> Homonationalism and pinkwashing should not be seen as parallel phenomena. Rather, pinkwashing is one manifestation and practice made possible within and because of homonationalism. Unlike pinkwashing, homonationalism is not a state practice per se. It is instead the historical convergence of state practices, transnational circuits of queer commodity culture and human rights paradigms, and broader global phenomena such as the increasing entrenchment of Islamophobia.

[8] Based on interviews with largely secular, middle-class, heterosexual Ashkenazi Jewish Israelis living in Israel's two main urban centres, these accounts reflect a particular range of social locations within existing hierarchies of power and privilege in Jewish Israeli society.

[9] Assessed primarily in terms of ethnicity, class and gender, studies of social stratification in Israel locate Ashkenazi Jews at the highest social level, Mizrahi Jews at a secondary level, followed by Palestinians living in Israel, and finally labour migrants – many non-Jewish – at the lowest social position (Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2004: 4). Oren Yiftachel (2006) complicates this prevailing model by looking to the total area of Israel's effective sovereign rule, including Palestinian residents of the Occupied Territories.

facilitate the repair of normalcy when breached, yielding gendered modes of normalisation and social self-regulation.

Set not *against* but constituted *through* wider political realities, the production, performance and maintenance of Jewish Israeli normalcy depends upon that violence which it ultimately seeks to erase. Indeed, as Natalie Konopinski (2009: 92) demonstrates in her ethnography of security perspectives and practices in Tel Aviv, within scenes of normality "violence always threatens, always the possibility, always the potentiality, to break through the surface of security." Here 'security' may actually reproduce and amplify the fears and suspicions it claims to anticipate and thwart (Ochs 2011: 5), sewing conflict deeply into everyday life.[10] Among Jewish Israelis, appraisals of both normality and reality remain largely framed by the continuing threat of violence, whether absent or present. Deemed constitutive of reality, as reflected in the prevailing sentiment that life in Tel Aviv is "unreal" due to its relative insularity from attack,[11] violence presents the greatest obstacle to the attainment of normalcy. "I spent all my life between wars, terror attacks," 57 year-old Ronit recounted as we sat in her living room in Mevasseret-Zion looking out to the garden and its surrounding hills. "In the Yom Kippur War two of my best friends died. But after all these terrible conditions I don't know how people grow up normal. It is *abnormal*, exhausting, depressing."[12] In her statement, Ronit clearly demonstrates how violence seemingly dissociates normalcy from reality while at the same time binding them together, as her life experience is framed by the wars which produce a desire for and imagination of normality. Importantly, this violence necessarily evades *complete* normalisation or even "routinisation" (Konopinski 2009; Ochs 2011; compare Allen 2008),[13] not by virtue of its simultaneous constancy and unpredictability – the ways in which lives are interrupted – but through social

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[10] This observation owes much to Charles Tilly's (1982) conceptualisation of "protection rackets," through which a state directly or indirectly manufactures the very threats from which it purports to protect its citizenry; see also Peterson 1992.

[11] Characterised as a 'bubble' or *medinat Tel Aviv* ['the state of Tel Aviv'] in various interviews, this prevailing discourse is also echoed in scholarship and popular media; see Konopinski 2009, Mendel 2009, Vick 2010, Simon 2012 and Deger 2012.

[12] Interview in Mevasseret-Zion, 20 May 2011; handwritten notes.

[13] Importantly, normalisation and routinisation are distinct phenomena. While *normalisation* avoids the abnormal or absorbs and renders it seemingly ordinary, *routinisation* implies the production of habit without the guise of normality – through the latter process an abnormal event or situation remains so even as it becomes marked as quotidian; see Allen 2008.

imperatives. Rather, as violence serves to actively reinforce and stabilize the relations which underwrite the construction of Jewish Israeli normalcy, particular worlds and communities are maintained.

This process of world-maintenance critically unfolds through ruptures and repairs occurring within the intimate relations of the family, a (hetero)normative unit granted primacy in Jewish Israeli society (Halperin-Kaddari 2004: 229) and associated with stability and belonging at the most basic level. Now 80 years old and living outside Tel Aviv in Jaffa with her husband, Sonya spoke at length about the ways in which her political identity as a feminist anti-occupation activist creates ruptures and repairs within family relations:

> K: Are your daughters politically engaged like you?
>
> Sonya: One shies away from politics completely. Her now ex-husband is Right-wing… we never talked about politics together, not the occupation or anything like that. They have four sons: 18 and-a-half, 17 and-a-half, 15, and 12. They never wanted these arguments in front of the children, they wanted to keep it as far away as possible. My daughter knows what I think and I'm sure she agrees that the occupation is not a good thing. But she's not in any way radical – she won't stand in the street with a sign saying 'Down with the occupation!' Because she won't let us discuss it, the boys know approximately what I think…. Like at last *Pesach* [Passover], the oldest asked a question about the occupation. Their family likes to do the whole thing [Passover ritual], to read the whole reading with a break for dinner in the middle. So I answered, my husband answered, and it became a big discussion. It lasted about 45 minutes. And my daughter got upset and said, "We have to finish [the reading]!" So we had to leave the discussion, but we said [to the grandson] "When you want to ask again, do so." The opportunity doesn't come often, as the boys are older. They're busy and it isn't like we get them on Saturday afternoons to go to the park anymore. They have their own lives. But they're very much aware of my way of thinking and that where I stand is very different from where their father stands.
>
> Our other daughter and our son-in-law actually met in Peace Now[14] at the university. But she doesn't want any political discussion when we're visiting – she hates arguments! Her husband would disagree pleasantly with me all the time if he were allowed. For instance, there was one discussion and their son was 12 years old at the time. He started asking "Why are they angry? Why is

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[14] Peace Now or '*Shalom Achshav*' is a long-time Jewish Israeli activist organisation which promotes the creation of two-states in Israel-Palestine; see http://www.britsforpeacenow.com; accessed 26 February 2012.

Aba [Dad] yelling at *Savta* [Grandma]?" and that was it – she doesn't want him to see this. Her in-laws are very far Right. We have to be careful when we visit with them. But she understands where I am. My daughter is running away, but I can't force her.

Our oldest daughter is in Los Angeles and she is totally with my way of thinking, she agrees. But what can she do? She lives in LA! Our youngest who is at home with us agrees with me about the occupation, but she is very sensitive. She won't do *Machsom* [Checkpoint] Watch[15] because she doesn't want to see. She will sign a petition, but she won't be active. She actually laughs at me – she says "Who are you going to make peace with tonight?" when I go out the door. I told her that "Tonight I'm going to make peace with Katie!"[16]

Illustrating a range of political subjectivities from her own identification as a radical Leftist feminist activist to her former son-in-law's Right-wing orientation, Sonya articulates the ways in which the family remains a repository of politics.[17] Here, various mechanisms of repair emerge through episodes of rupture, as each daughter differentially attempts to fend off and mitigate the ostensible intrusion of the political into the familial and intimate. Through mechanisms of joking, bypassing and unseeing, the politics framing and facilitating Jewish Israeli normalcy are seemingly displaced, rendering the 'impossible,' 'discomfiting' and 'unknowable' manageable or digestible. As Sonya's youngest daughter jokes about her mother leaving the house to "make peace," she summarily hyper-politicises her mother's actions and renders them surreal or ridiculous, despite shared political views. The first daughter to appear in Sonya's narrative also shares her politics, but effectively bypasses the resolution of a conversation about the occupation with an appeal to the completion of ritual or tradition. As the middle daughter met her husband at Peace Now a common politics is again demonstrated, yet this daughter blocks the sight of familial disagreement from her son, not only precluding future conversations but also likely helping the child to

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[15] Machsom Watch is a Jewish Israeli feminist anti-occupation organisation, whose work aims at influencing public opinion through conducting and documenting "[…] daily observations of IDF checkpoints in the West Bank, along the separation fence and in the seamline zone, on the main roads and on out-of-the-way dirt roads, as well as in the offices of the Civil Administration (DCOs) and in military courts." See http://www.machsomwatch.org/en, accessed 26 February 2012.

[16] Interview in Tel Aviv, 31 January 2010; handwritten notes.

[17] Throughout the course of interviews and fieldwork, a wide spectrum of political orientation and religious belief emerged characteristic of many Jewish Israeli families. Bound by blood relation and value systems that at some level remain shared, family units often bring together a tense amalgamation of politics and perspectives.

un-see the dispute. And not without a touch of sad irony does Sonya relate the absence of her most politically like-minded daughter, as the one who *would* do something cannot by virtue of geographic distance.

Joking, Bypassing and Unseeing

This trio of reparative mechanisms – joking, bypassing and unseeing – frequently recurred throughout the period of my fieldwork, experienced personally and conveyed in exchanges when political realities ruptured the carefully constructed fabric of normalcy. Though moments of tension and interruption remain central to the production and preservation of normality – as an ostensible 'inside' is made possible through the continued presence of its 'outside' – this necessity in no way diminishes the sensation of intense discomfort which accompanies the transgression of limits and destabilisation of order. Indeed, this very visceral tension remains requisite for the activation of normalisation mechanisms; here, gender operates on subtle levels, providing both frame and texture to the instances of rupture and processes of repair which together produce normality.

Though articulated in interviews and observed in public settings, the gendered dimensions of joking, bypassing and unseeing are perhaps best appraised through experiences within my own family, as I pushed 'the limits of the possible' through various acts of border crossing. Possessing an American passport and a desire to travel the entirety of Israel-Palestine, I understood physical borders as passable and political boundaries as open to traversal, experiencing mobility in a manner markedly different from my Jewish Israeli family and friends. Importantly, this border crossing and testing of limits was framed and enabled by my positionality as a white, middle-class, non-Jewish American woman, a social location which informed imagination, mobility and the reception of my perceived transgression. In June 2011, I planned a three-day trip to Ramallah and Nablus to visit friends, join a hiking group and travel to the origin of *knafeh*, my favourite dessert in the region. A previous trip to Ramallah and Birzeit had been a matter of secrecy to all but a small number of close friends, as at the time Guy was working in London and responsibility for me seemingly fell to his family. Not wanting to worry them with my border crossing, I had decided against telling the family my intentions and effectively bypassed the issue and its wider political context. This time, however, Guy was in Tel Aviv and I felt

more confident in defying limits, emboldened the day before by an interview participant who spoke about the importance of destabilising perceptions. Framed by my impending absence at a family birthday party and the reassurance that, no, Guy would not be going with me to Ramallah, I looked forward to this trip both for the new experiences it would offer and the satisfaction of my transgression made public – I would knowingly rupture the guise of normalcy within my own family. Surprisingly, there was no concern that I would be going into the occupied West Bank as a woman travelling alone; it was preferable that I should venture solo into the impossible and unknowable, a territory popularly associated with violence and insecurity, rather than taking my male (Jewish Israeli) partner with me. Clearly, ethnicity and nationality trumped gender in this appraisal of safety, though I was often mistaken for being Jewish, if not Jewish Israeli, inside Israel. Was there some intangible aspect of Jewishness that Palestinians could read, some way of 'telling' unknown to me? Would my 'rupture' interrupt anything at all?

During my absence that weekend, Guy kept record of responses prompted by his answer to the question "Where is Katie?" as it arose in various contexts, from a gathering at the beach to the family birthday celebration and an art exhibition in Jerusalem. Acting as both partner and research assistant, Guy responded openly when asked about my location and conveyed the subsequent reactions as we spoke over the phone each evening, revealing diverse modes of repair. "Why does she have to go there? Isn't there enough to do *here*?" was a sentiment repeated among female friends and relatives, whose rhetorical queries bypassed my location and the politics surrounding my absence through an act of dismissal. Similarly, a male relative asked, "Why would she go there?" this time expecting a response. Guy replied with questions in kind: "Why wouldn't she go there? If it was Paris would you ask why she's there?" Guy's interlocutor considered this for a moment before declaring that he would like to visit Ramallah himself, were he not concerned for personal safety. At a beach gathering among childhood friends a male friend responded to my absence with another sort of query: "What? She has an Arab boyfriend now?" Simultaneously a joke and an accusation, this response to my location not only diminished the politics of my absence but also called into question my morality through invoking sexuality, if in jest. Perhaps feeling badly about his reaction, this friend continued by telling Guy that he would actually like to visit cities in the West Bank and Jordan as he feels

"more comfortable in Arab cultures." Though desires are again stymied by fears for safety, in reality this friend lives in a Jewish Israeli settlement in the West Bank with his wife and children; he is surrounded by a desired 'Arab culture,' though unable to access its 'comfort' by virtue of the political realities which make possible his life within the settlement. Interestingly, these reactions recorded and recounted by Guy emerge in specifically gendered terms which reaffirm hegemonic norms, codes and relations. As practiced primarily by female relatives, bypassing remains rooted '*here*' – why can I not stay put? – while joking by male relatives and friends morphs into admitted desires to go '*there*,' to act and move. In this, prevailing dualisms of stasis-as-feminine and action-as-masculine are (re)confirmed through expressions of incomprehension and desire, though admittedly bypassing and joking are not strictly limited to women and men respectively. With respect to "military-masculine hegemony" and the masculinised construction of normality in Israel (Lentin 2000), together joking and bypassing effectively serve to avoid, reduce and constitute an 'other,' as *abnormal* actions are dismissed or rendered absurd through expressions which summarily feminise, diminish and invalidate.

While mechanisms of joking and bypassing clearly emerge among family and friends when faced with acts of assumed transgression, unseeing was activated upon the introduction of materiality as I sought to share gifts, photographs and experiences from my trip to the West Bank. In these instances, physical presence necessitated a different strategy of normalisation, as the material evidence brought from Palestine forced recipients to acknowledge what lies beyond the ostensible limits of possibility – in order to stabilise normalcy once more, this rupture required a differential mode of repair. Carried through the Old City of Nablus, ferried to the top of Ibn Tulkarm's palace, stashed under dusty bus seats, x-rayed and crushed in the machines at Qalandia checkpoint, and finally driven tiredly to Jerusalem and Tel Aviv, a plate of sticky sweets and bars of olive oil soap from Nablus met with unexpected reactions. "We don't like Arabic sweets – they're too sweet. You can take them with you when you go," I was told as I presented the first gift, summarily being asked to remove the Palestinian treats from sight. My photographs of the hiking trip – images of fog and breaking sunlight, terraced hills and exquisite flora – precipitated a request to see pictures of Ramallah, though these ultimately disappointed as they revealed a bustling and crowded city no more exotic than areas outlying Jerusalem. The olive oil soap

was received first with appreciation and then a joke: "Wow… So if I wash with this will I become…" The speaker left her sentence hanging in mid-air. "Clean?" I offered. "Pro-Palestinian?" came the end of the query with a quick laugh.[18] In these ways, gifts and images from my time in Palestine were actively un-seen by their intended recipients, as they were rejected or reduced in their materiality and symbolism. Clearly operating in tandem with joking and bypassing, here acts of unseeing acknowledge a discomfiting object or truth while barring it from entering too deeply into home or psyche – before being set aside in a sink for use, soap is first cleansed of its politics. Importantly, these exchanges occurred among women within domestic spaces, pointing to the ways in which mothers and wives might regulate the presence of politics in family life. Though overwhelmingly associated with men, conflict and security, here women meet with politics head-on and set the terms of subsequent visibility and engagement. In this, the porosity of the boundary between homefront and battlefield again becomes visible, creating not only the conditions for militarisation, but also determining exposure to alternative narratives, realities and possibilities.

Silencing

While joking, bypassing and unseeing take shape within intimate settings and interactions, resoundingly clear is the silence which prevails after incidences of rupture. As a mode of repair, silence emerges not only through the absence of articulation, but also the ways in which particular issues are spoken about or rather *around*; silence may thus include speech, albeit that which "[…] has had no political 'voice' or impact" (Berlant 2011: 232). Yet the dependency of normalcy upon politics and conflict signals that repair can only ever be partial – whether rendered insignificant or silent, the political cannot be fully erased in its necessity to everyday life. Then what is preserved by acts of silencing and for whom in these situations? Returning to Sonya's narrative recounted above, through forbidden to speak about politics in order to protect her grandchildren from the emotional upset caused by conflict among relatives, the silencing of Sonya and her husband does not preserve a sense of 'everything is alright' for their adult children; despite altruistic intentions it is not likely to do so for the children in question either. Rather, a knowing

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[18] Field notes, 23-25 June 2011.

approximation of childhood normalcy becomes reconstituted and enshrined, where reality – in Sonya's case political disagreement among adults – becomes displaced by a desired sense of normality. As such, this resulting normalcy necessarily remains aspirational, reflecting "[…] the desire to feel normal and to feel normalcy as a ground of dependable life, a life that does not have to keep being reinvented" (Berlant 2007: 281). So too the silence which prevails within my own family after episodes of rejection or diminishment does not sit easily, yet it sits nonetheless – we *wish* it could be otherwise, like that somewhere else 'normal' which we try to recreate in our ginger steps around obvious hurts and disappointments.

Importantly, though Sonya, her husband and myself appear victims of silencing enacted and normalcy pursued, those silent and silenced often play an active role in their apparent imposed muteness. As illustrated by critical scholarship around political violence, silence indeed may become a matter of active consent in response to violent acts witnessed or watched (Last 2000: 324; Cohen 2001: 145, 166), just as it may constitute a protective mechanism for victimised individuals and communities (Das 2007: 54, 87; Lawrence 2000: 178; Lentin 2000) or a sign of protest and reassertion of commitment among the politically depressed (Eliasoph 1998; Berlant 2011: 231). As there exist many kinds of silences (Lawrence 2000: 178), some retain aspects of agency despite their seemingly forced imposition by external actors. Not one to shy from confrontation, Sonya frequently marches in anti-occupation, anti-racism and pro-democracy demonstrations, in addition to participating actively in multiple feminist anti-occupation organisations from Machsom Watch and Women in Black to the Coalition of Women for Peace.[19] Her consent to silence among family, then, is quite significant. Indeed, my own silence after the reception of sweets and soaps must be read in conjunction with my academic research and frequent participation in demonstrations and protests – holding politics and family in tension, I actively recreated the subject of my own study. Rather than indicating denial as

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[19] Employing differential strategies for mobilisation and action, Machsom Watch, Women in Black and the Coalition of Women for Peace are among the most visible feminist anti-occupation organisations in Israel. While Machsom Watch focuses on reporting human rights violations at Israeli military checkpoints, as an international anti-militarist network Women in Black raises consciousness through weekly vigils. The Coalition of Women for Peace "initiates public campaigns and education and outreach programs" and is responsible for the 'Who Profits?' campaign, which exposes corporate involvement in Israel's occupation. For further information see http://www.machsomwatch.org/en, http://www.womeninblack.org/es/history and http://www.coalitionofwomen.org/?page_id=340&lang=en, accessed 26 February 2012.

commonly associated with silence (Cohen 2001: 9), our muteness appears an *affirmation*, a subscription to the sense of normalcy seemingly requisite for familial accord. While silence indeed interrupts the transmission of meaning upon which communities rely (Daniel 2000: 351), our reticence actively stabilises a most intimate constellation of collectivity.

Within this family unit from whence silence emanates, gender functions as an element of structure, a vector of normativity and a relation of power, though perhaps unpredictably so. The behaviours and attitudes produced through the entanglement of private with public, intimate with political, resist generalisation as an individual's location, experience and perspective as 'woman' or 'man' exists embedded in multiple relations, at once personal and familial, social and political, material and emotional (Brah 1996). In Sonya's account, as the narrator of these episodes her voice trumps that of her husband and she appears an authoritative matriarch. Yet in moments of silencing, political clashes occur explicitly with her daughters' more conservative male partners, initiating closure – in Sonya's opinion, her daughters all *agree* with her on matters relating to the occupation, while the men around her express opposition. However, in each of the final moments of judgment, these very daughters are the actors who forbid the intrusion of politics into the intimacy of family life; they emerge the keepers of normality. "*She* won't let us discuss it [with] the boys…", "*She* doesn't want any political discussion when we're visiting…", "*She* doesn't want to see…" – Sonya's daughters guard the gates of normalcy and family harmony, ultimately exercising power over political debate and engagement in a manner strikingly similar to my own family. Though acting differently within the ostensibly apolitical, feminised domestic sphere, political passivity cannot be ascribed to any of these women. Rather, despite their male partners' clear exercise of political voice, Sonya's daughters appear *de facto* heads of household invested in the preservation of familial sanctity against their mother's tide of politics. Thus while existing literature highlights the connections between political speech and 'knowledge of security' in Israel – primarily available to men through participation in combat (Mazali 2003; Lentin 2004; Jacoby 2005; Rimalt 2008; Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011)[20] – these accounts reveal more subtle gendered relations in operation at the

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[20] Interestingly, Orna Sasson-Levy, Yagil Levy and Edna Lomsky-Feder (2011) look to the exercise of women's political voice within and subsequent to military service via the activist initiative 'Women

level of the family, where women regulate the terms of visibility, discussion and engagement in the interest of normality.

The Ties that Bind Us

Significantly, as gender structures processes of normalisation at the level of the Jewish Israeli family, militarism, violence, intimacy and duty converge in a situation unique to Israel wherein both men and women face mandatory conscription to the Israel Defense Force (IDF) after completion of high school. As militarism relies upon the blurring of military and civil boundaries in order to facilitate the production of violence (Geyer 1989 in Levy and Sasson-Levy 2008: 353; Jacoby 2005: 42-43), it permeates and shapes the family while drawing from this unit both human-power and ideological support. From sites of active transmission such as school trips and holiday commemoration (Gor 2007) to more passive instances of shopping excursions marked by the routine inspection of bags at malls and supermarkets (Konopinski 2009; Ochs 2011), the demands and values of militarism enter deeply into Jewish Israeli family relations, imbuing silence with the weight of both intimate relations and national security. Yael, a 56 year-old Jerusalemite with four children above conscription age, reflected upon this enmeshment of military and family:

> [...] The minute a child – a child! A *child*! – goes to the army it becomes all-encompassing for that person who goes to the army. And also for the parents. It's very different to send a daughter versus a son – it depends on what the daughter is doing, of course. When you're a mother, even living in Tel Aviv, and you send a child to a combat unit your life isn't the same. You live on a different level. If Tel Aviv kids aren't going to the army, then they [the parents] are excluded from worrying about the security of their children and the nation.[21]

Embedded in a discussion of how she experiences the occupation in daily life as a "modern religious" Jerusalemite with friends and family living in West Bank Jewish Israeli settlements, Yael frames her observations as a difference between Jerusalem

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Breaking the Silence' (WBS). In this, the authors highlight the ways in which military service potentially grants legitimacy to women's anti-war discourses, though not without tension: "The case of WBS reveals that military service can be a new source for women's symbolic power in the political field. Hence, the same legitimating system that was hitherto deployed to marginalize women can also be leveraged to justify a political voice. However, employing military service as leverage to justify a political voice is also the source of its weakness" (Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011: 757).

[21] Interview in Jerusalem, 12 May 2011; handwritten notes.

and Tel Aviv. While this again situates Tel Aviv in the realm of the fantasy due to a lack of violence experienced and now duty fulfilled, Yael raises the possibility that continued detachment from reality is not the highest price paid by parents of service evaders and conscientious objectors in Tel Aviv. Rather, these parents 'miss out' on the worry which binds a collectivity, particularly during times of conflict and war; in this, their disentanglement from the needs of military and nation becomes a basis of non-belonging. For Yael, social and national belonging is not a given as, unlike her Israel-born children, she emigrated from Australia at age 18 in search of a "legitimate way to escape from family." The inclusion of Yael's children within the fabric of military, nation and society then signals a further entrenchment of her own belonging. As Nira Yuval-Davis (2011: 18) writes, "Belonging… is not just about social locations and constructions of individual and collective identities and attachments, it is also concerned with the ways these are assessed and valued by the self and others." Highlighting the differential levels of anxiety that accompany the deployment of daughters and sons – young women must volunteer for combat positions while young men may be openly conscripted – Yael makes a further distinction between the degrees of investment and perhaps prestige that accompany participation in and belonging to the national worry. Yet, in the space of the home these distinctions carry little import when the symbolism of the military appears upon the body of her child; as Yael said of her youngest daughter with obvious concern trailing into silence: "When my baby comes home with a big rifle and puts it in her clothes closet…"

Importantly spoken from her position as a mother, Yael's earlier narrative elucidates the depth of bonds between military and family as normalisation occurs through both the disruption of stability and instantiations of belonging – when sons go to combat and lives collectively fail to remain the same. Here, an experience of explicitly masculinised rupture grants not only social capital but also political voice, as in forums more public those families whose children refuse or evade military service may be actively silenced due to their lack of participation in both national security and worry. Corroborating this claim, Daphna, a research participant in Tel Aviv, spoke of an explosive conversation with her brother-in-law involving the accusation that she and her fellow Leftist activist husband were *'ochrei Israel'* [haters of Israel]. "'You hate your country, you hate your people – send your daughter to the army and then you can talk to me!'" the brother-in-law reportedly yelled before marching to the car

to await his wife's departure from the ruined family meeting. Already in an agreement of silence with a female cousin in Jerusalem who "[…] refuses to talk about politics with anyone in the family because of the huge damage it can do," Daphna and her partner now entered into a similarly tense voluntary truce with this relative.[22] Clearly, here military service denotes not only full social belonging for the family, but also the right to political speech. Significantly, the gender of the should-be soldier seems to matter little, as Daphna's *daughter's* enlistment remains the source of contention despite her lack of access to the social and political capital ascribed to male combat soldiers (see Sasson-Levy 2003; Sasson-Levy and Amram-Katz 2007; Levy and Sasson-Levy 2008). However, while Daphna's narrative disrupts the relationship between militarised masculinity and political voice, wider gender relations of "masculine normality" (Lentin 2000: 159, 217) remain intact – Daphna and her husband emerge the silent, feminised 'losers' of the family quarrel, while the indignant brother-in-law commands the terms of discussion.

As these ruptures emerge within family units, normality continues to gain traction. Speaking again from the position of a woman whose child, this time a son, opted against serving in the military, 61 year-old Aviva illuminated a differential means through which belonging becomes bound with bargaining and silence:

> I can say that because my son didn't go to the army, in that way it [the occupation] didn't touch me. But when your son is in the army I think it touches you very badly, again in a paradoxical way. I have friends who came from the Left, who were activists in their young ages. I cannot say that they rationally changed their minds – it doesn't mean that they didn't, maybe they did. But the fact that their sons serve in the army, in the [Occupied] Territories, makes them blind. Maybe this is normal, I can't tell you.
>
> KN: This isn't something you experience with a daughter in the army?
>
> Aviva: You don't experience it with a daughter because she doesn't go to combat. I don't think I would experience it anyway, I can't change my mind. But I can't say. My daughter challenged my limits, she said "Maybe I will be a combatant." I said, "No way. No way." We had great discussions about the army in our family. First with our son – my partner didn't go to the army and he didn't want our son to go, but he let everyone make his own decision. He said that I didn't allow our son to go to the army. It's *true*, he's right, but I

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[22] Field notes, 31 August 2011.

think that we *shouldn't* allow our son to go to the army! Here is the discussion. With our daughter we were more permissive because she's a girl, but she was more rebellious also. It was clear that I didn't want her to go. But I supported her, I took food, I went to the ceremonies. Here is where you have… the army gets into your house. The main way the occupation gets into your house is through the army.

Now it's less, but I was very busy with one issue when my daughter was 18 years old and her boy friends came to the house. We'd have dinner together, chat, the usual thing. These boys are in the army. And you don't ask questions, you try not to. I knew that if I asked questions I would be in a situation where I have to decide if I let them into the house. On the other side, they are responsible, but they are 18 years old… 18 years old. They are kids. There also you close your eyes to the occupation.[23]

Gender clearly pervades Aviva's account as she raises issues of sight, speech and silencing in response to a question as to whether she encounters the occupation in Jerusalem. Again daughters appear to constitute 'less worry' in their relative safety from assignment to combat positions, but these very 'safe' beings usher the military into the domain of family, dispelling the notion of sanctity from occupation and violence. Like a rifle in the clothes closet, daughters may bring the army "into your house" even as mothers actively bring 'home' to the base. Yet according to Aviva's narrative, normalisation operates on two differential levels which remain associated with sons: the shift toward conservative politics or 'blindness' among parents of male soldiers and the self-censorship that accompanies certain knowledge of what those soldiers do. Interestingly, in contrast to Yael's earlier assumptions about belonging, for Aviva her son's decision against military service provides escape from the 'touch' of the occupation – a respite from violence – rather than instilling in her a sense of non-belonging to the collective. Like Yael, Aviva migrated to Israel as a teenager, though from Argentina rather than Australia; however unlike Yael, her feelings of belonging to Israeli society somehow resist the destabilisation of a son avoiding mandatory service. Yet with her daughter's enlistment, Aviva actively performs national belonging on multiple levels despite her acute sense of political and personal discomfort, bringing food to the military base, attending ceremonies, acquiescing to silence and approximating normalcy as conscripted male friends join the family for dinner. Here, the destabilising yet normalised entry of military into domestic is again

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[23] Interview in Jerusalem, 14 June 2011; handwritten notes.

borne by daughters, as they differentially introduce violence to 'private' and 'home' in ways which simultaneously complicate and reinforce hegemonic norms.

What, then, does Aviva's mealtime silence preserve? A sense or approximation of normalcy similar to that seemingly at stake with Sonya's teenaged grandchildren? Whereas Sonya brings with her 'abnormal' politics which must be quelled, at Aviva's dinner table the catalyst appears external, with internal angst activated by the destabilising yet normalised entry of military into domestic. Indeed, militarisation explicitly *creates* constant destabilisation through collapsing boundaries between public and private, ushering violence directly into the home in part through the domestication of security (see Ochs 2011: 17, 117-37). Significantly, in each of the accounts related above, the agential individual silent or silenced feels tension, anxiety and frustration rather than overwhelming normalcy – there exists no false sense that everything is truly 'alright.' However, in a context of aspirational normality perhaps this is the very belonging in question, underwritten by the constant precariousness of everyday life, the insecurity of the moment's calm, the mantra of 'live for today because you can't count on tomorrow.' Again, roots may be traced to the normative narrative of Zionism, which historically found "'moral' justification" in experiences of the Holocaust even as Jewish Israeli society remains in tense relation to its survivors (Lentin 2000: 203). Indeed, as specific emotions become experienced as 'the national' and particular sensations are deemed politically meaningful, the affective regimes of nation-states may cohere community in ways which justify domination (Berlant 1993, 1998b). Israel's relationship to the Holocaust is suffused with sensation and emotion, indeed generating collectivity through a particular cluster of "national emotions"; as Idith Zertal (2005: 5) notes, "[…] historical defeats were transmuted into paragons of triumph and models of identification for a mobilised and combative nation." Here, the experiences and emotions associated with 'victim' and 'victor' overlap, as violence endured, imagined and pursued makes possible particular constellations of belonging (Zertal 2005; Kuntsman 2009).

Then to belong to this continual trauma and the quest to 'rise above' is to be part of the nation, to constantly recast normalcy and perseverance as if 'against' and 'despite' but in so many ways *through* conflict – in order to suffuse the ordinary, to instil social cohesion, that tension must be replicated in the family, the foundational unit of community in Jewish Israeli society. Within Jewish Israeli families processes of

rupture and repair take root, setting the stage for a vision of normality which allows living *as if – as if* all is 'normal,' while the everyday remains held in tension between reality and desire without need for their reconciliation. As conceptualised by Lisa Wedeen (1999), Yael Navaro-Yashin (2002) and Lori Allen (2013), a politics of '*as if*' serves to entrench the gap between awareness and action, as here fantasy does not replace material reality but rather ensures its continuation.[24] Through producing and maintaining this precarious relation, modes of normalisation among Jewish Israelis ultimately *make us belong* even as they close down the avenues of trust and understanding assumed guaranteed, opening fissures of anger, disappointment and resentment in their stead. Indeed, in the silence following a particularly upsetting exchange among my own family in Tel Aviv, this very claim rang true: "Now we're a *real* Israeli family, having an argument about politics in front of the television on a Friday night."[25]

Small Worlds, Simple Lives

In many ways, the preceding sections of this chapter have demonstrated mechanisms of normalisation enacted in moments of rupture or interruption, a tool kit for repair shared by those invested in the preservation of normalcy. Joking, bypassing, unseeing and silencing each emerge as modes of stabilisation in the necessarily precarious conditions which produce both normality and belonging, finding function through intimate political relations. Yet after repair, what does normalcy look like? How does it feel and for whom? As seen above, rupture and repair can be profoundly *tiring* enterprises for all involved, particularly as they involve intimate realms and relations (Berlant 2011: 27, 48).[26] Thus for many Jewish Israelis, personal energy is best invested on levels in which life can be made to feel most immediately normal,

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[24] Despite ultimately arguing that through fantasy Israel "has completely lost any connection with reality," Yonathan Mendel (2009) demonstrates the ways in which fantasy actually shapes material realities in Israel-Palestine: "The way of fantasizing [*sic*] another Israel – peaceful and moral, Jewish and democratic, not perfect but not harmful – has brought into being a virtual reality in which historical and contemporary events are blurred by wishful deceitful and blinkered thinking."

[25] Field notes, 4 February 2011.

[26] Lauren Berlant's chapter entitled 'Cruel Optimism' gives an excellent account of the fatigue produced by world-maintenance; see Berlant 2011, pages 23-49.

respective to the enormity and seeming intractability of surrounding political realities. Just as mechanisms of normalisation render the politics of occupation and discrimination palatable, so too does the creation of small worlds make life more liveable.

Though varied in size and composition, these small worlds signal a "becoming-private" (Berlant 2011: 259) which suggests that the guise of normalcy cannot be adequately maintained on larger scales. Here it is important to distinguish between modes and layers of normalcy, as throughout this thesis I argue that relations of occupation and discrimination have become so normalised as to constitute the basis for the function of everyday life for many Jewish Israelis. Indeed, concertina wire and security checks may be cast as routine along with Palestinian workers employed in particular trades; to the extent to which these material and corporeal reminders remain visible they become ostensibly 'normal.' Yet at the same time, the performance of 'normal' liberal, Western, modern, capitalist life in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem creates a stage or set for the enactment of 'just like you, like anywhere (else) in Europe,' where this visibility is seemingly rescinded. Thus while domination, subordination and oppression consistently underwrite and maintain the everyday in its differential appearances, these relations themselves remain unevenly normalised.

In assessing the function of co-existent worlds, sociologists Stanley Cohen and Laurie Taylor (1992: 113) write, "We simultaneously occupy several worlds and move into different activities each of which may be distinguished by the degree of individuality, at-homeness, freedom from constraints which can be experienced." Yet in the context of Israel-Palestine, these worlds may additionally provide familiarity, away-ness and connectivity, as experiences of sustained conflict are compounded by social fragmentation and privatisation produced through rapid liberalisation (see Shafir and Peled 2000, 2002; Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2004; Yiftachel 2006; Abdo 2011). Into this complex tension feminist and queer theorists insert a provocative claim: the normative and aspirational dimensions which constitute the basis of worlds apart may produce an economy in sync with existing relations of power and privilege. Couched in affective terms by Sara Ahmed (2004) and Lauren Berlant (2007, 2011), worlds large and small are built and maintained through attachments – to others, to objects, to

scenes, practices and desires.[27] Here, intimate relations and reciprocity yield the experiences of "unconflictedness, belonging, and worth" (Berlant 2007: 282) imagined to underwrite normality and 'ordinary life,' scenes where existence ceases to be a project and is instead exercised as fact (Berlant 2007: 291). Constructed differentially by Jewish Israeli women and men, these small worlds of intimacy arise through the intersection of gender with hierarchies of class, race, religiosity and geopolitical location, producing approximations of normalcy bound with the preservation of power and privilege.

Elsewheres, Here and There

> The mentality is Hobbesian here. Fuck Hobbes! You can't build a society based on Hobbes unless you want no equality, depression, aggression. Like Buffy the Vampire Slayer said, "I say my power should be *our* power!" – that's the fandom I come from. In sci-fi and fantasy Henry Jenkins did research and studied the link between involvement in sci-fi or fantasy fandoms and political action. There's a strong link, like how Donna Haraway writes about the creation of 'elsewhere.' The problem is that most people think "We have to do this," to be 'x' is the only solution. Well no, we live it and we can live it differently if we choose. I believe in small steps, very small steps, not symbolic steps which are huge. Of course it's complicated and huge, but if we don't start who will?[28]

Meirav, a 25 year-old feminist blogger and political activist, first raised the possibility of 'elsewhere' as we sat together in Jerusalem's Machane Yehuda market, watching evening shoppers from our position at a popular café. The founder of an online initiative aimed at ending street harassment, Meirav invoked Donna Haraway's (1992) conceptualisation of "elsewhere" multiple times during our interview, citing it as a positive space of possibility and meaning. Of debates around the differing plights of Palestinian and Jewish Israeli women in Israel Meirav claimed, "The argument [of who has it worse] usually gets stuck at a dead end, but there's always an 'elsewhere.' . . . Real change can come from women on each side." Similarly, in

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[27] Importantly, Clare Hemmings (2005: 550, 557-558) critiques the recent "affective turn" in cultural theory, as its purported epistemological freedom and "capacity to transform" largely overlooks both postcolonial and feminist theory, which "value continuity of difference over time" in questions of social meaning. Critically, this "myopia" allows affect theory to posit itself as "the way forward" in contemporary cultural theory.

[28] Interview in Jerusalem, 5 May 2011; handwritten notes.

discussing Israel's ongoing occupation of the Palestinian Territories and annexed East Jerusalem she concluded, "It is what it is, you get angry and frustrated. You break down and then you see the options… if you're lucky enough to have an 'elsewhere.'" For Meirav 'elsewhere' exists a realm of political action as suggested by Haraway (1992: 295), a site of imagination which leads to transformation, an ability to access fantasy and in doing so change reality.

Contesting claims to biological determinism, 'naturalisation' and postmodern "hyper-productionism,"[29] Haraway proposes the existence of "elsewhere," a space of difference and diffraction, a site of interruption and interference that creates the possibility of change (1992: 299-300). Home to "inappropriate/d others" (Trinh Minh-ha 1986, 1989 cited in Haraway 1992: 299) – those multi-cultural, ethnic, racial, national and sexual subjects excluded from hegemonic (Western) narratives of biology, nature and social construction – the third space of 'elsewhere' promises combination, interface, implosion, collapse, hope and action, a place where "my power" may indeed be "our power." What binds this realm of possibility and engagement with Ronit's securitised garden depicted at the opening of this chapter, a site of seeming haven and passivity arising in reaction to those very conditions which inspire Meirav to act? In a context of sustained conflict, rather than ushering in novel forms of resistance 'elsewheres' may additionally provide escape or respite, becoming small worlds of normalcy and immediate influence amidst a sea of uncertainty, fear, powerlessness and despair. Sheltered behind mesh fences and carefully adorned with beauty, these worlds may constitute enclaves or 'free areas' in which "[…] we don't experience any massive tension or disruption between fantasy and script" (Cohen and Taylor 1992: 113); so too they may be linked with denial, or "[…] the maintenance of social worlds in which an undesirable situation (event, condition, phenomenon) is unrecognized, ignored or made to seem normal" (Cohen 2001: 51). As highlighted by Meirav above, while 'elsewheres' importantly expand the scope of thought and deed,

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[29] In her work on transnational technoscience and cultural studies, Haraway (1992: 297) writes, "[…] [N]ature for us is *made*, as both fiction and fact. If organisms are natural objects, it is crucial to remember that organisms are not born; they are made in world-changing techno-scientific practices by particular collective actors in particular times and places." Through these claims Haraway argues that worlds, realities, identities and even individuals are produced and manufactured – importantly by specific communities whose interests remain informed by particular historical moments and locations. Yet Haraway remains wary of broadly deterministic constructivist theories and posits an alternative to what she deems "hyper-productionism," or the postmodern narrative that "[…] 'man makes everything, including himself, out of the world that can only be resource and potency to his project and active agency'" (1992: 297).

the "very small steps" taken within these realms may replace large and symbolic actions, fostering not transformation but stasis.

Rather than transcendental politicised realms evolved beyond prevailing conditions or conventions, the small worlds of Jewish Israelis emerge as liminal spaces, "gardens of perhaps" held in tension between the dewy warmth of promised blooms and the cold wind of certainty, sites of rupture and repair. In a manner similar to the ways in which processes of othering and exclusion produce 'elsewheres' as conceptualised by Haraway (1992), these small worlds take shape through the surrounding environment, resonating between extremes as they offer both escape and action. As Meirav acts to thwart street harassment, so too she escapes the violence of occupation and conflict; as Ronit escapes the Green Line and the threat of weasels, so too she acts to secure her garden and the lives within. Bound to both 'here' and 'elsewhere,' small worlds necessarily remain rooted in material reality, dependant upon the latter for content and intelligibility – in part what a small world is *not* and in part what it seeks to transform. Yet in a context of political violence, equally significant is the inverse relationship: how existing conditions might rely upon the production and maintenance of small worlds, both escapist and oriented toward political hope.

A Theory of Systemics

> What's keeping me sane is the micro environment – family and friends. I see families and I think "Where is this going? What will we leave to our kids?" I feel things are getting worse. Neighbourhoods are a micro-cosmos. At [age] 11, I saw that my daughter couldn't be free. They built a student dormitory – four-story-high buildings that were fancy and new. Many students live there. Then the Arabs in the neighbourhood became aggressive, they started attacking girls. The students built their own security groups and patrolled, they were the '*mishmar ezrachi*' [civilian guard]. The neighbourhood had groups on patrol too. I decided that if I was alone I would stay, I have no energy to make the changes! But because of Maya, not only was she growing up in this crazy country, but her development as an independent child [was at risk], the ability to go to her friend's safely and come back safely. So we left the neighbourhood because of Maya. And I'm so glad we did! Maya is independent, she goes to school and returns on her own, safely. It's not only being in an Arab environment, there are many people around who make life

impossible. I still have the feeling that I need to protect her – Maya calls me when she gets to school, when she gets home. But I'm not hysterical.[30]

Sipping tea and eating cakes in the cool of Ronit's apartment, the garden and its formidable fence remained visible through the sliding glass doors as my host outlined the contours of her small world, presented as a "micro environment." Here, Ronit constructs a multi-layered scene of threat and intimacy: a once-safe neighbourhood "micro-cosmos" whose changing dynamics jeopardised the core of her small world: her young daughter Maya. From neighbours to friends and ultimately family – here a unit of two as Ronit raises her single child alone – the narrowing rings of Ronit's micro environment indeed reveal sites of both action and stasis, clearly constructed through and bound by intimacy. While Ronit admits to having felt "no energy" to move from her first neighbourhood in Jerusalem's French Hill area, *de jure* a settlement across the Green Line in the Occupied West Bank, she feels impelled to action when her daughter's development and security appear at risk. By moving to escape conflict, violence and harm – acting to secure her small world – Ronit preserves a sense of stability: the apparent safety of a new neighbourhood and the 'normalcy' of childhood freedom.

In this, action becomes a vehicle for seeming passivity, ensuring a mode of 'coasting' which allows Ronit to invest in her micro environment and avoid feelings of constant struggle, danger and survival. Indeed, as our conversation ended Ronit mused, "If one is happy in one's micro environment, one will be used to the macro – this is keeping me sane. In science, if the micro takes hold it becomes systemic." Yet to read Ronit's words carefully, the happiness, security and stability of her micro environment remains tenuous, in need of continual maintenance and reaffirmation. Despite moving from French Hill to Mevasseret-Zion where Maya can walk through the neighbourhood without fear, Ronit still requires her daughter to phone upon reaching the nearby school. During the course of our interview Maya called to say that she was leaving school, arriving to the house some time later to a warm reception from her mother. Rather than a performance of acute relief, an indicator of the extraordinary, Ronit and Maya's interaction conveyed *routinisation* – this call and response constitute a daily interaction. Instead of creating accord with the wider environment,

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[30] Interview in Mevasseret-Zion, 20 May 2011; handwritten notes.

the 'systemics' of Ronit's small world clearly operate within particular boundaries to produce normalisation: one grows *accustomed to* the macro rather than including it within the scope of action and everyday life.

Then even as her micro environment promises stasis and offers respite from wider cycles of violence, trauma and conflict, the stability of Ronit's small world requires constant repetition, a forcible reiteration of particular norms (Butler 1993: 2). As demonstrated by feminist and queer scholars including Judith Butler (1993, 1997b), Lauren Berlant (1997, 1998a, 2007, 2011) and Sara Ahmed (2000, 2004), normativity is central to world-building and maintenance as 'matter' gains "boundary, fixity, and surface" through processes of (re)materialisation (Butler 1993: 9). Then which repeated norms give rise to Ronit's small world, linking her 'elsewhere' to material reality in its provision of "at-homeness" and away-ness? Most clearly, Ronit's micro environment underlines the primacy of protection, importantly challenging hegemonic gender norms while simultaneously reinforcing sexualised racial norms. Produced through militarised patriarchal nationalism in combination with an ongoing settler colonial project (Abdo and Yuval-Davis 1995; Lentin 2000), the normative relations of Jewish Israeli man-as-protector and woman-as-reproducer are undermined by Ronit's account of lived experience: as a single mother and sole income earner, Ronit assumes the dual responsibility of security and nourishment/care. Here the (gendered) divisions between 'homefront' and 'battlefield' (Sharoni 2005 [1994]; Herzog 2005 [1998]; Jacoby 2005) collapse even as Ronit seeks to maintain division, physically moving home to a locale beyond – yet near to – the Green Line through a mobility enabled by her membership in Israel's middle class. Yet in pursuing a sense and site of security on behalf of her young daughter, Ronit reaffirms a racialised and sexualised category of 'other' within the settler colonial project: the 'Arab' imagined to lurk menacingly at the physical and metaphorical borders of her micro-cosmos. In a manner strikingly similar to discourses of colonial projects past (see Anthias and Yuval-Davis 1992; McClintock 1995; Stoler 2002), Ronit's narrative (re)produces an image of the 'other' as an aggressive (brown or black) native-man-turned-invader preying upon innocent (white) daughters, salient symbols of the nation.

Thus as Ronit performs protection and in doing so subverts hegemonic gender roles, the repetition of this racial norm confirms the position of the "abject being" (Butler 1993: 3) whose continued presence materialises the border of her small world, a site

simultaneously secure and precarious in its proximity to 'other' bodies and violence. Then systemics transmit not happiness and security, but rather a sense of danger and fear, recreating the impetus for protection. Indeed, after describing the contours of her small world, Ronit related the following:

> Katie, you can't imagine how they *hate* Arabs. . . Maya grew up – you can't *imagine* how she hates Arabs. In this house, in this family, you won't hear these words. She has so much hate, fear. I say, "Maya, you can't generalise! We have [friends] Amal and Khalid, we're invited to their house!" She tells me, "They are exceptional! You can't trust [Arabs]."
>
> KN: How old is she?
>
> Ronit: She'll be 13 in October.[31]

Spiritual Escapes: Of Self and Circles

As valuations and hierarchies of race emerged stabilised by the repetition of norms associated with protection, Ronit's family unit provides a small world in which norms are simultaneously subverted through acts of necessity; although a daughter remains the object of protection, her mother assumes the (masculine) roles of defender and provider along with (feminine) caretaker. Yet family institutions provide no predictable patterns with regard to the construction and maintenance of small worlds and the normative relations therein; rather, specific factors intersect to give rise to diverse realms of escape and action. In Ronit's case, residence as a single mother in the occupied territory of French Hill converged with valuations of (Palestinian) race and opportunities afforded by (middle) class to produce the contours of her "micro environment," a site worthy of cultivation and action. For others, the family constitutes a nexus of differential interests, producing small worlds of investment and action which diverge from yet reinforce the overarching norms framing Ronit's narrative.

For 30 years, Yael has lived in the same modest limestone home in West Jerusalem's German Colony, separated from the tense environment of French Hill by the Old City, Hebrew University and what feels like a cultural chasm. Now retired from work as

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[31] Interview in Mevasseret-Zion, 20 May 2011; handwritten notes.

the manager of her husband's surgery and with four children grown and moved away, at 56 year-old Yael cultivates her interest in dance, pottery, yoga and meditation through courses offered at the Cultural Centre behind her house. Prefacing our exchange with the claim that she is "not a political creature," Yael outlined her position and practices thus:

> Let me paint you a picture: every morning the paper is delivered to our door, my husband picks it up and goes through it, clucking his tongue in disappointment. Ido is very Left and he can't believe what's going on here. I can't get my head around it. I have to put my head in the sand like an ostrich to live here, because I don't believe there's a solution.[32]

As an immigrant from Australia, Yael chose to raise her own family in Israel, exchanging one reality for another which, for her, necessitates conscious disengagement. Defining her family as "modern religious," for Yael "what's going on here" extends beyond the divisions of nation and ethnicity described in prevailing narratives. "We are modern religious, so we're very exposed," Yael related as we sat in her bright kitchen. "In Jerusalem as modern religious people we don't have one group of friends, we have all kinds. My husband has lots of family here from Denmark and Sweden, all of his cousins immigrated. And they're all religious. We also have a lot of family living in hard-core settlements. For us it's not 'them' and 'us.'" With family living in occupied territory, Yael's experiences and valuations of 'otherness' emerge along lines of religious practice, belief and affiliation as abject beings appear within her society, 'others' not along lines of race but ideology.

This intimate relation to Israel's illegal settlements then informs Yael's perceptions of the world around her, as family ties and religious belief propel her and her loved ones across territorial boundaries. Indeed, with two of her children wounded during a shooting in the West Bank as they drove along a 'settler only' road, Yael views macro and micro scales in distinctly political terms. Here 'macro' emerges "the Arab countries," settlements and her children's military service – matters of "security and survival" which preoccupy the country – set against the 'micro' of friends and family. "Yes, my kids were shot at in the car, but it wasn't a personal attack on me," Yael explained. "And my son had an army accident, but it wasn't the Arabs. I don't take this on board – the way I divide life is that the problems, bad, negative is 'out there'

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[32] Interview in Jerusalem, 12 May 2011; handwritten notes.

and what is personal…" Trailing into silence, this disjuncture between "out there" and those matters deemed "personal" creates the boundary of Yael's small world, a site of escape, connection and action:

> I'm a person who connects things! I always say to the kids "*Hakol kashur*" – everything is connected! They don't see how, but it is. But I disconnect because I look for the spiritual life. I feel how I can bring the spiritual to the ground, into the here and now. I only believe that what I can do in the world is to do what I can, to do good within my small circle. I begin with myself – when I'm depressed it's not good for anyone. Then I go to my relationship with my husband, build a wonderful family, reach out to friends. I don't do community work on an organisational level, going to organisations and demonstrations, but on a *personal* level. All I can do is on that level, in my small circle. I see Bibi [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu] on the television and it's embarrassing to see his body language – he's sitting on a chair and there is a row of gangsters behind him. It's about money and religion – they hide behind the cloak of religion, religion which is so full of righteousness. What can I do with all of that? Except for run away if it gets too bad…

Disengaging from the macro level despite feeling irrevocably connected, Yael outlines a small world constructed through a particular form of spirituality, importantly different from the righteous religiosity of (male) political leaders. Again demonstrating a subscription to systemics – the ability of change, happiness and stability to transmit from small circles to those larger – Yael positions herself as central to her small world; from here "goodness" radiates outward, yet "all [she] can do" remains within the personal level delimited by the presence of "bad" beyond. Yael's small world then becomes a multi-layered sphere of influence, intimacy and consistency, a space of simultaneous connection and disconnection which allows her to remain living in Israel.

Yet which repeated norms form the basis of this world unique to Yael's spirituality, social class, race, location and gender? Here, the overtly racialised 'othering' of 'us' and 'them' as Jews and Arabs becomes displaced by internal exclusion borne of religious belief and practice, as spirituality expands territorial boundaries – 'we' are meant to remain within state borders, while 'they' live illegally beyond. However, while complicating conventional understandings of 'otherness,' Yael's distinction between "out there" and "the personal" again mirrors the normativity of protection, in both racialised and gendered terms. 'Macro,' 'bad' and 'there' emerge bound with

Arabs, conflict and politics while 'micro,' 'personal' and 'here' become a source of sameness, read in terms of intimacy, calm and the presumed whiteness of Australia, Denmark and Sweden. Thus 'here' emerges in need of protection from 'there,' repeating the militarised, sexualised and racialised gendered norms in part resisted and reinforced by Ronit's actions in the interest of her daughter's safety. Although Yael directly experienced political violence as visited upon the bodies of her children, she avoids politics in a manner reflective of the norms which link knowledge of security to political voice in Israel (Mazali 2003; Lentin 2004; Jacoby 2005; Rimalt 2008; Sasson-Levy, Levy, Lomsky-Feder 2011). Through avoiding the bad there even as it intrudes on the good here, Yael actively constructs herself as "not a political being," unqualified to speak about the world around her even as she demonstrates a nuanced understanding of its connections and machinations. Yael's spiritual small world of action and influence then reproduces 'the political' as a realm of men, those "gangsters" whose exercise of power produces in her the desire flee ever deeper into spirituality, a hybrid practice made possible through (middle) class belonging.

"Together in Pain, Together in Hope"

While the narratives above seemingly point to a phenomenon of depoliticised or apolitical small worlds produced by Jewish Israeli *women* as gender norms meet with geopolitical location, social class, race and religion, this is not to say that Jewish Israeli men collectively dwell in the wider world of politics. While small worlds of family and spirituality take shape in forms bound with the feminine/masculine valuations of private/public, homefront/battlefield and domestic/political borne of militarised patriarchal nationalisms, so too Jewish Israeli men construct microcosms of belonging, influence, escape and action vis-à-vis wider realities of conflict and violence. Emerging through the confluence of norms and intersecting hierarchies of power and privilege, these small worlds again centralise intimacy and connectivity; in this, diverse spheres ultimately draw together to form a particular type of collective.

Both a practitioner and instructor of a movement-based meditation practice derived from Buddhism and martial arts, 40 year-old Yair's small world resonates with the circles built by Yael in part through spiritual practice. Now living near to the Knesset[33] in Neve Sha'anan northwest of Yael's home in the German Colony, Yair

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[33] The Israeli Parliament.

credits his father's extreme politics with the formation of his current beliefs and practices:

> My father was very right-wing politically – he was part of the original settlement movement '*Gush Emunim*'[34] and part of the group that supported [former Prime Minister Ariel] Sharon when he ran for the first time to the Knesset. He wasn't religious or anything, but he had a hard-core Right-wing orientation. This was also me through high school – I was involved in the ideological Right wing until the army. . . . It is the outcome of my father's education that I support the opposite."[35]

While military experience catalysed a period of questioning and personal transformation for Yair, a post-service trip to Japan and the eruption of the second *intifada* during a retreat in France radicalised his politics, bringing Yair to participate in what he terms "Dharma activism." "The basic tenet of Dharma is that there is suffering in the world and we should be involved in ending or finishing the suffering," Yair explained. "[…] [T]he goal is not to solve, but to understand the conflict." Part of a small community of practitioners in Israel, activism in this vein aims at self-understanding as a foundation for wider processes of change: "'What does the conflict do to me?'" Yair related as the central question posed by Jewish Israeli Dharma activists. "Not even to *us,* but to *me.* We want to create a safe space and gently insist on exposing this pain." Thus the individual again emerges the core of a world of meaning, this time based on 'universal' suffering which must be "ended or finished" while at the same time violence makes possible the very "safe space" of action.

Yet within this world of self-reflection, greater understanding and reduced suffering, how does political action become manifest? Yair describes "advanced practice" as a time in which the work of Dharma activists "extends," importantly mirroring the principle of systemics outlined by Ronit and internalised by Yael, as all view security, stability and happiness as radiating outward from a core. However, Yair admits that the "immature practice" in Israel focuses on "inner work"; as such, burgeoning initiatives seek to integrate self-cultivation with the wider context of conflict, which

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[34] Precipitated by the October 1973 or Yom Kippur War, *Gush Emunim* ['Bloc of the Faithful'] was a political religious nationalist movement which encouraged Jewish Israeli settlement of the Gaza Strip, West Bank and Golan Heights; see Shafir and Peled 2002: 159-183 and Shlaim 2010: 25-36.

[35] Interview in Jerusalem, 15 May 2011; handwritten notes.

many identify as the root of their suffering. From workshops with teenagers nearing military service to consciousness-raising meditation walks and solidarity actions in Palestinian villages, Dharma activist leaders attempt to bridge self and society, 'me' and 'us.' Yair recounted one long-term initiative thus:

> The New Age community is a group that you could say doesn't have any political awareness, but for the last eight years there has been a ceremony commemorating Memorial Day, Independence Day and *Nakba* Day together.[36] The reason you don't know about it is because it is initiated by New Age people. At the start it was a Jewish renewal group that celebrated all the holidays. A friend who belonged said, "We're celebrating everything that happened here, but not *Nakba* Day – there are people here to whom that is important." It was a two-day event and the theme was 'Together in pain, together in hope.' The first day is Memorial Day – it's about pain: the Holocaust and the *Nakba* story. The second day is Independence Day – it's about hope: how do we see a joint state or a joint way of living together? . . . But the New Age group doesn't understand the political implications of what they're doing. Very healing things happen: Jews listen to Palestinians tell their story, they sympathise, and then the same thing happens in the opposite direction. . . . The New Age group, their minds don't go there, they're happy with their personal moment of deep catharsis. But I support it, of course.[37]

Bringing together divergent national narratives beneath the banner of a single event, Yair and his fellow Dharma activists centralise suffering as a means of fostering connectivity across borders, formulating a sense of shared history and common future. Yet those practitioners who take part fail to move beyond "personal catharsis" even as the event ostensibly impels them to action – here individual happiness again supplants transformation on wider scales.

Repeated in this world are the prevailing intersecting norms of race, class and gender, as indeed 'us' and 'them' remain the racialised categories of 'Jew' and 'Palestinian,' social class facilitates access to a spiritual practice requiring time and mobility, and the "safe space" for reflection and understanding appears feminised vis-à-vis the

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[36] As conveyed in Chapter One, while Memorial Day and Independence Day are Jewish Israeli holidays marking the deaths of citizens (military and civilian) in conflict and the 1948 establishment of the State of Israel, respectively, *Nakba* Day is observed by Palestinians as the day of 'catastrophe' on which the Israeli state gained international recognition. Memorial Day and Independence Day follow the Hebrew calendar, while *Nakba* Day is commemorated annually on 15 May; Memorial Day, Independence Day and *Nakba* Day commonly fall within the same week, only one week after Israeli commemoration of the Holocaust.

[37] Interview in Jerusalem, 15 May 2011; handwritten notes.

assumed masculinity of violence and conflict. Yet significantly, the central repetition underwriting this small world is the normative narrative of Zionism. As Idith Zertal (2005: 3) writes, "Through a dialectical process of appropriation and exclusion, remembering and forgetting, Israeli society has defined itself in relation to the Holocaust: it regarded itself as both the heir to the victims and their accuser, atoning for their sins and redeeming their death." The terms of threat, persecution and transcendence resonate deeply with the suffering, pain and hope centralised by Jewish Israeli Dharma activists, as *Nakba* Day converges with commemoration of the Holocaust and celebration of Israel's 'independence.'[38] Enmeshed with gender, class, race and the geopolitical location of Jerusalem – a nexus of diverse faiths positioned on a fault-line of history and ideology – Yair's small world repeats the very narrative at the core of Jewish Israeli state and society, linking 'me' with 'us' in ways which halt at the boundaries of self and nation. Here sympathy engenders not movement beyond the borders of collectivity, but guarantees trauma its position of primacy in worlds small and large.

From this central ideological narrative emerge the norms repeated in differential worlds, spaces of escape and action bound with power and privilege. These safe, feminised realms ostensibly free from the violence of 'politics' emerge those same sites where 'whiteness' takes shape through the masculinised and sexualised threat of 'Arab others,' where class and urban environment enable the accumulation of 'sameness' in constant need of protection. At stake in the loss of these worlds, then, is less their sense of normalcy knowingly suspended between fantasy and reality, but the very selves and intimate relations at their centre, the systemics imagined to bind in both pain and hope.

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[38] Joseph Massad (2006: 19) notes that the official document marking the foundation of Israel is entitled the 'Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel' and was renamed the 'Declaration of Independence' only within popular discourse. Massad pointedly argues that as Zionist settlers achieved statehood with the backing of imperial powers, their declaration of 'independence' stands as an attempt to recast the colonial establishment of the Israeli state as an anti-colonial struggle, ostensibly heralding a post-colonial era in Israel-Palestine. So too Ronit Lentin (2000: 6) casts critical light on the claim to post-coloniality, if differentially so; Lentin writes,

> Zionism can . . . be seen as both a de-colonisation process (Jews freeing themselves from the Euro-Aryan yoke) and a re-colonisation process (in relation to the land of Israel and the indigenous Palestinians). However, this call on post-coloniality does not sit comfortably with theories of diaspora: we must ask, in relation to the negation of the Jewish diaspora implied in narratives of the newly constructed Israeli nation, where does homeland begin and diaspora end.

The Liveable Life of Stasis

Through fostering self and connectivity within differential spheres of meaning, influence and respite, the inhabitants of Jewish Israeli small worlds practice membership within micro imaginings of community while simultaneously ensuring belonging to the larger collective – a public importantly built upon the normative precarity of Zionism. Importantly, this lack of stability creates the possibility of a world's rematerialisation, of each day living out renewal and redemption *as if* a normative 'ordinary life.' Herein lies seeming potential for transformation. While detailing the constitutive and pervasive qualities of normativity Judith Butler (1993: 2) writes, "That this reiteration is necessary is a sign that materialisation is never quite complete, that bodies never quite comply with the norms by which their materialisation is impelled." Raising the possibility that within iteration lay the seeds of resistance or subversion, the incomplete materialisation of worlds and the non-compliance of bodies offer the hopeful interference, diffraction and interruption promised in Donna Haraway's 'elsewheres' (1992). However, when the central normative narrative around which selves and worlds coalesce *relies* on rupture and instability, what are the implications for transformation?

As made visible through the accounts above, small worlds, their ruptures and repairs arise through a dynamic relationship between norms, not only those repeated but also those subverted, upending any assumptions about a mono-dimensional role of normativity in projects of world-building and world-maintenance. When Ronit challenges the hegemonic gender roles which link Jewish Israeli men to action/defence and women to passivity/care, her very resistance becomes normative at the level of larger structure. As Israel presents itself a 'modern,' 'liberal' and 'democratic' state, feminist agendas paradoxically converge with patriarchal gender norms, fashioning particular kinds of Jewish Israeli women into markers of both tradition and modernity. Ashkenazi, middle class, urban, secular and heterosexual, Ronit's agential securitising actions signal resistance while at the same time repeating the claim that Israeli is like 'anywhere else' European or American (Lentin 2000: 200; Mendel 2013). So too while Yael expands the scope of 'us' and 'them' to include hierarchies of belonging internal to Jewish Israeli society – challenging the narrative

of a single cleavage between Jews and Palestinians – her rejection of politics reaffirms the gendered norms linking men with the political and women with the domestic. As Yair seeks to expand the systemics of his small world beyond self-cultivation and into political action, the work of Dharma activism breaks against the boundaries of self and nation, reproducing the normative narrative of Zionism. Here, actions which subvert and destabilise also reinforce, becoming normative within wider frames of reference – ruptures indeed catalyse repairs.

Unable to completely decouple from political realities, categories and actors, the construction of small worlds then remains bound with the norms and relations which deem particular lives 'liveable' and 'thinkable' (Butler 1993: 8-9; Butler 2004) – the contours of 'I' and 'we,' of 'me' and 'us.' These realms importantly complicate the optimism shown by both Butler (1993) and Haraway (1992) as small worlds demonstrate how instability might stabilise, violence might securitise and subversion might normalise, all within the frame of the nation. Thus 'ordinary life' emerges a practice bound within particular structural boundaries, as acts of ostensible freedom – escape and action – articulate within wider material and political realities.[39] Change may indeed be pursued to ensure the sanctity, security and stability of always-insecure and unstable small worlds, their senses of normalcy and the liveable lives of their inhabitants. However, these actions supplant steps to be taken on larger scales, as existing political realities and historical narratives together *produce* the conditions for cherished worlds of constancy.

With its core tightly bound with conflict and violence, normalcy in these small worlds remains fantastic and aspirational, an object of desire which, though seemingly tangible and achievable, remains ultimately beyond reach. Then normalcy as it is imagined and performed within these realms – intimate, dependable and fulfilling – reflects a desire for the condition of stasis, for shaking free of continual reinvention and reconstitution, its fantasy indeed "[…] a form of bargaining with what is overwhelming about the present" (Berlant 2007: 291-292). Gender enters deeply into these bargains, impacting world-making and life-building in its normative capacities, simultaneously constituting an aspect of subjectivity and a relation of power which

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[39] For a superb discussion of the relationship between practice and structure see Timothy Mitchell's (1990) critique of James C. Scott's (1985) *Weapons of the Weak: Everyday forms of Peasant Resistance*; see bibliography.

frames, structures and organises diverse sites of normalisation and regulation. This very pervasive quality of gender – operating on levels micro, meso and macro – binds intimacy with politics, public with private, and sanctuary with violence in the formation of subjects and collectivities. In this, explicitly *gendered* norms generated within Jewish Israeli society shape carefully built small worlds through dynamics of rupture and repair. Constructed 'against' the fragmentation borne of liberalism, insecurity borne of conflict, and aggression borne of politics, hegemonic patterns of gender provide the very sense of constancy and stability imagined to underwrite normality; at the same time, gender roles, codes, norms and relations reaffirm the precarity of Zionism, ultimately making possible the continuation of conflict.

Conclusion

Occurring interpersonally on micro levels, ruptures and repairs appear to ensure smooth function or lack of disruption in larger scenes of normality. We may all sit happily sipping cappuccinos here or there, aware of the surrounding tensions – even casting them as regrettably ordinary with resigned shaking of heads – and through the repetition of normalcy we become less likely to say or do anything which might puncture the bubble of our present world (Cohen 2001: 52); in this, we assent to domination. Yet even as we sip tea beneath a clementine tree looking out to the hills from garden sanctuary, we experience how world-maintenance – seeming stasis – may be physically and emotionally 'tiring' in its guise of passivity.

As this sense of normality socially produced and maintained by Jewish Israelis articulates clearly in the public domain, it importantly takes root within the private, bridging the ostensible gaps between nation, state and self through the institution of family. Here gender emerges not only "a structure of social relations" (Connell 2002: 10) but acts to *structure* those very relations and the resulting political realities in complex and at times contradictory ways. As Jewish Israeli women mark the boundary between tradition and modernity, they become the primary producers and guardians of normality in sites of intimate politics; as daughters fulfil the duty of military service they may cause 'less worry' than sons, yet introduce occupation and violence into the home in ways perhaps more penetrating. These shifting norms, codes, roles and relations ensure that the desired 'normal' necessarily remains

aspirational as, following Zionist narratives, Jewish Israeli normalcy requires constant hardship, pursuit and transcendence. As mechanisms effectively mask this dependency upon rupture and violence, the family emerges as much a regime of regulation (Ong 1999) and source of domination as a site of felt security and intimacy, equally an indicator of power and a locus of belonging.

Rooted in the primacy of belonging and the tension between reality and aspiration, small worlds and micro environments arise as modes of 'escape from' and 'resistance to' wider political realities. Offering normativity, security and forums for action inclusive of resistance, small worlds come to constitute microcosms of normality, an 'inside' of seeming dependability, security and belonging made possible through the perpetuation of conflict 'outside.' Structured through the interplay of gendered norms performed and subverted, small worlds constitute the fabric through which individual and collective 'simple lives' might materialise; critically, at stake in the loss of these worlds are the very selves and relational communities at their centre. While joking, bypassing, unseeing and silencing function to maintain and repair normality within these worlds and family units, the necessarily interpersonal dimension of these mechanisms importantly reminds us of *who we are* and what binds us together. More precious than the fostered sense of normalcy consciously acknowledged by many as fleeting and unreal, micro environments offer the moral consistency, meaningful participation and realms of optimism and hope through which individuals may recognise themselves as 'good' and just. Investment in small worlds thus extends beyond the active cognitive and material work required to stage 'everyday life' against the backdrop of conflict; rather, here one belongs to a moral community, formed not reactively but *pro*-actively, reflective of ideal selves who together invest in the present moment. These small words exist not as the choice between utopian and eupsychic visions of the world around us – the former centred on an ideal social order and the latter concerned with an internal psychic order (Cohen and Taylor 1992: 14) – but as an *integration* of self and community, micro and ostensibly macro, in which the site matters less than its sustaining bonds.

Chapter Four

Embedded (In)Action – *Ma La'asot?* **[What Can We Do?]**

Standing at the fence line, a landscape of browns and greys spreads out before me from my position atop the hill, the wind blowing through my hair just as I had imagined. When first I decided to join in the olive harvest with Rabbis for Human Rights, I pictured myself in the hills near Nablus – then unseen by me – amidst a grove of olive trees, labouring with volunteers and villagers as the shadowy presence of settlers and soldiers haunted the slope below. However, a call from the organisation on the day before the harvest set me straight, bringing into focus a different image as I heard that we would be going not to Nablus, but to the area of Jayyus; near to the Green Line, we would be harvesting in a 'buffer zone' of sorts, positioned between the village and the fence with its military patrols and promise of violence. According to the woman on the end of the line, we would be helping a widow and her two young sons to bring in their harvest for processing, a feat impossible for them alone in their relative ages and small number. Less romantic than the thought of myself among gnarled trees high above the valleys of the West Bank, I adjusted my expectations to a barren dust track, turnstile gates and patrolling soldiers whose latent violence threatened the widow and her children. Slightly more nervous than before, I slept little that night particularly as a relative expressed her shock upon hearing my plans for the next day: "This is not an ordinary thing for people to do, you understand?" Flushed with the excitement of transgression, on harvest day I was surprised to find that our ultimate destination would not be Jayyus but a site behind Qalqilya, technically across the Green Line yet on the 'Israeli side' of the fence.

Bumping along dirt roads in a minibus peopled with retirement-aged Jewish Israelis and international activists, our leader – a female rabbi – briefed us on violence and how to position our bodies between Palestinian harvesters and the military or settlers – our task was explicitly to "act as a buffer," not solely to harvest olives as I had imagined. Previously unaware that this was part of the 'job,' I felt a creeping anxiety as we came to a stop seemingly in the middle of nowhere; the Palestinian driver kindly instructed us to disembark and wait for our contact who would lead us to the harvest site. A quick look around revealed no Palestinian villages, inhabitants or olive trees. I was confused. The only recognisable sight meeting the eye was a Jewish Israeli settlement which seemingly oozed over the sloping hillside above us, red roofs

and orderly streets enclosed within a formidable perimeter fence. After a time we were indeed met by our 'contact,' two Palestinian boys no more than ten years old, who turned and led us up the dirt track toward the settlement – could this be right? Along the path other harvesters worked in the valley: small groups of Palestinian women and children with sticks, mules and carts, some singing as they whacked the olive branches, others resting beneath shade in the growing heat of morning. Coming to a stop at the fence – now it was certain that we would be harvesting *inside* the settlement – my sense of the surreal grew upon learning that we must wait for the armed settlement guards to allow us entry. After more than twenty minutes and numerous phone calls to parties inside the settlement, two men appeared in a large truck with black guns slung over their shoulders, their bright white smiles shining with benevolence. They bid us entry along with a group of university students and the small number of Palestinian harvesters who had joined our retinue, slowly making note of passport numbers on a pad of legal paper. Amidst the activists in the queue, the Palestinian women remained silent as their children practiced English and the single Palestinian man present revealed that these were *his* trees we planned to harvest – not a widow with two small children, but a male filmmaker with property in Ramallah. Things were not at all what they had seemed.

The harvest proceeded with volunteers picking by hand and rake, while the Palestinian children and women used long sticks to reach the higher branches with force. "The Palestinian methods are backward and primitive, but we are their guests so we do it like they do, even if we can think of a better way," our rabbi leader told me as we moved slowly among the twenty trees which sat directly behind a row of red-roofed houses, the area littered with garbage thrown over private fences. If I climbed even one meter into a tree I could see over the fences and into the lives of these settlers, their yards manicured and adorned with lawn chairs, children's bicycles and brightly coloured slides and swingsets. Turning my head 180 degrees my eyes met another fence, that of the perimeter behind the patrol road. Slowly, slowly we worked, with many volunteers taking breaks to practice Arabic and commiserate – why weren't we rushing? As it was *Shabbat*, we needed to leave by early afternoon in order for those observing the Sabbath to be home by sunset. I asked about our unhurried pace and received an answer that really this harvest allowed the Palestinians with us "to feel good," that some measure of accomplishment came from merely tending the trees. In

truth it seemed more symbolic: the filmmaker and his family had been denied access to the trees for at least three years and did not expect to make much of the actual olives, yet our presence and actions were a means of articulating a claim to the land. Perhaps this desire to "feel good" more accurately applied to the volunteers and settlement guards than it did to our fellow harvesters. A short time later we broke for a lunch of hot tea, breads, dips, cheeses and vegetables prepared by the Palestinian women; many volunteers would not re-commence work that day.

During the meal I sat on the periphery of the group, watching a competition of who-knows-more-Arabic or who's-the-most-familiar-with-Palestinians unfold among volunteers, feeling disappointed and perplexed though I understood the symbolic value of our presence among the trees in the settlement. Eventually, we began to gather our belongings before returning to the waiting minibus and I decided to walk alone for a moment, following the patrol road uphill toward our entry and exit point. Here I found my 'lookout'; the desired wind indeed moved my hair as the warm sun and dust slowed the day to a crawl. I closed my eyes in an effort to just *be*, to imagine my original fantasy, and instead found myself becoming aware of a loud, rhythmic pounding. Opening my eyes and turning my head, I matched sound with image as a nearby construction site promised a bloom of new red roofs, private yards and orderly streets atop the neighbouring hill. Only days earlier the construction ban in the settlements had expired, and clearly no time would be wasted. I turned back to the vista, this time with my eyes open, taking in exactly what I was doing, where it was being done and under which circumstances, feeling much less the resistance and resistor of my imagination.[1]

Outside yet glaringly inside, my participation in the olive harvest with Rabbis for Human Rights brought multiple limits and layers of power into focus. East of Qalqilya yet somehow still within Israel, inside a Palestinian olive grove yet enclosed by a settlement, transgressing the borders of *what people do* yet requiring permission from security guards – could my act honestly be framed as resistance? In this context, the interplay between limits and transgression emerges a matter of complexity, as seemingly oppositional elements remain dependent upon one another for definition. As Michel Foucault (2003 [1963]: 446) writes:

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[1] Field notes, 4-5 November 2010.

Transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being; transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its immanent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes (perhaps, to be more exact, to recognise itself for the first time), to experience its positive truth in its downward fall. And yet, toward what is transgression unleashed in its movement of pure violence, if not that which imprisons it, toward the limit and those elements it contains?

Following Foucault, limits and transgression contain one another, inseparable as their exercise in part becomes possible through the continued existence of purported antithesis. As the realisation of that which is – or those who are – excluded makes possible the "positive truth" of limits, so too transgression relies upon a standard of ordinary *things people do*; ultimately, a given order arises through the presence of both.

Just as I stood inside the settlement fence line considering its multiple boundaries as the hammering of renewed expansion rang out over my act of resistance, layers of power shape decisions around action and inaction in Israel-Palestine, binding the two together. As transgression indeed makes visible the limits of a particular order (Foucault 2003 [1963] cited in Fadil 2009: 440), actions taken and withheld may be cast as indicators of embeddedness, revealing the overlayering and production of power within a given context (Abu-Lughod 1990). In response to the query '*Ma la'asot?*' [What can we do?], this chapter illustrates the multiple means through which individuals actually *do*, the ways they take action with regard to occupation and discrimination through modes of resistance and transgression. In doing so, not only do limits informing oppositional political action in Israel-Palestine become visible, but also the ways in which the very boundaries *produced by* transgression generate inaction in explicitly gendered terms. Moving from forms of 'everyday resistance' differentially practiced by Jewish Israeli women and men, to the consequences of normalised feminist and 'feminised' anti-occupation activism, to the ways in which radical protests meet the threat of routinisation with shifting rules and codes, this chapter reveals a continuum linking political action and inaction among Jewish Israelis.

Everyday Conflict, Everyday Resistance

Framed by a 'sense of' normalcy, everyday actions taken by Jewish Israelis occur within an approximation of the ordinary which remains predicated on keeping *out* wider political realities while intimately constructed through their continued presence. The task of this chapter is not to judge or evaluate modes of action, to assign labels of 'good' or 'bad,' 'effective' or 'ineffective,' but in part to think around the economy and effects of diverse forms of activism – what they *do* in frames wider than individual everyday lives in the context of Israel-Palestine. No longer an 'event' in the sense of "a drama which shocks being into radically open situations" (Badiou 1999 cited in Berlant 2011: 5), Israel's occupation of the Palestinian Territories has become a 'situation,' "a state of things in which *something* that will perhaps matter is unfolding amid the usual activity of life" (Berlant 2011: 5). Overlapping with and sometimes productive of the event's staccato punctuation – those necessary moments of rupture – the situation exists "a state of animated and animating suspension" (Berlant 2011: 5), at once resonant with the precarity of constructed normalcy explored in the preceding chapters. Here, resistance becomes framed by *routinisation* – absorption of the extraordinary within the everyday or translation of rupture into habit (Allen 2008) – which permits of action, reinforcing the extant order in part through hegemonic patterns of gender.

Even as resistance becomes routine, for many Jewish Israelis the everyday remains a site of meaningful action – "You have to consider people like my cousin who refuses to drive over the Green Line," I was told by a friend as we sat discussing my project during the early days of fieldwork. For months I too understood myself to be undertaking acts of "everyday resistance" in correspondence with scholarship by James C. Scott (1985), Diane Singerman (1995) and Asef Bayat (1997), as part of a "prosaic but constant struggle" often comprised of "passive noncompliance, subtle sabotage, evasion, and deception" (Scott 1985: 29, 31). In the name of resistance, I refused to travel Route 443 through the occupied West Bank – a 'short cut' from Jerusalem to Tel Aviv – but upon travelling the highway in a shared taxi I realised how my boycotting of this road actually melded with a rejection of sight, experience and knowledge, as the spaces and places of *de jure* and *de facto* occupation were obscured through my own design.

Far from uncommon among politically Leftist Jewish Israelis, everyday resistance unfolds across a diverse range of actions and positions, as "non-activists," "would-be activists," "should-be activists," "couch activists," "passive activists," "one-eighth" or "one-quarter activists," "office activists," "radical activists" and "former activists" practice multiply innovative modes of everyday political action.[2] Here, *what we can do* is constantly articulated and performed in the everyday, in terms both positive and negative – through doing and not doing. Yet as each account of everyday political action and resistance takes shape through the limits of a given order, it also becomes implicated in the production of differential modes of power. In a manner reflective of Lila Abu-Lughod's (1990) work on power and resistance, here *embeddedness* importantly frames oppositional action, as an act of resistance against a particular relation of power potentially reconstitutes a differential or wider relation. In her scholarship, Abu-Lughod (1990: 42) importantly urges anthropologists to invert Foucault's (1998 [1978]: 95-96) dictum "Where there is power, there is resistance," instead looking to "[…] signs of human freedom… to tell us more about forms of power and how people are caught up in them." In doing so, the many acts of everyday resistance practiced by Jewish Israelis emerge as underwritten by and reproductive of hegemonic patterns of gender, which importantly reflect the differential registers for action available to women and men. Here resistance indeed diagnoses power as gender norms shape the sites and content of action, reaffirming dominant orders while simultaneously permitting of subversion. Thus the multiplicity of domination – its constitution through overlapping and at times contradictory relations of power – becomes visible across diverse sites importantly including home and labour, those spaces and practices from Chapter Two so central to the division and entanglement of Israel-Palestine.

Resistance at Home

As seen in the preceding chapter, the intimate space of the domestic remains central to understandings and experiences of politics; in this, so too 'home' – with its security and belonging – might become a site of resistance. For Boaz, a long-time Jerusalemite living in the Beit HaKerem neighbourhood, home is a physical space accompanied by relations of ownership and autonomy:

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[2] The categories listed here emerged throughout the process of interviews in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, as participants offered self-assessed labels to describe their degrees of political action.

> Living here, being part of the society, I feel that I cooperate with the occupation whether I like it or not. I evade taxes for the most part. Here it's moral, in this situation. I evade taxes by not working – I don't bring a benefit to society and I don't pay much tax. It's also because I'm lazy. But it's a resistance! I don't feel that I fit in with society. Also I'm not married and I don't have a family – also maybe this is resistance.

Conveying awareness of his own embeddedness in wider political realities – "I cooperate with the occupation whether I like it or not" – Boaz describes a mode of oppositional everyday action which targets the economic foundations of the Israeli state: his refusal to pay taxes constitutes an explicit act of resistance. Yet as Boaz articulates and practices opposition, he simultaneously declares a fondness for capitalism, 'surviving' on the rental income generated by the multi-unit building which he owns and lives in. "Now let me tell you about the renter who was smoking on the bench over there," Boaz said later as he motioned toward where an older man had been sitting quietly on the edge of the garden, a lush green space with chestnut trees transplanted from the Golan Heights. "He's a Palestinian from the north, from 1948. Being a Palestinian looking to live in West Jerusalem is not so fun. He works as an economist in the budgeting department at Hebrew University – he's been there for years. To me, he has a regular paycheck. That's the only thing I look for."[3]

Here, resistance in the space of the home indeed diagnoses power, as Boaz protests Israel's occupation and state policies in explicitly capitalist terms while reaffirming the logics of neoliberalism – individualism, profit, privatisation – which underwrite the *status quo*. This layering of power ultimately produces in Boaz a sense of benevolence as he accepts 'a regular paycheck' from a Palestinian lodger, an act morally consistent with his participation in East Jerusalem protests even as it summarily elides its own politics of capital gain. Not without significance is the way in which Boaz relates his act of protest and egalitarian ideals to marital status and (hetero)normativity – as a single Ashkenazi man these registers of resistance are *available* to Boaz, providing him with both an expression of political voice and a source of financial profit. Indeed, after our interview Boaz admitted that he will need to amend his present lifestyle if he begins a family in the future: "There will be more money going out in expenses and I'll have to expand the flat – this means less rental

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[3] Interview in Jerusalem, 17 April 2011; handwritten notes.

income coming in. In the end, I will have to work." Thus Boaz acknowledges that his resistance through withholding tax and providing accommodation is necessarily ephemeral, as when he shifts to a normative lifestyle – moving to "fit in with society" – both will cease.

Yet as Boaz invokes the normativity of the family unit assumed to be heterosexual and nuclear, it should not be taken as given; rather, alternative formations reveal further ways in which everyday resistance becomes caught up in power. Also single, Ashkenazi and a property owner near Jerusalem, Ronit's practices of everyday resistance reflect further upon home as a site of resistance, here a space of intimacy whose garden gave rise to a description of normalcy imagined, pursued and protected in Chapter Three. As a single mother, prior to moving to Mevasseret-Zion Ronit lived in French Hill, a settlement *de jure* though *de facto* a Jewish Israeli neighbourhood conveniently located adjacent to the nearby university. For Ronit, living in French Hill was an explicitly political act:

> I looked in many Jerusalem neighbourhoods, but I liked so much French Hill. At the time I was very ideological about peace and living in a mixed neighbourhood attracted me. So I decided to buy a small apartment with three bedrooms and I took a mortgage. My living room and bedroom windows faced the desert and the Dead Sea, the hills of Jordan. The road below my windows went to the Dead Sea and the desert – it was very pleasant. I was very happy at that time period. . . . After, in 2000, I had Maya … We were very happy, we had cats.

> Then started the *intifada*. It was so tough – it's because of this that I'm telling you about Maya. When there was no nanny… the nanny didn't have a car so they would walk home, carrying a cell phone. The kindergarten was a square building, facing the road with five classes – there were 150 kids in the kindergarten. It was nice, there were different ages and classes. When I went to pick up Maya [one day], everything was curtained, closed and dark. There was no music. Normally it was a loud place, open with lots of music. The guard also wasn't there – you must knock and then the guard walks toward the gate from inside the building. He tells me that they heard from the army that there are terrorists moving around the neighbourhood, and one of their aims is to kidnap little children from the kindergarten… I don't know how I didn't run away.[4]

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[4] Interview in Mevasseret-Zion, 20 May 2011; handwritten notes.

Ending on a familiar note of perseverance, an ordinary act of resistance is again embedded in multiple layers of power as Ronit recounts living in a "mixed" neighbourhood, in fact a Jewish Israeli settlement beyond the Green Line. Surveying the Dead Sea and the Occupied Palestinian Territory bisected by the road below, from her vantage point in French Hill Ronit experiences the satisfaction of resistance without explicitly acknowledging the politics engaged and elided by her actions. With the arrival of her daughter, Maya, Ronit's everyday oppositional act – living among 'others' – is revealed to be fleeting, as her experiences and understandings of coexistence reaffirm racialised constructions of threat. Here home becomes a site of both security and precarity, at once the safe space to which Maya returns and the seemingly *sole* place of stability amidst a sea of danger. In this space Ronit acts to both nurture and protect, as recounted in the previous chapter, upending gender norms as a woman raising her daughter alone. Yet as Ronit doubly resisted power in her daily life in French Hill – attempting to practice coexistence as a single mother – her experience reproduced hegemonic norms and narratives, as a daughter in need of protection is ultimately ferried to the heights of Mevasseret-Zion where violence seemingly cannot shatter the music of childhood and the sanctity of home.

Thus home differentially provides a site of everyday resistance struck through by contradiction, even as it produces and reflects modes of normativity. Through their narratives, both Boaz and Ronit make visible multiple forms of opposition which overlap while seemingly standing in tension. To date, neither conforms to the gendered national norms which centralise family in its nuclear constellation as man, woman and (multiple) children; Boaz remains single and Ronit raises her daughter alone. Yet in their non-normative lifestyles, both reproduce gendered hegemonic norms through their chosen registers of opposition – on a readily discernable level Boaz performs masculinised authority and wage earning, while Ronit affirms mothering and feminised vulnerability. Importantly, this performance, affirmation and reproduction remain complex processes at the levels of subjectivity and sociality. Indeed, while Boaz might perform aspects of hegemonic masculinity, his non-normative lifestyle and activism imply a kind of social marginality; so too Ronit might affirm hegemonic roles associated with Jewish Israeli women, while at the same time providing the sole income and protection for her family. Thus as hegemonic patterns of gender shape everyday acts of resistance within the home, prevailing norms, roles,

codes and relations may be simultaneously contested and confirmed. Ultimately, however, each narrative concludes on a note of normativity, signalling that here resistance in part reconstitutes power through gendered, classed and racialised social relations.

Resistance through Labour

Beyond the intimate spaces of home and family, Jewish Israeli resistance becomes sewn into the fabric of everyday life though labour as employment practices create opportunities for contact and exchange, as detailed in Chapter Two. Again, here patterns of gender intersect with modes of everyday resistance to shape and reveal embeddedness in power. Upon beginning our interview in a Tel Aviv restaurant, Dana, a 32 year-old occupational therapist, conveyed doubt that she would be able to assist with my research as she feels herself politically "avoidant." However, throughout the course of our exchange Dana demonstrated how political awareness and engagement extend beyond reading newspapers, watching television broadcasts or listening to radio programmes, facilitating modes of everyday resistance:

> I work with Palestinians, you know. I work as an occupational therapist at the hospital in Tel Aviv, with children who have cancer and have to stay in the hospital. There is a whole floor of Palestinian kids from Gaza – a whole floor. This is the only way that I can be a pacifist, the only way that I can think of myself as contributing to the conflict. I'm learning Arabic, '*shwaya, shwaya*' [Arabic: slowly, slowly]. But I don't feel the conflict with them.
>
> KN: How do you mean?
>
> Dana: My boss has to do a presentation about this floor at a meeting now that more people are finding out about the Palestinian kids there – they want him to talk about what 'dilemmas' we face working with Palestinians, how we get along, etc. But I don't feel the conflict, although there are lots of other issues. There is no stress, no expression of it. The other issues are medical, mostly – about treating the children. Will they die if they are sent home to those conditions, we can't get their medical histories, it's difficult to communicate, cultural differences, their families have no means, no resources. These are medical issues.
>
> KN: So is this a way that you feel you can be proactive about the conflict?
>
> Dana: No, it's not proactive. But treating them as equal, really trying to learn Arabic. . . . This is the only thing I get being peaceful – I judge them as a person, no less.

I also learn things about their society, things that make me question their behaviour. Before working with the children at the hospital I definitely would have said "It's all our fault" or "What options do 18 year-old boys in Gaza have besides terrorism, becoming a terrorist? I would probably do the same in that situation." But I had a Palestinian friend, he's from the West Bank, and he would sometimes blame Israel for everything. Everything! Like family pressure, and they had means – they weren't rich, but they had means – and narrowed options. There is no argument about his position in life and the fact that Israel has something to do with it, but it's not all Israel's fault. I have pressure from my mother to be responsible, to have a family and a job, and it's not to do with the conflict. He would transfer everything to the conflict. But it also has to do with the conflicts you have in life – yes, you have fewer options than us but also you have to take responsibility for growing older.[5]

Recounted at length here, Dana's narrative is remarkable for its self-reflexivity, honesty and clarity as she articulates the multiple layers of power in which her work unfolds. Framed by her pacifism and desire to act or "contribute to [ending] the conflict," Dana's account sheds light upon the ways in which considerations of social class, race, religiosity, physical ability and geopolitical location inform her provision of service to Palestinian patients from Gaza. Here resistance emerges not only in terms of providing care and learning Arabic in order to overcome technical obstacles to her work, but also as learning to treat these patients as equal – "as a person, no less." Yet as this egalitarian practice enables Dana to practice resistance, so too it grants an unexpected sort of clarity and a shift away from radical politics. Through "learning about their society," Dana arrives at a more politically centrist position which moderates her perception of how occupation, colonisation, blockade and domination impact the lives of her Palestinian patients and friends. Thus her everyday resistance – practiced literally each working day – gives rise to a political sentiment aligned with the logics of the *status quo*.

In recounting his experiences as a social worker in Jerusalem's lower-income neighbourhoods, 35 year-old Gil echoed how a shift to political conservatism may be made possible through labour-based encounters, if differentially so. In his work with 'at-risk' Jewish Israeli adolescent boys, Gil spends increasing amounts of time in the neighbourhoods of south Jerusalem, an area in which he includes Gilo despite its status as an illegal settlement overlooking Bethlehem. As Gil related:

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[5] Interview in Tel Aviv, 17 January 2010; handwritten notes.

It was always because of this thing, of oppressed people and groups, that I was always very Left-wing, but in the process of the last few years of life… I'm getting to understand other opinions as well. Right-wing politics – I'm not talking about economics here – I'm getting to understand their concerns. The fears, the complex situation, the need for security.

KN: How? Because of the families you work with? Are they more conservative?

Gil: Not because of work and those communities. Because I'm getting more involved in society – my opinions are getting more based on reality, not on a basic idea of oppressed and oppressors. I feel it is happening with my friends too. It also comes with age, you get to see a more complex view. Specifically for me, because I felt in a way oppressed, in a way pushed away from society – how do you say '*Leshatef peula*'? 'Cooperate.' I used to go with this, seclude myself from society. In the last few years, especially since I started with social work, started working… I felt in a way that society was fucked up, I didn't want to deal with it – society was fucked up and I didn't want a connection with it, I didn't want to deal with it. In the last years I am involved more with society, I get to understand the complexity. I understand that I have to influence in a limited way – I *have* to. It's not worth it to stand on the side… even though it's not perfect and it isn't going to be. So it comes from more involvement in society. I didn't go to the army, I was doing my stuff, music. Jobs were just things that interested me, jobs didn't influence. In a way they do [influence] because I always liked art – it's a more abstract, free way of influencing, of being part. I'm trying to be involved in more concrete ways.[6]

This narrative appears internally contradictory, as Gil rejects work as the reason for his shift in political opinion while simultaneously detailing the ways in which his job as a social worker provides an avenue of awareness, resistance and importantly influence. Here, experiences of encounter and subsequent understandings emerge not from exchanges with Palestinians, but from meeting Jewish Israelis who possess scant access to social, economic and political capital. Like Dana, Gil sees his work as everyday resistance, this time providing a means of acting against the prevailing relations of power which shape privilege and belonging within Jewish Israeli society; yet so too these ordinary oppositional actions remain embedded in wider realties, including relations of domination. Indeed, through resistance Gil comes to understand the complexity, fears and security which drive more conservative politics than his own,

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[6] Interview in Jerusalem, 13 June 2011; handwritten notes.

effectively moving to centre as he draws closer to the society from which he felt previously estranged.

Within these narratives of resistance based in labour practices, patterns of gender again shape and reflect the differential registers available to women and men. Both Dana and Gil work in trades associated with care-taking – an ostensibly feminine or feminised role – and articulate a shift from stances described as more radically political to "understanding"; in keeping with the gender norms which frame Jewish Israeli society, this might be perceived as process of feminisation even as it conveys a kind of gender equity. However, the actions, resistance and seemingly paradoxical complicity of Dana and Gil must be read through the *intersection* of norms and hierarchies. Here Dana relates her understanding of responsibility – something she admits to personally struggling with – to acceding to normative pressures including the drive for family and reproduction, which seemingly equalises the life experiences of Jewish Israelis and Palestinians. For Dana, these imperatives are divorced from their wider context of conflict and occupation – all men and women are subject to family pressures, purely as a matter of "growing older." In Dana's eyes, what she negotiates as a young Ashkenazi Jewish Israeli woman should be met similarly by a young Palestinian man from the West Bank, nothing more and nothing less. For Gil, resistance enables proximity to a society from which he has felt rejected as both a Mizrahi Jew and an artist. In terms of gendered normativity, Gil's non-normative masculinity is implied by his avoidance of mandatory military service, that 'man-making' process ostensibly experienced by all Jewish Israelis. This vector of difference intersects with Gil's Iranian ethnicity, producing in him the impulse to "go along" with his own marginalisation, which simultaneously yielded Gil's formerly radical politics and disengagement. Refusing to cooperate in his own oppression and resisting the hierarchies of power and privilege which shape Jewish Israeli society, Gil chooses a register of action in which he might have more influence as a non-conformist in gendered, political and ethnic terms, ultimately coming closer to the hegemonic group. As made visible by both Dana and Gil, through labour hegemonic patterns again shape action and everyday resistance in complex and at times contradictory ways, ultimately bolstering the *status quo* and entrenching multiple layers of domination.

Structures of Practice

As considered here, accounts of everyday action and resistance demonstrate the extent to which acts occur not in isolation, but within the wider context of 'living on' in conditions of conflict; when appraised through intersecting relations of power, meanings become destabilised despite the actors' original intentions. Then how do these acts positive and negative – doing and not doing – add up? This query does not imply that actions taken or withheld are collectively futile, nor that individuals are victims of false consciousness; rather it directs attention to economy, how these acts combine and what they *do* together. Embedding resistance in capitalist accumulation, illegal settlements and conservative politics – here everyday oppositional action becomes implicated in wider matrices of power. While individually these actions might resist the "lateral agency" involved in the creation of the small worlds – attempting to counter "a mode of coasting consciousness within the ordinary" (Berlant 2011: 18) – they also provide those moments of interruption which remain integral to the stabilisation of normality, as argued in Chapter Three. Thus oppositional action may actually fortify relations of power which lie beyond those targeted through resistance. In this manner, actions against occupation, injustice and discrimination become enmeshed with neoliberal capitalism, nationalism and political conservatism, all integral aspects of contemporary Zionism which shape not only 'conflict,' but also hegemonic patterns of gender.

As such, what first appears as contradictory or hypocritical within the narratives recounted above becomes an matter of consistency, linking exchanges and experiences through the wider practices, norms and ideologies shaping Jewish Israeli society. Here those forms of political action often deemed most accessible and least incendiary – everyday acts of resistance – serve to diagnose power, as enlarging the frame of reference indeed reveals how "[…] resisting at one level may catch people up at other levels" (Abu-Lughod 1990: 53). As depicted in the passages above, these specific actions not only provide necessary ruptures of normalcy on micro levels and recreate the precarity essential to a state of suspension, but also they bolster hegemony. As highlighted by Timothy Mitchell (1990: 553), "Hegemony, in Gramsci's writings, refers to non-violent forms of control exercised through the whole range of dominant cultural institutions and social practices, from schooling, museums, and political parties to religious practice, architectural forms, and the mass media." Through the

accounts of Boaz, Ronit, Dana and Gil, gender emerges as central to those practices and processes which secure hegemony even through resistance, intersecting with vectors and relations of power in everyday life. Here the roles respectively ascribed to women and men in Jewish Israeli society importantly shape modes of resistance and action, along with expressions of political voice. However, hegemonic patterns of gender necessarily retain a degree of dynamism, adapting to changing relations of power. In this, the role of (Ashkenazi) woman-as-mother sits easily with mother-as-earner, as both differentially reproduce the prevailing national narrative. So too a Mizrahi man who refused mandatory military service might increasingly identify with the role of man-as-protector, reaffirming the very construction of masculinity from which he felt excluded. Together these textures point to a diverse range of gender roles, norms, codes and relations which in part determine registers for action.[7]

Yet as everyday resistance makes visible complexity and contradiction, these actions are not a matter of 'false consciousness' or the ideological persuasion and misrecognition which implicates individuals and communities in relations of domination (Scott 1990: 72). Indeed, the individuals narrating the passages above knowingly articulate their embeddedness: Gil acknowledges that refusing to cooperate in oppression paradoxically brings him closer to the mainstream and domination, just as Dana admits that treating Palestinians from Gaza as "equal" means passing judgement on individuals whose "position in life" is shaped through violence perpetuated by her own state and society. Thus diverse actions intended to express resistance or solidarity implicate individual actors in multiple relations and layers of domination. This entanglement and embeddedness necessarily binds meaning with materiality and practice with structure, if in unexpected ways; as Mitchell (1990: 561) well cautions:

> The distinction between particular practices and their structure or frame is problematic not simply because it may not be shared by non-western traditions, but because . . . the apparent existence of such unphysical frameworks of structures is precisely the effect introduced by modern mechanisms of power and it is through this elusive yet powerful effect that modern systems of domination are maintained.

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[7] The dynamic patterns of gender outlined here importantly complicate those roles and relations outlined in existing literature around gender, nationalism and militarism within Jewish Israeli society (see Sharoni 1995; Katz 2003; Sasson-Levy 2003; Jacoby 2005; Segal 2008).

Hegemonic Entanglements

As the above accounts indicate, in the context of Israel-Palestine acknowledgement of "catching up" in power becomes a means of expressing how one 'lives on' or 'gets by' in conditions of conflict and their constitutive relations of power. In this, the admission that "I am part of it whether I like it or not" signals that practice and structure indeed remain entwined. Here hegemony importantly arises not through the division of coercion from persuasion or the separation of the physical realm from behaviour and consciousness (Mitchell 1990: 545, 559), but in large part through social maintenance and production, simultaneously invoking both materiality and meaning. Thus participation in domination cannot be appraised as imposed or enforced by state or military actors upon an unwilling or unknowing populace, but must be understood as rooted in interpersonal and intimate dimensions of sociality, inclusive of those who resist. Importantly, while this creates a seemingly untenable position for oppositional actions and actors – by their own admission bound with power despite altruistic intentions and at times great personal cost – resistance remains significant in part due to its very embeddedness, as individuals and communities insist upon the possibility of a better future despite inevitable flaws and failures.

Yet given this enmeshment with hegemony, resistance might create its own resistance or movement away from its promise of opposition. What drives those who actively 'resist' resistance in opting *against* participation in the political actions which seek to oppose occupation, discrimination and injustice? In a manner similar to transgression, which "[…] allows the limits to arise, in their blank nakedness, while simultaneously being transgressed" (Fadil 2009: 440), opposition to resistance despite a shared politics betrays much about the workings of power, providing a differential adaptation of Abu-Lughod's (1990) imperative. As resistance becomes interwoven with hegemony, opposition to those actions and agendas might be cast as a "nonpositive affirmation," a contestation which "[…] does not imply a generalised negation, but an affirmation that affirms nothing, a radical break of transitivity" (Foucault 2003 [1963]: 446-447). While these modes of 'resistance to resistance' appear to contest hegemony, (non-)actions and (non-)actors ultimately become implicated in domination through their apparent passivity, as practice again emerges tightly woven with structure.

The Banality of Activism

On the most readily apparent level, those individuals resisting resistance respond to an overwhelming normalisation of organised activism within everyday Jewish Israeli life, particularly those initiatives specific to the political Left. From municipality-approved demonstrations in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem to independent activist organisations, various forms of political protest are actively stitched into the fabric of ordinary life, many in specifically gendered terms. As fieldwork progressed throughout the year, my participation in frequent Tel Aviv demonstrations began to feel routine and formulaic, if not oddly 'normal' – even as my bodily presence in the street ostensibly directed attention to opposition, my actions somehow contributed to a prevailing sense of anaemia. Dana, the occupational therapist who characterised her degree of political engagement as "avoidant," described this regularisation:

> Most demonstrations are in Tel Aviv, but you barely feel it. Every Friday at Ben Zion there is a quiet demonstration.
>
> KN: Women in Black?
>
> D: Yes – no one notices it. It's on a major route for buyers and, okay, they [Women in Black] are there, but it's the same with the puppies with SOS.[8] One Friday people were yelling at them, but there is indifference here.

Grouped with the pitiable puppies leashed to a city fence in hopes of adoption, the weekly protest of Women in Black stands a marker of normalcy rather than a provocation, though presumably evocative of different emotions and reactions than the pets nearby. While often ignored or unseen, these primarily elderly women protestors at times elicit aggressive responses, emotional reactions which stand in contrast to the women's "quiet demonstration" and the overwhelming "indifference" to their acts of protest. Yet this very volatility of encounter itself remains subject to normalisation, as it occurs within a political and social environment characterised by conflict, aggression, confrontation and debate. When asked later in our interview about the possibility of mass mobilisation, Dana remarked upon the comportment and emotion imagined to spur action:

> The problem is that the Left-wing is impotent – where the Right-wing has loads of people and shouting, the Left is civilised and singing. They don't get

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[8] SOS is an animal rescue organisation; see http://www.sospets.co.il, accessed 30 April 2012.

noticed. There is practically no Left-wing. Sadly, when the people will rise for change it will be because of internal problems, not because of the conflict. Problems like the corrupt government, financial judgment, and criticism of education. When [Prime Minister Yitzhak] Rabin died he was supporting the peace initiative – if there will be any serious initiative there will be followers. But to rise against the situation as it is now? No. The activists, the Anarchists, the Women in Black – it will be the same actors and the same percentage. People won't rage against it.[9]

Within this reflection, the indifference facing oppositional actors becomes a product of their own doing, an apparent deficiency in critical mass, political voice and visibility in contrast to that garnered by the political Right.[10] Critically, these "same actors" – explicitly listed among them the Friday protestors from Women in Black – are deemed lacking in *rage*, the same ingredient I increasingly felt missing from the organised protests of Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, save when met with Right-wing counter-protests. Interestingly, this subscription to rage – also on my part – replicates the denigration of women's and feminist protest groups in Israel, as it validates a belief in the transformative potential of masculinised anger infused with the threat of violence. Numerous commentators note the prevalence of women's anti-occupation and peace activism organisations in Israel from the 1980s through the early 2000s (see Mayer 1994; Sharoni 1995, 1996; Helman 1999a; Cockburn 1998, 2007; Freedman 2002; Misra and Rich 2002; Svirsky 2002a, 2002b; Lentin 2004; Fuchs 2005; Jacoby 2005; Powers 2006; Kaye-Kantrowitz 2008; Segal 2008; Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011), detailing how women activists became associated with particular protest modes and agendas. While this association of women with protest potentially serves to feminise Israeli peace organisations and initiatives, Dana's narrative points to a sense that the *wider* culture of Leftist political protest has become feminised, extending beyond women's and feminist groups. Thus Dana's political avoidance emerges in part a resistance to a normalised and pacified spectre of organised political protest, an ostensibly feminised mode of action deemed "impotent" in the face of a masculinised Right-wing fury. Here, as anger seemingly constitutes the ultimate political motivator – an exception to the banality and passivity of 'living

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[9] Interview in Tel Aviv, 17 January 2011; handwritten notes.

[10] In numerous interviews individuals expressed their sense that the political Right-wing is able to mobilise more effectively than the Left, noting that these parties and organisations are better versed in the politics of protest and popular appeal.

on' or 'getting by' – the assumed emotion of opposition effectively affirms the hegemonic gender order.

However, in keeping with the complexity and contradiction of resistance as made visible in the preceding section, this belief in the transformative capacity of masculinised rage halts at the limits of the Jewish Israeli collectivity. Intersecting with race, class and national belonging, here too the conduct of protest entrenches prevailing gender norms, codes, roles and relations, if differentially so. As seen in reactions to demonstrations by Palestinian citizens of Israel, African refugees and asylum seekers, and domestic caretakers, the normalisation of specific forms of protest in turn creates 'abnormal' or 'dangerous' modes of action, coded along lines of race and gender. With its protest site intentionally positioned in the centre of Tel Aviv, a Palestinian demonstration against Hosni Mubarak's regime in Egypt and two marches involving the city's African migrant population were characterised by a high level of male participation, relative visibility in the core of 'white' Tel Aviv and a striking degree of audibility. As I attended the Palestinian-Egyptian solidarity demonstration in Basel Square,[11] I was struck by the ways in which 'Israeli Arabs' – clearly differentiated from 'Palestinians' in nearly every interview I conducted – suddenly became *Palestinian* even to the "hard core" Jewish Israeli activists who stood watching the demonstration across the street. "They don't understand Arabic, they don't know what they're saying," a fellow anthropologist explained to me after speaking with these activists, many of whom were participants in her research project. "People are scared – they see a big group of angry young Palestinian men, shouting in Arabic and waving Palestinian flags."[12] Though young Palestinian women were also in attendance, their voices were subsumed within the majority-male mass as the spectre of masculinised rage and ostensible threat of violence transformed not only the 'Israeli Arabs,' but also the radical Jewish activists who in their trepidation became 'Israeli.'

Likewise, playing drums, chanting in English and appearing in numbers previously unknown to the Jewish Israeli residents of central and north Tel Aviv, African

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[11] For footage of the 1 February 2011 protest near the Egyptian embassy see http://vimeo.com/21132162, accessed 30 April 2012.

[12] Field notes, 1 February 2011.

refugees and asylum seekers elicited similar shock and anxiety in both the 2010 Human Rights Day march and an independent demonstration against the construction of a planned African-only detention facility.[13] As Dimi Reider (2010) of *+972 Magazine* wrote of the former event, " […] until yesterday, Israelis have never seen the refugees march together, as a coherent, unapologetic group, not merely speaking their claim not in the slums and the periphery where they have been pushed, but chanting it on one of Israel's most affluent shopping streets." Viewed by participants and organisers as a welcome addition to the ordinarily predictable annual Tel Aviv march, the presence of the African migrants – primarily men – on Human Rights Day was more ambiguously received by onlookers; as Ilan, a 32 year-old Tel Aviv resident, recounted: "I was in Pilates on the day of the International Human Rights Day march and we watched out the window as hundreds of blacks walked past on Rothschild [Boulevard]. They just kept coming, and people found it really alarming."[14] In a similar manner, walking amidst the crowd in the later protest against the detention facility I wondered how the presence of large numbers of African demonstrators – many from Sudan, Eritrea and Congo – appearing in central Tel Aviv would ultimately impact their struggle, given the climate of virulent racism.[15] While the African migrant community importantly became visible and articulated their demands, at the same time a perceived 'threat' materialised and became suddenly tangible to a wider Jewish Israeli society.

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[13] For footage of the 10 December 2010 Human Rights Day march see http://democracy-project.org.il/en/2010/12/highlights-from-the-march-part-2-the-refugees, accessed 30 April 2012. The solidarity demonstration against the detention centre was held on 24 December 2010; see Lior 2010. Importantly, though the article by Lior (2010) cites the presence of a large number of "Israeli activists," the overwhelming majority of participants were from the African migrant community in south Tel Aviv.

[14] Interview in Tel Aviv, 5 January 2011; handwritten notes.

[15] Throughout the time of my fieldwork public racism and violence directed against African migrants – often refugees and asylum seekers – increased dramatically, reflecting the discrimination and prejudice directed toward Palestinians while at the same time supplanting this group on the lowest echelon of Israeli society; see Ettinger, Hasson and Lior 2010 and Sheen 2011a. However, Jewish Israeli attitudes and behaviours toward this community often exposed significant tensions; while largely reviled and demonised within public discourse, within individual exchanges black African migrants were regarded with a degree of pity and empathy not extended toward Palestinians. For example, during an *ulpan* lesson our instructor related her understanding that where many African migrants lived in (south) Tel Aviv tended to be "violent and dirty, with drugs and homelessness." Shaking her head sadly our instructor told the class, "These conditions bring out the worst in them and this brings out the worst in us [Israelis], and people then take advantage of them." Field notes, 28 December 2010.

Significantly, this masculinisation and racialisation of non-Jewish protest articulates through the sexualised discourse of threat, penetration and "infiltration" applied to both Palestinians from the Occupied Territories and African migrants (Ettinger, Hasson and Lior 2010; Khoury, Pfeffer and *Ha'aretz* 2011; Dana 2011; Sheen 2011a; Lis 2011b; Reuters 2013). Thus the presence and expression of rage cannot be so easily associated with transformative potential in political protest; rather race, national belonging and gender intersect to shape perceptions and experiences of political action. Indeed, a protest against the institution of an immigration law binding health workers and domestic caregivers to a specific family – deemed the "slavery law" by activists – garnered far more public support and far less anxiety or fear, problematising an easy association of anger with political or social change. Though the law was eventually passed on 16 May 2011 (ACRI 2011a), in March 2011 a relatively high proportion of (white) Jewish Israelis attended a quiet, orderly demonstration in order to support those individuals, primarily women of Asian origin, tasked with caring for their elderly relatives. One interview participant explained the support for this demonstration as a testament to the successful "integration" of these female workers in Jewish Israeli society. However, and perhaps more importantly, this demonstration also followed the template of 'normalised' political action, characterised by the same perceived feminisation and lack of rage as found in regular Leftist demonstrations.[16] Paradoxically, this same dearth or absence imbued the initiative with markedly greater legitimacy than protests by Palestinians or African migrants. Indeed, Tamar Hermann (2009 cited in Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011: 746) makes a similar observation with regard to the *Arba Emahot* [Four Mothers] campaign, which resulted in the withdrawal of Israeli troops from Lebanon in 2000: "The movement gained legitimacy and public attention because of its framing as an apolitical group within the acceptable framework of motherhood."

Marked by the spectre of masculinised and racialised rage, the Palestinian and African migrant protests were cast as *abnormal* vis-à-vis the normalised and ostensibly feminised docility of regular Tel Aviv protests, which the care providers and their supporters invoked to a potential advantage. Again pointing to the embeddedness of protest and resistance within wider relations of power, the political actions undertaken

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[16] Field notes, 26 March 2011 and interview in Tel Aviv, 27 March 2011; handwritten notes.

by Palestinian citizens of Israel and African migrants living in Tel Aviv bolstered a sense of 'threat' while at the same time substantiating the Israeli state and society's claims to democracy. As minority populations publicly exercise freedom of speech and right to assembly, resistance becomes 'caught up' in layers of power and contributes to hegemony. However, the significance of these accounts to perceptions of *what we can do* lies in their complication of and contribution to normalisation, as a mode of protest – seemingly feminised, pacified and impotent – becomes subject to active resistance, despite achieving legitimacy. Here opposition to political action emerges as a move against the overwhelming sense of passivity, calm and balance which these actions are seen to project, those very attributes paradoxically strived for in the pursuit of normalcy. In this, dominant forms of oppositional political action are read for their *effect* in the context of Jewish Israeli society, as a necessary rupture ultimately obeys the limits of structure and permits of everyday life.

Yet this dynamic does not go unacknowledged by the activists whose initiatives and organisations become normalised and associated with the hegemonic quality of Leftist political action. Yardena, a 75 year-old Jerusalemite formerly active with Bat Shalom and currently working with Machsom Watch, the Israeli Committee Against House Demolitions, Women in Black and Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity,[17] became politically active in England during the anti-Vietnam war and anti-Apartheid movements, returning to Israel in 1970 in time to join the first demonstrations against the then-nascent West Bank settlements. As we spoke together on *Naksa* Day,[18] Yardena recounted her experiences and perceptions thus:

> What was interesting was the *sociology* of things – I find that very interesting. The first time when I was arrested in 1970 [for protesting] against the settlement of Kiryat Arba, we were all stuck in a big cage of the Russian Compound prison, men and women together. The guards brought us coffee… the environment was relaxed. We were not taken seriously – the occupation had not settled in. We weren't the enemy. But in '73, we were the enemy. I was not in a cage with other people, I was put with women. Some women

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[17] Each of the organisations listed may be considered part of a wider 'anti-occupation movement' in Israel; see bibliography for links to organisation websites.

[18] As related in Chapter One, *Naksa* Day marks the Palestinian commemoration of the 1967 War, which resulted in further dispossession and displacement of Palestinians along with the military occupation of the West Bank, Gaza Strip, East Jerusalem, Golan Heights and Sinai Peninsula. The 2011 anniversary was marked by protests and the killing of unarmed Palestinian civilians by the IDF as individuals attempted to cross the border fence from Syria into Israel; see Khoury, Ashkenazi and Harel 2011.

there didn't like me because when you're low down on the social scale you have to be 'better than' [someone else]. . . . With Women in Black – I can't remember the start date… it was the first *intifada*. At the demonstrations it was built up in a circle with men on the bottom and women on the top in the centre. . . . The drivers would go past and say, "Women go home! You have a child waiting for you! The Sabbath dinner is waiting!" A few months later it was, "Arab lovers! Prostitutes!" And a few more months later it became, "Traitors!" Women's place as political beings, who don't follow their men into the army, was very interesting… Then there were a lot of women at the demonstrations, but now there are 15 with many women from abroad. Then there were 40 to 50 – it's 15 now. On the Friday nearest the 6th of June [*Naksa* Day] we used to get more than 100 people, Israelis, men and women. Last Friday we had 40, with many from abroad.

Highlighting the gender tensions which suffuse her experiences of arrest and political protest, Yardena's narrative recalls a transition from the social inclusion of the early 1970s to the sexualised and nationalised exclusion caused by the imbrication of protest with episodes of violent conflict – the 1973 October or Yom Kippur War and the first *intifada* – culminating in the relative indifference and inaction of the present day. Within her secondary discussion of Women in Black, the narrative arc is particularly significant as here Yardena traces a shift from dismissal – on gendered grounds as mothers – to labelling as "traitors" as women mounted an increasingly serious challenge to Israeli state and military policies. Importantly, Yardena relates normalisation – the failure to be "taken seriously" – to declining participation, ultimately reflecting upon women's position as "political beings" in the past tense. Here, normalisation can be read as silence, as the gap between vehement accusations and low participant numbers; in the interim, Yardena implies that women as political beings have been seemingly neutralised or eliminated as their protest becomes normalised.

Yet similarly to the ways in which vectors of race, class and gender complicate the association of rage with transformative politics, an intersectional reading of Yardena's narrative sheds further light upon normalisation at it meets with protest. Throughout our exchange, Yardena made reference to the racial, ethnic and class composition of what she deemed Israel's "social scale," a spectrum invoked in her recollection of time spent in prison. At one point, she related an experience of marching with the Israeli Black Panthers, a Mizrahi protest movement active in the 1970s:

> They had a big march, several, in Jerusalem. At this one I was separated from the main march and surrounded by North African Jews. They said, "What are you doing? You're Ashkenazi! You're rich, you have an apartment!" I wasn't [rich], but the assumption was that because I'm Ashkenazi I'm rich and I have an apartment to go home to. I said, "Okay, let's assume I was [rich]. Why wouldn't I march with the Black Panthers?" It was like a march with the blacks in the southern US when the whites came, except the blacks [in the US] accepted it.[19]

In these combined accounts, Yardena's actions aimed at social and political transformation are met with what she perceives to be class- and race-based antipathy, rather than solidarity – in both the Black Panthers march and the women-only prison cell, Yardena is not welcome. Delineated precisely as Ashkenazi (white), affluent and female, in these narratives the hegemonic figure of the Jewish Israeli protestor is received with hostility and derision by fellow citizens who possess less privilege, influence and capital. Strikingly, in both instances the "social scales" invoked by Yardena are inverted, as if in states of exception – explicitly as a white Jewish Israeli activist, she is treated *as if* positioned lower within social hierarchies than her respective interlocutors, understanding herself differentially perceived as "the enemy." In this, Yardena remains a member of the hegemonic group despite her acts of resistance; in the spaces of both radical protest and incarceration her presence is equated with the privilege of normalcy.

Resistance to the Game

Within the passages above, the normalisation of activism within Jewish Israeli society begets not only its own resistance, but also new modes of political action, if judged 'abnormal' or threatening. Indeed, protests by Palestinian citizens of Israel, African migrants living in south Tel Aviv and the Mizrahi Black Panthers of the 1970s arise through and at the limits of hegemonic forms of protest, including those actions seemingly feminised, normalised and pacified. In this, established forms of activism set 'rules of the game' to be contested and reformulated by subsequent initiatives and organisations. Baruch Kimmerling (2001: 216) writes similarly of Israeli militarism: "Another fact of this situation of perpetual threat has been the development and adoption of a value system – that is, *the rules of the game* implied by culture, values,

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[19] Interview in Jerusalem, 5 June 2011; handwritten notes

mores, folklore, and myths – that tends to support the real and artificial needs created by warfare and a perceived siege situation."[20] Beyond the codes and needs which underwrite the militarised value system explored in Chapter One, of interest here is "the game" whose explicit acknowledgement and entanglement with conflict makes visible further ways in which patterns of gender intersect with protest to produce political inaction.

As 'games' of resistance unfold within more veteran protest vehicles – those now-normalised modes of political action explored above including highly visible women's initiatives and organisations – their diverse codes of conduct ultimately influence the perception and performance of new modes of activism; importantly, these games take place not only within the borders of Israel proper, but also in the spaces of the Occupied Territories. Indeed, the normalisation of older forms of anti-occupation activism within Israel's recognised borders has in part yielded groups such as Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity in East Jerusalem and popular resistance initiatives in West Bank villages including Na'alin, Bil'in and Nabi Saleh, which have recently shifted to the forefront of organised political action. Ofek, a 26 year-old activist from Jerusalem, detailed the contours of one such game of activism which subsequently establishes new rules:

> In the south I was part of Machsom Watch – they're a human rights group to watch entry. Usually there aren't young women, it's more like old aunts because they can be easy, relaxed with the soldiers. When they had enough [older] women to balance me, I took part. It was becoming a practice at this point: three women arrive, the soldier closes the checkpoint, no Palestinians can go in or out because of Machsom Watch. It's like a game. Then we'd go to the hill and they [the soldiers] would notice, they come back and close the checkpoint again… until we go, the Palestinians suffer.[21]

Well-documented and researched similarly to the Israeli Women in Black, Machsom Watch was founded by Jewish Israeli women in 2001 at the onset of the second *intifada*, as the function and proliferation of checkpoints in the Occupied Territories became increasingly visible to Jewish Israelis (Kotef and Amir 2007: 974). The organisation has been critiqued both internally and academically in terms of its gender,

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[20] Emphasis added.

[21] Interview in Jerusalem, 11 May 2011; handwritten notes.

ethnic, class and generational dimensions, as membership consists primarily of retirement-aged middle-class Ashkenazi Israeli women whose 'de-sexualised' femininity and maternal appearance is seen to grant a degree of protection from and influence over the young (male) soldiers stationed at military checkpoints in the West Bank.[22] While an innovative mode of action relative to the sanctioned demonstrations occurring within Israel's recognised borders, Ofek highlights the game-like qualities of the interaction between the Machsom Watch women and the soldiers, illustrating the extent to which both action and *re*-action have been regularised over time. Characterised as "a practice," this game of political protest and intervention indeed possesses particular rules, values and codes. While the declared intention of the organisation is to observe and document the operation of the checkpoints and the subsequent treatment of Palestinians at these sites,[23] in Ofek's narrative – and indeed the accounts of other research participants active with Machsom Watch – the exchange unfolds strictly between Jewish Israeli actors whose interactions remain framed by prevailing assumptions concerning the relationship between gender and violence; the Palestinians subject to this exercise of power are consigned to waiting and suffering. Paradoxically, and in keeping with the embeddedness of resistance within wider relations of power, the actions of Machsom Watch have been explicitly criticised as ensuring the continued function of the very checkpoints these activists oppose.[24] Potentially contributing to the extension of military control through sanitisation, the actions of Machsom Watch produce not only a differential mode of

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[22] Interviews in Jerusalem, 11 May 2011 and 20 June 2011; handwritten notes. While Kotef and Amir (2007) contest this claim with accounts of younger women's sexualisation in Machsom Watch – both strategic and unsolicited – no corroborating narratives emerged during multiple interviews involving Machsom Watch volunteers across a range of ages.

[23] See http://www.machsomwatch.org/en, accessed 3 May 2012; also see Kotef and Amir (2007).

[24] As Professor Yagil Levy (2011) argues:

> Even if the leftist groups' intention is to ensure upholding Palestinian rights, though, the unintentional result of their activity is preserving the occupation. Moderating and restraining the army's activity gives it a more human and legal facade. Reducing the pressure of international organizations, alongside moderating the Palestinian population's resistance potential, enables the army to continue to maintain this control model over a prolonged period of time.

Importantly, many Machsom Watch volunteers are aware of this tension in their work. See interviews in Tel Aviv, 31 January 2011 and Jerusalem, 17 April 2011 and 14 June 2011; handwritten notes.

normalisation, but also *depoliticisation* which accompanies the shift to a language of human rights in this context.[25]

More radical and marginal than the sanctioned demonstrations of Tel Aviv, specific oppositional political actions produce rules of the game as outlined above, providing a standard for future initiatives. Here reactions and resistance to the established model produce differential modes of political action, as patterns of gender again meet with conflict and protest. Significantly, positions adopted by the latest generation of activist initiatives which include Jewish Israelis – such as Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity and the Friday protests in Bil'in, Na'alin and Nabi Saleh – actively refute the perceived feminisation and regularisation of hegemonic political protest.[26] Yet at the same time as innovation transgresses existing limits, new rules and value systems come into play, again shaping relations of inclusion and exclusion, participation and resistance. Intrigued by the demonstrations in Bil'in,[27] presented to me as "hard core" political actions during numerous interviews, I decided to participate and observe a Friday protest in May 2011. I was encouraged by the small number of interview participants who had attended the protests and was puzzled by comments made by Nadav, a 31 year-old activist from Tel Aviv, in a recent exchange:

> You should go because if you're a decent person you will get mad – about the activists, the army, all the ritual. Of course there are reasons it is like this. It's hard to keep it in mind. For an Israeli to go to Bil'in is something necessary. For the first time in your life you're in the Palestinian Territories, surrounded by Palestinians, Arabic, Arabic music coming from speakers on a large truck… it's like something from a Reuter's photo. You're sure you will get killed. The army is no longer an 18 year-old douche bag with a rifle – it's the

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[25] Many interview participants attested to the increasing appeal of 'human rights' work; at the same time, a small number of participants drew attention to the potentially neutralising or depoliticising aspects of this discourse and practice (see also Einhorn 2008: 171-190 and Allen 2013: 90). Importantly, this depoliticisation remains associated with feminisation, again bringing valuations of gender squarely into resistance.

[26] While Sheikh Jarrah Solidarity protests take place in East Jerusalem, organised actions in Bil'in, Na'alin, and Nabi Saleh are located within these respective Palestinian West Bank villages; the latter sites are associated with the Popular Struggle Coordination Committee (see https://popularstruggle.org, accessed 4 May 2012).

[27] These demonstrations began in response to the annexation of Bil'in lands by the Jewish Israeli settlement Modi'in, made possible by the construction of the Wall through village territory; see http://www.bilin-village.org/english, accessed 4 May 2012. After the Israeli High Court ordered the Wall to be re-routed in 2007, the structure was finally moved in 2011; however, 150,000 square metres of village land presently remain annexed (*Ha'aretz* 2010a) and protests continue.

enemy. You try to remember that the army is an 18 year-old guy whose vacation is screwed up because of you. But the Palestinians have more to lose. It doesn't change your views, but it does change some of the elemental fear Israelis have of Palestinians.

Most of it is like tourism. Like I met four Italians in Ma'asra[28] who were singing, shouting something at the soldiers. I speak Italian so I understood what they were singing – it was children's songs. They were singing excitedly, furiously at the army… they were having a very nice time. This is what happens. Last time I was in Bil'in, I was surrounded by tear gas, shock grenades, people weeping… and you can hear 'Jingle Bells' coming from the ice cream truck on the road. It's a hot day and the truck is there, like usual, selling ice cream to people and playing 'Jingle Bells.' You sit and watch the truck with the driver… it's something you have to see. Some Israeli activists do it for adventure, for tourism… for righteousness.[29]

On the day of my participation in the protest at Bil'in 'Jingle Bells' was not to be heard, nor was the mythical ice cream truck in sight, but Nadav was present along with fellow Jewish Israeli bloggers relaying the events real-time on Twitter. The predicted sense of ritual and fantasy indeed began on the 45-minute drive from Tel Aviv to the village, wherein passengers in the vehicle played friendly 'name games' by means of introduction as we hurtled along Route 443 past Modi'in and across the Green Line. As we drove and familiarised ourselves, Sean, a young Jewish American man studying at the Arava Institute,[30] summarised his perception of the Bil'in protests with a reference to American popular culture: "It's like 'Fight Club': 'Once you've been in fight club the volume on everything else is turned down.'"[31] Our driver, Nina, nodded in agreement and Sean continued excitedly with a declaration that, having been to Bil'in four times, the next week he planned to attend the demonstration in

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[28] Weekly actions are also held on Fridays in the West Bank village of Ma'asra.

[29] Interview in Tel Aviv, 20 April 2011; handwritten notes. For excellent analyses of the ways in which tourism intersects with conflict and security practices in Israel-Palestine see Stein 2008 and Ochs 2011: 138-160.

[30] Located in the Negev Desert of south Israel, the Arava Institute for Environmental Studies "… prepar[es] future Arab and Jewish leaders to cooperatively solve the region's environmental challenges"; see http://www.arava.org, accessed 5 May 2012.

[31] The exact quotation from Chuck Palahniuk's 1996 novel reads as follows: "After a night in fight club, everything in the real world gets the volume turned down. Nothing can piss you off. Your word is law, and if other people break that law or question you, even that doesn't piss you off."

nearby Nabi Saleh explicitly *because* these actions were more violent. "The army goes into the city there!" he told us, highlighting the extent to which these West Bank demonstrations exist hierarchically arranged according to levels of danger, with participants therein appraised by their degrees of bravery.

After crossing through the checkpoint – "Everybody look Zionist!" Nina commanded with a laugh as we passed the Israeli soldiers – the game of protest continued to unfold in the village, its rules becoming obvious as the event began. Upon joining the main group, I was assigned a "babysitter," a veteran (male) Jewish Israeli activist to guide me at the demonstration and ensure that I stayed within my personal comfort zone vis-à-vis the expected violence. We chatted as I waited for a safety briefing to begin and the atmosphere was friendly even if I felt anxious; I noted with some surprise that I actually recognised the houses and a number of faces from the film *Bil'in Habibti*, a documentary viewed months earlier.[32] Eventually, members of Anarchists Against the Wall[33] called new participants to a shaded garden and the safety briefing commenced in serious tones. Here we learned what to expect and how to act regarding military violence, as clearly there existed a customary order of events and escalation: first stun grenades, then skunk water and tear gas canisters, possibly followed by Ruger rifles and rubber-coated bullets or even live fire. Next came instructions on what to do upon injury, arrest and finally – for women – sexual harassment by male protestors. Replete with a separate set of instructions, alcohol wipes were passed around the group in order to quell the effects of the inevitable tear gas. I felt increasingly unsure of this game. Yet as the demonstration began, led by a cardboard coffin and Palestinian men dressed as [Palestinian National Authority President] Mahmoud Abbas and either [Hamas Political Bureau Chairman] Khaled Mashal or [disputed Palestinian National Authority Prime Minister] Ismail Haniyeh,[34] I fell in behind the line of yellow flags, youths with *keffiyeh*-wrapped faces and a

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[32] *Bil'in Habibti* [Bil'in My Love] is a film made by Jewish Israeli activist and documentarist Shai Carmeli-Pollak in 2006, which focuses on the popular struggle in Bil'in.

[33] Anarchists Against the Wall is a Jewish Israeli group "supporting the popular Palestinian resistance to the Israeli separation wall"; see http://www.awalls.org, accessed 5 May 2012.

[34] The makeshift coffin signified the disunity and factionalism that were meant to end with the then-recent Hamas-Fatah reconciliation; there was some disagreement among the Jewish Israeli and international activists as to whom the bearded man was supposed to be, Mashal or Haniyeh.

group of nearly fifty Jewish Israeli and international activists as we walked to a small peninsula of land ringed by fencing and Israeli soldiers.

From here the real game began, as my babysitter explained that while the official non-violent procession advanced toward the far end of the fence – where soldiers stood at the ready with guns and a skunk water truck behind the buffer zone – the *keffiyeh*-clad youths would break to the right and begin throwing rocks, though it was always unclear who acted first in violence, the soldiers or protestors. As we followed the demonstration at a distance the first stun grenades were fired, directed at the young men who had indeed broken off from the group. Then the tear gas began. When the gas dissipated momentarily we retreated to a small rise, watching the game from a safer vantage point: youths stood inside the fence among low scrub grass and rocks as soldiers pelted them with tear gas canisters – both 'sides' baited and responded. In the distance, the official demonstration had nearly reached the fence before being sprayed with skunk water and enshrouded in tear gas, trapped between concertina wire, soldiers and guns or a haze of noxious smoke. Shouting, crying and vomiting, protestors retreated and lit small fires in their wake; only a man in a wheelchair wearing a gasmask was able to withstand the intensity.[35] I stood watching and at times coughing or weeping due to the gas, realising that for many of the Jewish Israelis and international activists around me the demonstration was a 'Choose Your Own Adventure' affair, similar to a children's story with multiple points of decision and conclusion. These protestors were constantly testing their personal limits as they and their Palestinian counterparts challenged those of the Israeli military. For many, the scene of conflict spread out below as if on television, though at times it surrounded all players. Indeed "like a Reuter's photograph," the press in their brightly coloured vests stayed close to the young Palestinian men and boys near the fence with their slingshots, rocks and *keffiyehs*, engulfed in tear gas and "looking for blood," according to my minder. Beneath the popping sound of newly fired gas canisters, we turned back to the village close behind. As we walked, I asked whether villagers protested on other days of the week; my babysitter shook his head in the negative and

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[35] Rani, a young Palestinian man partially paralysed in 2000 during the start of the second or *al-Aqsa intifada*, appears in the film *Bil'in Habibti* and is now an iconic figure in the Bil'in protest. Interestingly, the mythology of the protest among Jewish Israelis contends that Rani was injured at Bil'in rather than in Jerusalem, as clearly presented in the film.

replied, "They have to work, live their lives, so no. The game is on Friday and everyone knows it."[36]

Exhilarating and confusing, surreal and simultaneously hyper-real, my experience of Bil'in that day indeed unfolded in a game-like manner, one marked explicitly by violence expected and enacted. In these few hours I began to understand first-hand the extent to which violence can be both shattering and unifying, terrifying and productive of intense solidarities; with tears running down my face, I gave my alcohol wipes to a father and his two daughters no older than six, feeling something which seemed deeper than outrage and more profound than empathy as we reeled from the effects of tear gas. Yet this was all part of the game, very much in keeping with the values, codes and myths created by and defining our political action. Something apart from the ostensibly feminised, regularised and normalised modes of protest associated with Jewish Israeli Leftist activism both mainstream and radical, participants in this generation of innovative activist initiatives construct rules of a game newly *masculinised*, with implications for wider political action. Tali, a 30 year-old feminist gay rights activist from Tel Aviv whose anti-occupation activism has recently diminished, painted a complete picture thus:

> At the big demonstrations I can see that they are run by men. Even when women are the organisers, the people on the stage are men – Ashkenazi Jewish men at that. This is frustrating and annoying to me. It makes me feel that even though these movements are against the occupation, they are also against me. In the radical Left there is more discussion about gender, so there should be more awareness. But there you can see subtle oppression, like in Sheikh Jarrah a few months ago when the women protestors were asked to wear 'decent clothes.' You can also feel the physical aggression, the machoism. For example in Bil'in you can feel the machoism of the Palestinians – only Palestinian men are there – and also the machoism of the Jewish demonstrators too. Women are pushed aside.

> KN: Does that change how you feel about participating?

> Tali: I don't want to be part of it. It makes me angry that in order to promote justice for Palestinians, we don't want gender equality. There is a song from the '80s by Pollyana Frank called 'Dykes and the Holy War' – the refrain says

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[36] Field notes, 6 May 2011.

"Revolutions are alike, none will enter my door / Guess what they'll do with us dykes when they win that holy war?" It's true.[37]

Indeed, the specifically gendered dimensions of these protests old and new constitute a significant element of structure, shaping sites of action, forms of expression and relations of inclusion and exclusion. As articulated by Tali and other interview participants, the rules of the game cannot be read with a lens limited to the relations between 'Israel' and 'Palestine'; rather, here too an intersectional approach makes visible the working of power within resistance. For Tali, the routinised demonstrations of organised political protests – marked by stages, speakers and rallies – remain the bastion of (particular kinds of) men, in a manner similar to the ways in which politics and political voice are largely framed by direct experiences of conflict and knowledge of security; paradoxically, these are the same demonstrations perceived as "feminised" and "impotent" among many younger activists. Yet rather than drawing a distinction between the new generation of protests which in part arises in reaction to these (white) men speaking on stages, Tali outlines terms of connection: both are "run by men" despite the participation of women. Naming Bil'in and Sheikh Jarrah – two of the most popular Friday protest sites, often cited as responsible for the low numbers of participants at Women in Black demonstrations occurring at a similar time – Tali associates these actions with a kind of "machoism" which mitigates against gender equality and the realisation of gay and queer activist agendas.

Thus Tali's account may indeed be read for the ways in which gender and sexuality intersect with conflict-derived norms in the space of protest; yet so too it might be read for race, adding a further layer of complexity. As Tali identifies forms of "subtle oppression" in operation at the Sheikh Jarrah events, race, religion and ethnicity go unspoken, however in practice the request that (Jewish Israeli and international) women wear "decent clothes" came at the behest of Muslim Palestinian participants (Issacharoff 2012). Correspondingly, when Tali highlights "machoism" above, she does so in explicitly racialised terms, first citing it as a characteristic of "Palestinian men" at the Bil'in protests and later adding "Jewish demonstrators." As well, her emphasis on the absence of Palestinian women and the subordination of those other women present is significant. Indeed, while the sexual harassment briefing in Bil'in was left free of racial markers, those providing and attending the training shared an

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[37] Interview in Tel Aviv, 28 January 2011; handwritten notes.

understanding that this phenomenon pertained to the targeting of Jewish Israeli and international women by Palestinian men (Issacharoff 2012). While this creates a substantial tension for those feminist activists like Tali who remain invested in realising anti-occupation and gender equity platforms together, for many would-be participants sexual harassment constitutes a significant deterrent to action, particularly as it draws upon prevailing racial stereotypes. Further demonstrating the embeddedness of these new forms of protest within multiple layers of power, *Shin Bet* – the Israeli internal intelligence agency – used the publicity surrounding instances of sexual harassment to pressure Jewish Israeli activists prior to a planned "fly in" demonstration in April 2012, adapting official methods of deterrence to meet with shifting rules of the game (Hass 2012).

Soldiering

Upon hearing my tale of the Bil'in demonstration hours later over ice cream in Tel Aviv, my boots still smeared with the red dirt of the village, Guy confessed, "I want to go even less now – it feels just like the army, with the security briefing, the strategising, the gas and the violence. It's a game, but also it's the military."[38] Thus arises a differential mode of hegemonic entanglement which frames Jewish Israeli political action, as here experiences of military service become enmeshed with activism. Not limited to matters of procedure such as briefings and strategies, resistance to 'soldiering' often becomes a way of talking about the assertion of individual identity in a context of conformity, a means of insisting upon the salience of subordinated interests, and a critique of existing hierarchies of power and privilege internal to the Jewish Israeli collective. As militarism collapses the boundary between the military and civil society, soldiering extends into everyday life with its affective regime, modes of practice and value system, as detailed throughout this thesis. Citing Israel as characterised by "total militarism" inclusive of both professional and civilian dimensions, Baruch Kimmerling (2001: 215) writes:

> This characterization [*sic*] is amply underscored by the overt and latent social significance that is attributed to military service, and by the way in which the society orients itself toward constant preparation for war, a kind of 'militarism of the mind.' In this case, the socio-political boundaries of the collectivity are

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[38] Field notes, 6 May 2011.

determined and maintained by participation in military service and manipulation of the collectivity to sacrifice in order to support the spheres classified as belonging to national security.

While much academic research substantiates these claims to the influence of militarism over collectivity boundaries, national belonging and social hierarchies in Israel (Sharoni 1995; Yuval-Davis 1997; Lentin 2000; Shafir and Peled 2002; Sasson-Levy 2003; Jacoby 2005; Yiftachel 2006; Segal 2008),[39] Kimmerling's charge of explicit "manipulation" positions Jewish Israeli political actors as largely subject to rather than *productive of* the discourses and practices which grant primacy to national security. Similarly, while Kimmerling (2001: 215, 227-228) asserts that Israel's particular brand of militarism creates that situation in which war-making and peace-making exist in dialectic relation, the actual behaviours and attitudes binding these collective pursuits remain obscured. In the realms of subjectivity and interpersonal relations, both ideological and material dimensions provide the glue which melds war and soldiering with ostensible peace. Yet rather than resulting from manipulation or coercion, this diffusion of militarisation provides an illustration of hegemony both passively and actively secured, bearing significant implications for resistance and opposition.

Recounted previously as the primary conduit through which the occupation and army enter the intimacy of private life – rupturing the ostensible sanctity of family units and small worlds – experiences of soldiering continue to impact individuals, families and communities beyond the period of active duty. Indeed, mandatory military service remains profoundly *normative* in Israel, immediately productive of subjectivities while its influence extends to political participation, national values and institutionalised privilege. In speaking of the impetus for a recent project, Oded, a 33 year-old filmmaker living Tel Aviv, articulated the extent to which this normativity importantly emerges through gender dimensions:

> […] I met an elite [unit] guy. After the army he went to India to travel and when he returned he almost lost his mind. I understood that this is a terrible thing: men are trained in combat to kill, kill, kill. The Israeli army is moral – wait, I believe that the Israeli army is less *immoral* than the US army or

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[39] The scholarship highlighted here pays particular attention to the ways in which Israeli militarism creates and emerges through particular valuations of gender, race, class and sexuality, contributing an important intersectional approach to the study of militarism.

European armies. It's always on the surface, morals. [They say] "Don't carry out orders blindly, you are not a tool." There is actually an 'absolute illegal order,' which is when your commander tells you to kill, but he doesn't explain it in a way that you find logical – you can refuse. On paper this is probably as good as an army can get. The problem is that an 18 year-old learns "shoot and kill, shoot and kill, shoot and kill" – "oh, but wait until someone gives you a good reason." Most don't wait. They have terrible power in their hands and they're kept ready for action. I know it, I felt it. I was too much a coward to get carried away with action – I'm happy that I wasn't in a situation where I was about to kill. I feel bad enough about the experiences I had.

Anyhow, I started to think here's a good guy: kind, sensitive, intelligent. At 18 he wants to do good. Ok, so 'good' goes to the elite unit to become the 'man-est of men,' to protect the country. He went, he killed people, it screwed his mind. He comes back to live life in society, to live as a civilian. No one prosecutes him for what he has done – in society he did the 'right' thing. . . . At a fragile age they take your humanity and give you 'manhood' instead. . . . You go in a child and come out a man.[40]

Notable for the extent to which it seemingly corroborates Kimmerling's (2001: 215) assertion of manipulation, here Oded articulates an experience of 'shooting and crying,' in effect displacing blame for violence upon the entity educating and issuing orders (Kidron 2004; Helman 1999b: 67 fn19). Importantly, this account clearly illustrates how collective morality emerges in tandem with the construction of hegemonic masculinity, underwritten by participation in violence. "Good" not only dutifully fulfils his military service, but he does so at the highest level, exposed to the greatest degree of sacrifice, required to kill and deserving of prestige; ultimately "good" becomes the "man-est of men." Yet as Oded voices his opposition to the normativity of soldiering, a practice which he feels strips individuals of their childhood and humanity in pursuit of "right" and "good," he judges himself by the very normative standards in question, casting himself as a "coward." Retrospectively pleased with his "inability to get carried away with action" as it shielded him from moral imperatives surrounding the decision to kill, in describing his actions as 'cowardice' Oded continues to valuate himself according to normative militant manhood (see Sharoni 1995; Lentin 2000; Sasson-Levy 2003; Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011).

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[40] Interview in Tel Aviv, 11 April 2011; handwritten notes.

This is not to say, however, that individuals who incompletely or unsuccessfully resist the normativity of soldiering are subject to or victims of false consciousness, unaware that they remain 'part of it' even in their opposition; rather, active negotiations may constitute a path toward self-definition. Earlier in our interview, Oded explicitly acknowledged the layers of his enmeshment and the constant manoeuvring this embeddedness entails, particularly as he now engages in activism:

> KN: You said that you are active in human rights activism – how did you become active?
>
> Oded: It started mostly after the second Lebanon War [in 2006] – it's all part of the same process. Coming out was part of the process too. . . . after that I was able to make choices, it all came together. Ok, so this situation is fucked up and I know it is. I might as well try to do something about it – if I don't it won't change. And if I do maybe it still won't change, but at least I tried!
>
> So I started with gay rights, human rights and circles of people who feel like myself about issues. The Anarchists used to have the best parties! I can't stand lots of people there – they can be as militant and aggressive as the Right-wing. This is the thing about Israeli society: brutality. The belief in power goes really deep. This is how Israelis define themselves as Israeli, as men. It's hard – I've only lived here half my life, I grew up in another place. But still these things got deep in to me, through high school and the army. I'm still trying to squeeze it out [of myself]. Like how can I struggle without becoming physical? It's harder for people who were born here and raised by parents who were also raised here. It defines who you are – you can't just throw it away.[41]

Contextualised within the process of understanding his non-normative sexuality, Oded's will to action remains explicitly framed by multiple dimensions of militarised normativity: the narrative ubiquity of war, the "brutality" permeating activism, the overriding subscription to power, the definition of 'Israeli' as masculine and the pedagogical influence of militarised institutions. Collectively these factors shape Oded's subjectivity, yet importantly he insists upon the availability of *choice,* marking his presence as an agential actor within these conditions of constraint. Facilitated by the becoming-public of his sexual identity, that mentality which was cast as the result of manipulation or indoctrination is met with struggle or resistance, as "being part of it" becomes a state that might be changed. Having grown up in Latvia and arriving alone to Israel at age 16, Oded importantly uses his lesser degree of belonging as a means of

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[41] Interview in Tel Aviv, 11 April 2011; handwritten notes.

qualifying his ability to choose and act – though he relates 'full Israeliness' to the military service in which he partook, Oded deems his sense of self as bound less tightly with militarisation, soldiering and masculinised normativity than for those Jewish Israelis born and raised in Israel.

Thus through Oded's account the negotiation of identity and experiences of activism collapse into militarism, and *soldiering* emerges as a practice which produces further resistance to resistance. Here, those saturating qualities of militarism which produce constructions of masculinity and create normative identities are rejected in the desire for individuation and self-definition. Importantly, this resistance extends from experiences of military service to understandings of political action. Dov, a 35 year-old artist and DJ living in south Tel Aviv, explicitly traced this connection through his reflections:

> I never wanted to be a fighter [in the army]. . . . I'm a good boy but I don't like inclusive institutions – I don't like institutions that strip you of your identity. I thought from the beginning that I don't buy their game, I don't like to be the smallest piece on the chess board to a politician. That's what I felt. . . . The army fucked me up *big time*.

After serving in an intelligence capacity during the Oslo Years between *intifadas* – stationed at times in the West Bank – Dov clearly articulates his resistance to the perceived homogenisation and powerlessness which accompany the military 'game,' confronting the limits and costs of being a "good boy." Yet so too he projects this resistance onto activism, including those initiatives which resist the military policies and practices which he opposes. In response to queries around his participation in actions against the occupation, Dov stated, "Yeah, I did something, but even in that I'm not an infantry soldier, you know what I mean? I'm not a soldier…. I read Ghandi, Martin Luther King. I don't believe in war."[42]   Not only does Dov connect military service and activism through the figure of the willing and dutiful soldier, but also he critically situates both within a shared frame of conflict, violence and war. If mandatory conscription produces hegemonic constructions of masculinity as Oded and multiple scholars argue (see Sharoni 1995; Lentin 2000; Sasson-Levy 2003; Jacoby 2005; Levy and Lomsky-Feder 2011), within the shared frame of war so too

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[42] Interview in Tel Aviv, 21 March 2011; handwritten notes.

dutiful activism produces patterns and hierarchies of gender – "good boys" whose loyalty might later be questioned and resisted.

Importantly, Jewish Israeli men are not alone in expressing resistance toward soldiering and its homogenising capacities as they consider participation in oppositional action. Subject to deployment in combat positions and longer terms of conscription, many men experience lengthier exposure to the normative pressures of military service than their female counterparts; however, Jewish Israeli women also pass through this normative institution, which in turn shapes their experiences and understandings of activism. At 30 years old and currently working for a "violence reduction" NGO in Tel Aviv, Noa reflected upon her former service as an education officer in glowing terms, stating, "This was the first time I felt *me*, that this is what I want to do." Charged with the instruction of soldiers in Israeli history and morals – an assignment predominantly given to female soldiers – Noa's position importantly exposed her to markedly different conditions from those of the infantry or combat units where Dov and Oded served. Later in our interview Noa spoke about activism and the difficulties of finding an outlet for action which suited her, both personally and politically:

> In Israel the term 'activist' is an automatic label to the political sphere. Activists are people who spend their entire life at protests. I feel my work is connected to social change, yes, but not to activism. In a normal country this would be the same, but in Israel activism is *peace* activism…. I feel the whole country, the whole world, is concentrated on the conflict. "God damn it!" I said, "We need to do something also for ourselves." It's related in a way to the occupation…. It's difficult to find something that you're not a 'soldier' in, something where you are yourself. I don't feel that something is really me except [the NGO] because something changed inside me. I was looking at the Palestinians and their suffering, and also our suffering. Now I'm looking inside society and doing the best I can with my tools. It's very tiring to focus on the conflict and the occupation.[43]

Echoing Dov's narrative, through her account of action withheld and pursued Noa describes her resistance to soldiering as she reacts to the hegemonic entanglement of activism with conflict and peace; importantly, however, Noa's experience of military service remains favourably framed, providing her with a sense of self and burgeoning interests. In their commonality, the narratives of Noa and Dov bridge the ostensible

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[43] Interview in Tel Aviv, 31 March 2011; handwritten notes.

gap between war and peace in Israel-Palestine, situating these concepts and conditions as dialectical within a context of protracted conflict. For Noa, activism in Israel has become defined through and by *peace* initiatives which emerge as the hegemonic frame of political action. While the qualities associated with hegemonic forms of activism in Israel invoke both pacifism and ostensible feminisation as argued throughout this chapter, within Noa's account the wider frame is significant – Noa does not stress the specific contours of peace activism, but rather its location within conflict. In this, Noa turns away from activism by paradoxically looking back to the Jewish Israeli collective which produces the very figure she rejects: the soldier whose masculinised sacrifice in part sustains conflict. Through identifying her niche for action as "work connected to social change," Noa makes an active choice not only for herself, but importantly for Jewish Israeli society as well. In doing so, she reaffirms the hegemonic patterns of gender which shape and reflect a presumed division between 'social' and 'political' realms, the former associated with women in their role as reproducers of culture, while the later remains the bastion of men.

Conclusion

Thus hegemonic patterns of gender emerge as a thread binding conflict with peace and problematising the too-neat division between political action and inaction within Jewish Israeli society. Just as war and peace exist inseparable effects of power, so too actions taken and withheld – political activism and ostensible apathy – materialise not in opposition, but rather bound together as aspects of domination. As Timothy Mitchell (1990: 559) reminds, "It is through the creation of what appears to us as the larger binary order of meaning versus reality that the effectiveness of domination is to be understood." Here, while action and inaction are intended as diverse modes of resistance, in reality both differentially reconstitute the *status quo*, preserving stasis on larger social scales. In complex and sometimes contradictory ways, the initiatives and options which constitute *what we can do* – those actions available to Jewish Israelis who oppose Israel's occupation – thus morph into the question underwriting this thesis: *Ma la'asot?* What can we do?

As demonstrated throughout this chapter, diverse modes of action and inaction comprise a spectrum which binds activism and apathy within the shared context of

conflict, as experiences and understandings indeed converge to secure hegemony through both active and passive assent (Gramsci 1971: 52-53). Through a dynamic made visible by employing resistance as a diagnostic of power (Abu-Lughod 1990) and considering practice in relation to structure (Mitchell 1990), resistance begets resistance – action begets inaction – as it telescopes within an ever-widening frame. Embedded within multiple layers of power, everyday forms of resistance may reaffirm neoliberalism, conservative politics and prevailing relations of gender, race and class; radical feminist activism might produce not provocation, but normalisation and routinisation; shifting 'rules of the game' may lead to the re-framing of anti-occupation activism as a bastion of male privilege; and practices of soldiering might generate opposition to both military service and political action.

Within these trends and processes, hegemonic patterns of gender importantly serve to structure experiences and understandings, practices and beliefs, meanings and materiality, providing a baseline of constancy while permitting dynamism. As actions taken and withheld by Jewish Israeli women and men largely reconfirm the gendered norms, relations, codes and roles prescribed by Zionist narratives, these patterns respond to changing values and conditions. In this, a "new breed" of radical activists might indeed be constructed as 'gender sensitive' – explicitly addressing sexual harassment at demonstrations – while at the same time disavowing the perceived prior feminisation of political protest, effectively bolstering the existing gender relations which subordinate 'women' to 'men' and 'feminine' to 'masculine,' in addition to entrenching racial stereotypes. Thus as forms of resistance adapt to meet new rules and roles, they produce not only the terms of their own opposition, but also those hegemonic patterns underwriting the seeming binary orders which drive conflict and falsely divide action from inaction in a context of domination.

Chapter Five

Protesting Politics – *Ha'Am Doresh…* [The People Demand]

'Ha'am! Doresh! Tsedek chevrati!' The people demand social justice! The cry preceded its mass as we stood in shock along side Tel Aviv's Ibn Gavirol Street in July 2011. Sceptical, cynical and curious, Guy and I were attending the second 'official' demonstration of Israel's nascent housing protests as observers rather than participants, for the first time taking part in a political event with some degree of passivity. Initiated by university students on 14 July 2011 in response to the rising cost of housing in Tel Aviv, the protests had electrified and magnetised Jewish Israeli society, bringing to action many of those interview participants and personal friends who had – until now – cast themselves as politically avoidant, reluctant or inactive. First watching the protests gather momentum from the distance of a short trip to London, we felt at turns frustrated and ambivalent, witnessing those who we would see moved to participate in anti-occupation, anti-racism and anti-discrimination activism join protests centred around the cost of living.

Yet here we were in the humid Tel Aviv night air, standing on the shores of a living sea which would soon engulf us too, as the tide of humanity surged to forcibly blur the boundary between participants and observers. Waiting for the protest to move from its start in Habima Square toward the Tel Aviv museum, the streets were filled with an energy, vitality and creativity unknown to me from previous protests. Indeed, the sheer numbers of participants streaming uninterrupted toward the meeting point marked something decidedly *different* about this demonstration. This flow continued unabated until suddenly the steady wave of foot-traffic doubled back on itself, reversing direction. The demonstration had begun and it was impossible for latecomers to fall into line behind the banners; instead, they simply turned to walk in their great numbers before the organised front line.

Generating deafening, raucous, unorganized noise, the body of the crowd bore down upon us. The sound of drums banging, whistles shrieking, voices screaming not words but sheer anger, hands and feet colliding with whatever made sound nearby – this filled the air to a decibel I had yet to experience anywhere. Homemade signs were in full effect with inspired banners and colourful posters waving high above the crowd, nearly one in every five participants carrying something original which voiced

her specific demand or message. Absent were the prepared plastic signs of the political parties with their official slogans; present were tens of thousands of personal connections to this demonstration and the declared issues at hand. People were fed up, needed a release, wanted social change and they were going be certain that their concerted voices were heard. The chants began in earnest with thousands of voices in unison rising at top lung capacity – gone were the feeble, self-conscious declarations which typified even the recent Jewish Israeli-Palestinian solidarity march in Jerusalem. The night air was filled with cries: "*An entire generation demands a future! Hoo-haa, here comes the welfare state! The people demand social justice!*" "Social justice – do they even know what that means?" I later asked as we left the demonstration, walking through the remnants of what looked and felt like an enormous street party. At the moment it mattered little – social justice was what together the people wanted.[1]

However, as the protests hollered and crashed, laughed and sang, chanted and demanded in voices individual and collective in the humid Tel Aviv night air, the strident call for change simultaneously spelled the perpetuation of stasis. Here political actors sought transformation as their actions targeted the policies, practices and relations of power deemed most significant to everyday life. Seemingly more contestable and 'solvable' than the matters of conflict and occupation widely associated with politics in Israel-Palestine, in the summer of 2011 Jewish Israelis temporarily inverted the national prioritisation of security. Ordinarily masked by a focus on impending or active threats of violence, domestic concerns gained centre stage during these summer months, ostensibly highlighting the social and economic divisions elided and maintained by previous deferment for issues of conflict. Yet ultimately this inversion served to reproduce and bolster existing relations of power, entrenching the popular meaning and space of 'politics' while defining government as its sole arbiter.

In looking to the 2011 summer of protests in Israel, the critical theorisations of Lila Abu-Lughod (1990) and Timothy Mitchell (1990) engaged in the preceding chapter offer tempting and applicable frames through which to consider the meaning and economy of political action. Here resistance may indeed again become a diagnostic of

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[1] Field notes, 30 July 2011.

power, as practice and structure emerge inseparable in the production and maintenance of domination. Yet the 2011 protests merit specific attention in so far as they present a microcosm in which to judge how political protest may be *depoliticising*, revealing a critical distinction between acts which are world-making versus world changing (Berlant 2008: 269-270), as aspirational normality and political action converge. Through gender analysis, a practice of 'apolitical politics' emerges as central to protestors' targets and agendas, entrenching those presumed binary orders in which domination takes root. Here, a *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]) suspension of national priorities ultimately reaffirmed private as separate from public, social as separate from political, 'us' as separate from 'them' and 'here' as separate from 'there.' Critically, the temporary inversion of gender norms and codes served to structure this renewed political action – its promises, practices and meanings – while at the same time providing a means through which 'politics' *could become* apolitical. In this shift and subsequent return to the *status quo*, protest participants and supporters effectively reified Israeli state sovereignty and with it the prevailing gender norms, codes, roles and relations which structure domination. Drawing together the gendered constructs, mechanisms and dynamics detailed within the preceding four chapters, this chapter responds to a critical query posed by Maya Mikdashi (2009): "When we surrender politics to the politicians, what are we doing?"

Rothschild *pinat* [corner of] Tahrir

Days after the first tent was erected on Rothschild Boulevard in Tel Aviv (Sherwood 2011) – a site symbolic of the city's history and wealth (Mann 2001) – I departed Israel-Palestine with Guy for a short trip to London, leaving behind the nascent protests with a shrug of the shoulders and the assumption that, as is common to the cycle in Israel, before long those assembled would dissipate. Following on the heels of a Facebook-led boycott of cottage cheese, which resulted in the lowering of prices for this staple Ashkenazi breakfast food (Zrahiya, Rozenberg, Lis and Cohen 2011; Connolly 2011),[2] the protests relied heavily upon social media for the transmission of

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[2] The ethno-national contours of this protest were explicitly made visible on a popular Israeli late night comedy programme, as when asked about his views regarding the cottage cheese protest Palestinian MK Ahmed Tibi shrugged and replied, "We don't eat cottage [cheese] for breakfast – we eat *labneh*."

grievances and agendas, mirroring the mobilisation strategies adopted by activists in uprisings across the Middle East and North Africa. Indeed, in addition to the popular movement in Egypt from which the protests adopted their name and Twitter hashtag – 'the July 14 movement' or #J14 – Israeli protestors were also influenced by the Indignants movement in Spain, anarchist and anti-capitalist protests in Greece and later the global 'Occupy' movements which emerged from Canada. Together, these events and political actions directly inspired the main protest slogan, practices adopted by the protestors, and messages displayed on signs posted at tent encampments and carried during demonstrations, among them "Rothschild *pinat* [corner of] Tahrir," "Walk Like an Egyptian," and "Go! Egypt is here."[3]

As I regarded the events from the relative calm of Islington, London, the tent dwellers' protest gathered momentum and produced its first organised demonstration on 23 July, attracting 20-40,000 participants who made their way from an encampment on Habima Square to the Tel Aviv museum (Gelbfish 2011; Lior 2011; Reider 2011). Unlike an earlier impromptu demonstration which corresponded with the appearance of the first tents, upon arriving at the final destination this time protestors followed routine protocol by completing their march with an organised rally, including speakers who addressed the crowd from a well-lit and amplified stage. Yet in a move which would become characteristic of the housing protests, those 'officially' voicing the call for change importantly did not include politicians, though a number of Left-wing Knesset members (MKs) were present among the group assembled. Rather, the primary voices and faces of the 2011 summer of protests in Israel were to be two young women: Daphne Leef, the Tel Aviv University film student whose actions catalysed the summer's events, and Stav Shaffir, now an MK with the long-established Labour Party (Lior 2011; Lis 2013). Though leadership was shared more widely with other young Jewish Israelis (Schechter 2012), Leef and Shaffir became the unofficial spokeswomen for the protests, and their visibility and audibility – their political presence and voice – importantly signalled an inversion of (masculinised) 'politics as usual.'

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[3] Field notes, 1 August 2011 and 6 August 2011.

Summarising 'Social Justice'

Displaying a commitment to grass-roots leadership and creative protest while generating impressively high numbers of participation, the housing protests commanded national attention onward from the July 23 rally as participants articulated a collective demand for 'social justice.' As the protests quickly spread from Tel Aviv to cities and towns throughout Israel proper (Sheen 2011b), leaders and participants remained focused on two primary modes of action bolstered by social networks and growing mainstream media attention: tent encampments and regular demonstrations, both taking place in common public spaces. However, this brief depiction of the protests' expansion and mobilisation perhaps presents a too-tidy portrait of the summer's events and their manners of generating individual and collective participation.[4] Despite the overall framing of the protests as led by and largely representative of middle-class (Ashkenazi) youth, multiple meanings became ascribed to the housing protestors' demand for 'social justice,' increasingly binding together a diverse body of participants. Importantly, this inclusivity and appeal prompted some commentators to draw connections between the 2011 protests and the agenda advanced by the Mizrahi Black Panthers in the 1970s (Sheen 2011b; Ahronovitz 2011). Founded by Jewish Israelis of Middle Eastern and North African ancestry who recognised and opposed their treatment as second class citizens in Israel (Massad 1996: 61-62), these political actors "[…] called for the destruction of the regime and for the legitimate rights of all the oppressed without regard to religion, origin or nationality" (Shohat 1988: 29). The political, social and economic agenda of the Mizrahi Black Panthers – significantly expressed in solidarity with Palestinians (Shohat 1988: 31; Massad 1996: 63) – targeted not only state policies and practices, but also the relations underwriting power and privilege in Jewish Israeli society. Though more radical than the 2011 protests, the Mizrahi Black Panthers' platform was similarly inclusive of diverse parties with multiple claims and interests within Israel; yet unlike the recent Ashkenazi-led demonstrations, the Panthers met with violent state repression, coercion and a government campaign aimed expressly at their delegitimisation (Shohat 1988; Massad 1996; Lavie 2011). Ultimately, and again much like the trajectory of the 2011 protests, rather than forcibly denying all demands

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[4] For an analysis of the protests' relative disorder, particularly at the Rothschild Boulevard site, see Thom 2011.

articulated by the Panthers, the Israeli establishment selectively addressed and appropriated concerns, resulting in the eventual disbanding of the movement and the absorption of its leadership into existing political parties (Massad 1996: 64; Lavie 2011: 67).[5]

Significantly, despite a similarly inclusive platform the 2011 protests assumed a less threatening façade, as 'social justice' became a broad "summarising symbol" (Ortner 1973) importantly articulated by members of the dominant social sector, in part recollecting the approach of Women in Black, a prominent Jewish Israeli feminist protest group (see Helman and Rapoport 1997; Sasson-Levy and Rapoport 2003). As Sherry Ortner (1973: 1339) writes, summarising symbols are "[…] those symbols which are seen as summing up, expressing, representing for the participants in an emotionally powerful and relatively undifferentiated way, what the system means to them."[6] Operating under the pretext of generality, the inclusive framing of these symbols allows for and arises through the presence of a multiplicity of meanings. Here, rather than defining and locating a variety of precise targets for resistance, summarising symbols generate action through remaining relative open and permitting of membership. As Orna Sasson-Levy and Tamar Rapoport (2003: 390-391) highlight with regard to Israel's Women in Black, "The summarising nature of the homogenous message – 'Stop the Occupation' – enabled each woman to maintain zealously her individual political interpretation and position, while outwardly preserving a united front."[7] At the same time, the 2011 protests paired this context-specific broad framing with recognisable regional uprisings, as Egyptian Tahrir Square's "The people want to topple the regime" morphed into "The people demand social justice" (Kashua 2011a), a recognisably Israeli version of the demand for change. Having witnessed the uprisings in Tunisia and Egypt along with the reactions

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[5] Following the 2011 protests against the cost of living in Israel, protest leaders Stav Shaffir and Daphne Leef became differentially involved with the Israeli government; while Shaffir was elected to the Knesset as a member of the Labour Party in 2013, Leef travelled to the UK in 2012 in conjunction with the government's *hasbara* or 'information' programme to challenge 'Israeli Apartheid Week' (see Lis 2013 and Glaser 2012).

[6] Different from "elaborating symbols" which order experience (Ortner 1973: 1340), summarising symbols draw together a complex system of ideas under a unitary mode of representation, reducing differentiation in the interest of cohesion.

[7] In their research with Women in Black, Sara Helman and Tamar Rapoport (1997: 688-689) additionally cite the group's lack of "ideological deliberation" as key to "maximis[ing] enlistment" and crystallising the "distinction between those within the demonstration and those outside it."

of distrust and fear displayed by both the Israeli government and the majority of Jewish Israelis, many activists feared that the transformative potential of the neighbouring movements might bypass Israel altogether (Ravid 2011). Thus what began as housing protests expanded to become *social* protests through employing and activating multiple sites of appeal, simultaneously linking to Israel's history of political protest and contemporary political movements.

However, beyond the appeal of summarising symbols and recent regional uprisings, Jewish Israeli protestors needed to generate participation, principally secured through fostering a sense of *commitment* and investment. As importantly highlighted by Ortner (1973: 1342), summarising symbols bind systems of meaning with emotion, centralising the symbol's "[…] focusing power, its drawing-together, intensifying, catalysing impact upon the respondent." Rather than organising thought or prompting action, these symbols crystallise commitment and catalyse feelings, speaking primarily to attitude (Ortner 1973: 1342-1343). While in part capitalising on the enormous affective impact of regional events both 'successful' and violently repressed, participants in Israel's social protests generated participation by creating an atmosphere unique to the Israeli setting yet reminiscent of differential places, times and struggles.

Two days after my first experience of Israel's social protest demonstrations, I stepped into Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard tent encampment in hopes of experiencing its energy more directly. During a brief prior visit to the site, I had been impressed by the coexistence of organisation with chaotic revelry before the night's protest, as groups excitedly readied colourful hand-made signs in a public space newly rendered quasi-private. Now in daylight, I passed the Israeli flags which adorned the main organising tent at the head of Rothschild Boulevard near Habima Square, noting the small poster reading '*Gilad adayn chai*' [Gilad (Shalit) is still alive'] with its blue and white Stars of David and images of a then-hostage soldier;[8] together, these icons and symbols provided an immediate sense of the limits at and within which the protests might operate. Beyond this logistical space – here a blackboard declared the day's schedule of meetings – the encampment's central infrastructure unfolded: the first aid

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[8] In 2006, Jewish Israeli soldier Gilad Shalit was captured on the border with the Gaza Strip and held captive for five years. During this time a media campaign galvanised public support for efforts to pressure the government into securing his release and Shalit became a national symbol; see Cohen 2011.

tent staffed by Physicians for Human Rights, a broadcast and transmission station for the popular Army radio station '*Galatz*,' and the massive kitchen area operated by the organised protestors. From here orderly rows of tents covered the centre and edges of the boulevard, as the largely identical grey make of structures branded 'Outdoor Revolution' was interrupted by pedestrian aisles, communal living spaces and hand-drawn expressions of motivation, discontent and desire.

Importantly, while orderliness prevailed in the sections of the Rothschild encampment closest to the kitchen and organising areas, it gradually diminished as I walked the length of the boulevard toward Allenby Street away from Habima Square. In large part a product of the protestors' conviction that the encampment should be long-term, this degree of organisation conveyed a belief that orderliness generated both sustainability and appeal. Yet the impression of tidiness was also produced through the municipality's regular deployment of sanitation workers, many of whom are black African migrants – in this, the social protest encampment benefitted from and reinforced racialised patterns of labour. Indeed, when the remaining encampments in Tel Aviv and Jerusalem were forcibly dismantled in September 2011, images circulating in the mainstream press depicted black African (male) contracted workers evicting Jewish Israeli protestors and demolishing their structures, potentially bolstering existing prejudices. Interestingly, while also orderly, the tent encampment in Tel Aviv's Levinsky Park– located in an area of south Tel Aviv now home to much of the city's African migrant population and historically inhabited by working class Mizrahi Jews – was less maintained by the municipality and subject to frequent evacuation and demolition beginning in July (ACRI 2011b). This disparity was likewise replicated between Jerusalem's Horse and Independence parks, as more affluent protestors populated the former during the summer of 2011, while largely working class and impoverished or homeless protest participants inhabited the latter (Levy 2011a). Here, the platform ostensibly shared with the Mizrahi Black Panthers of the 1970s dissolved, as the 2011 protests not only left key relations of power and privilege intact, but also in part depended upon their perpetuation.

Back on Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard, with camera in hand I made my way through the rows of dwellings and interests, arriving to the corner of HaHashmona'im Street where the '*Migdal Ha'Am*' [Tower of the People] adorned with Israeli flags faced an enormous heart-shaped arch erected by the 'Love Revolution' and the small

number of structures which constituted 'Tent 1948,' an attempt to bring together Jewish and Palestinian citizens of Israel. Here, the multiplicity of messages and agendas seemed less a source of strength than an indicator of the extent to which 'social justice' constituted an empty signifier, as the protests' summarising symbol and rallying cry appeared in constant need of filling up. As I recorded images, a man aged in his 60s approached me and asked, "*Ma at choshevet al kol ze?*" [What do you think of all this?]. Assuming that he had mistaken me for a reporter, I responded evasively that I found the encampment interesting and somehow beautiful with its creativity, hope and energy. My interlocutor replied, "But there's a problem here. At night all these young people are drinking beer, dancing, singing, talking about love – I see it on television! It's starting to be a problem." He shook his head, "It's becoming like Woodstock." "But it's also supposed to be fun, isn't it?" I asked. This produced a snort of contempt:

> "It's fun." This is no Woodstock, you understand? Woodstock was a party yes… but it was around the Vietnam War, it had Jimi Hendrix, it had The Doors. I've seen The Doors! These young people here don't know what Woodstock was.

> A friend asked me a few years ago if I wanted to go with him to see The Doors play, but how is it The Doors without Jim Morrison? That isn't The Doors! You understand? And this isn't Woodstock – they had Hendrix, Morrison…[9]

In a matter of minutes, "It's becoming like Woodstock" morphed into "This is no Woodstock," as a statement of negatively judged similarity shifted to become one of inadequacy, appearing a reversal of the previous claim. Yet rather than revealing contradiction, this commentary constitutes a significant statement about the deliberate act of distancing undertaken by the protestors: 'politics' would remain absent from their discourse and platform. Situating the authenticity of Woodstock within the wider context of protests against the Vietnam War, this observer of Israel's largest tent encampment found the site, actors and agenda lacking *specifically* in political terms, as symbols and practices were incompletely appropriated. Here the drinking, dancing, singing and love which characterised and popularised the American protest are stripped of both meaning and transformative potential within the depoliticised

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[9] Field notes, 1 August 2011.

context created by protestors in Tel Aviv, despite the presence of signs reading '*Mahapecha'* [Revolution]. Equivalent to The Doors without Jim Morrison and Woodstock without the Vietnam War, the social protests assumed a form more akin to *carnivalesque*, as a "pathos of change and renewal" (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]: 11) became the mask beneath which politics could be expunged.

The Politics of Carnivalesque

According to Mikhail Bakhtin (1984 [1968]: 7):

> Carnival… does not acknowledge any distinction between actors and spectators. . . . Carnival is not a spectacle seen by the people; they live in it, and everyone participates because its very idea embraces all the people. While carnival lasts, there is no other life outside it.

With boundaries indeed blurred between participants and observers as recounted in the opening of this chapter, Israel's protests were "lived in" by the many Jewish Israelis who found space however small within social justice for their individual interests and claims, becoming absorbed by the life within. More carefully constructed than was readily apparent during my first experience of the demonstrations, the inner life of the protests resonated with the qualities of energetic possibility ascribed to carnival by Bakhtin (1984 [1968]: 10), replete with new modes of communication and the ostensible suspension of hierarchies. However, as formulated by Bakhtin (1984 [1968]: 10) *carnivalesque* explicitly exists as a "*temporary* liberation from the prevailing truth and from the established order."[10] With an eventual return to the "old order" after the cessation of carnival, the very "change and renewal" made possible proves impermanent (Weichselbaumer 2010), as like Ortner's (1973) summary symbols Bakhtin's pathos targets emotion without necessary implications for sustained thought or action. Thus the "feast of becoming" (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]: 10) arises and functions through concealment as much as potential, raising the question of how the *carnivalesque* might trivialise or elide relations of power while permitting of subversion (Weichselbaumer 2010).

In the case of Israel's 2011 summer of protest, this concealment or masking emerged not as an incidental by-product of the emotive atmosphere, but rather an integral

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[10] Emphasis added.

aspect of the protestors' strategies aimed at garnering appeal, strength and longevity. As Bakhtin's (1984 [1968]) momentary *carnivalesque* can only be incompletely decoupled from the reality of the "old order," so too the Israeli protests remained bound with their wider context through discourse and practice, though selectively so. Here the deliberate splitting off and avoidance of 'politics' – the erasure of Vietnam from Woodstock – created a platform from which to generate a critical mass, melding the economic concerns of the early housing protests with broader 'social' interests of a dissatisfied public. Importantly, this apparent division between politics and those interests deemed economic and social was underwritten by hegemonic patterns of gender in both their suspension and reproduction. Throughout the protests, the separation of 'the political' from 'the economic' and 'the social' framed calls for social justice, as leaders and participants routinely renounced contextually defined politics in favour of those agendas they felt ordinarily obscured or subsumed. In gendered terms, this reversal was paramount to prioritising issues constructed as *feminine* or *feminised* over those deemed *masculine* or *masculinised*; here, calls for domestic transformation – lower costs of housing, groceries and childcare coupled with increased budgets for education, social welfare and medical systems – trumped the primacy of inter-national concerns rooted in perceptions of threat and security. One protestor, a young man then dwelling on Rothschild Boulevard, made clear the terms of this apparent subversion:

> This isn't about who loves Palestinians and who hates Palestinians. . . . Yes, this *is* political. It is political. But it isn't political in the way that we're used to talking about politics in Israel. The biggest criticism we face is the accusation that we are all 'Leftists.' Yes, we're Leftists, but this is the *social* and *economic* Left, not the political Left.
>
> We're very careful to not be Right or Left, but we *are* social and economic Left. In the end, however, it will have to become political because that's where change happens.[11]

As defined by this speaker, here politics relates tightly to one's stance regarding Palestinians, raising the masculinised spectres of conflict and violence popularly associated with 'the political' among Jewish Israelis (Mendel 2013). Yet as this understanding prevailed, the young man on Rothschild Boulevard demonstrates how

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[11] Field notes, 1 August 2011.

political labels of 'Left' and 'Right' may be detached and reaffixed, transferred from politics to economic and social realms in a move which apparently leaves little residue. Importantly, in creating the potential to realise oneself as politically conservative yet economically and socially 'Leftist,' protestors effectively widened their popular base by drawing ostensibly clear boundaries and stipulating that politics must be left at the door – here inclusion and exclusion operate together to increase appeal. However, at the same time as the speaker reaffirms the prevailing meaning of politics-as-conflict, he ultimately evokes *political process* – read as governance or formal politics – as the site "where change happens" and the practice with which protestors must eventually engage. Politics is thus splintered, conceptually detached from social and economic issues yet practically remaining the forum for transformation.

As the social protests of 2011 developed throughout the summer months, this bifurcation came to characterise protestors' discourses, practices, platforms and agendas, effectively affirming and re-inscribing the prevailing meaning and space of politics through resistance or opposition. Yet in this, protestors not only bolstered existing valuations of political/social, but also they reinforced those ostensible binary orders and gendered codes which characterise divisions of masculine/feminine, international/domestic, conflict/peace and 'Right/Left' in Israel. As made clear in the account above, 'Leftist' was openly wielded as a largely pejorative term during those summer months, even when distanced from popular understandings of politics (Mendel 2013).[12] Here, the assumed feminisation implied by Leftist pro-peace platforms – "who loves Palestinians" – stands apart from the elevation of social or domestic matters, also considered 'feminised' within prevailing popular discourses. Thus in abjuring both 'Left' as a political label and 'politics' read as concerns around masculinised inter-national conflict, the protests produced a form of *depoliticisation* which maintained exiting hierarchies, patterns and meanings. Here gender would become the mask of *carnivalesque*, as the temporary subversion of hegemonic norms,

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[12] Importantly, as argued by Sasson-Levy, Levy and Lomsky-Feder (2011: 749-750), the accusation of being politically "Leftist" in Jewish Israeli society produces a silencing effect, described by the authors in the context of military service:

> The women soldiers, combatants and noncombatants alike, stated that they did not speak up during their service because of the very real fear of being socially ostracized, labeled [*sic*], identified as one-sided, as well as due to a sense of weakness and being in the minority. . . . The few who dared raise even the most measured criticism were marked as leftists and informers, were socially ostracized, and had to pass more initiation rites than others to prove their loyalty to the army and the state.

codes, roles and relations allowed wider political realities to remain intact. However, this de-coupling of 'politics' from popular protest in Israel is not unique to the 2011 social protests. Indeed, as seen in the previous chapter's discussion of the *Arba Emahot* [Four Mothers] campaign against the deployment of Israeli troops in Lebanon, an explicit shift toward depoliticisation may increase legitimacy while simultaneously resonating with perceived feminisation within the Jewish Israeli public sphere, paradoxically generating an apolitical politics of protest. So too the strategic employment of Women in Black's summary symbol – '*Dai laKibbush*' [End the Occupation] – produces a mode of depoliticised politics, if differentially so. Framed less in terms of legitimacy than appeal, as Sasson-Levy and Rapoport (2003: 391) claim, "The relatively long-term duration of Women in Black may be attributed in large part to its deliberate avoidance of any collective ideological elaboration of the political message, protest practices, or the vigil in general. . . . [T]he avoidance may be regarded as a protest practice that enabled the inclusion of as many women as possible in the vigil." Then through these complex dynamics arises the possibility that *avoidance* may become an integral aspect of mobilisation, a strategy which depoliticises while facilitating and strengthening commitment.

Israel's Intimate Public

Importantly, during the summer of 2011 avoidance and depoliticisation explicitly combined with collective aspiration for "the good life," those material conditions imagined to underwrite normalcy in contexts less subject to conflict and political violence. In their ostensibly apolitical frame the social protests might thus be read as generative of an "intimate public," a domain which thrives in proximity to the political yet ultimately remains ambivalent about politics (Berlant 2008: x). In a manner similar to summarising symbols (Ortner 1973) and *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]), intimate publics explicitly draw upon emotion as both catalyst and agent of cohesion, creating within or beside the dominant public sphere a differential space of belonging and action. As Lauren Berlant (2008: 10) writes:

> A public is intimate when it foregrounds affective and emotional attachments located in fantasies of the common, the everyday, and a sense of ordinariness, a space where the social world is rich with anonymity and local recognitions, and where challenging and banal conditions of life take place in proximity to the attentions of power but also squarely in the radar of a recognition that can be

provided by other humans.

Central to intimate publics are sociality and affirmation practiced *next to* larger matrices of power, constituted through these relations yet importantly not determined thereby. Deemed "juxtapolitical" by Berlant (2008: 10), this proximate location of intimate publics provides "relief from the political" in contexts where "[…] the political sphere is more often seen as a field of threat, chaos, degradation, or retraumatisation than a condition of possibility" (Berlant 2008: 11), a description which mirrors many Jewish Israeli protestors' assessment of political life in Israel.

Providing more personal impetus for the avoidance highlighted above, intimate publics importantly straddle the porous boundary between public and private spheres. Again parallels to the Israeli context arise as Berlant (2008: 3) claims, "[…] generally intimate publics … [flourish] in proximity to the political because the political is deemed an elsewhere managed by elites who are interested in reproducing the conditions of their objective superiority, not in the well-being of ordinary people or life-worlds." Framed by the inclusion of Israel within the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2010 (Ravid 2010), the resilience of the Israeli economy during the recent global economic downturn (Bassock 2011), and the continuing dominance of select Jewish Israeli business families (Ben-David and Wainer 2010), protest leaders and participants indeed foregrounded the concerns of 'ordinary people' vis-à-vis the economic and political elite, those now-targeted 'tycoons' and politicians. Yet despite ostensibly instating division, intimate publics rely on boundary collapse and an ultimately incomplete separation from the political. As Berlant (2008: x) writes of juxtapolitical "women's culture" in the United States, "[…] [it] thrives in *proximity* to the political, occasionally crossing over in political alliance, even more occasionally doing some politics, but most often not, acting as a critical chorus that sees the expression of emotional response and conceptual recalibration as achievement enough."[13] While this is not to claim that Israel's social protests of 2011 and American "women's culture" exist in analogous terms of relation, the contours of political ambivalence in one context may serve to demystify another. Productive of both emotional response and conceptual recalibration as seen in the accounts above, success or "achievement" in the context of the Israeli protests can

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[13] Emphasis in original text.

thus be read not solely in goals outlined and subsequently attained, but in the creation of an intimate public. Indeed, it is possible "[…] to understand the flourishing of the social to one side of the political as something other than a failure to be politics" (Berlant 2008: 24-25) while at the same time as asking what those terms of thriving might *do* in political terms.

Importantly, the intimate public specific to the social protests of 2011 emerges in specifically gendered terms, reflecting the norms, relations, roles and codes specific to the Israeli context and its national narrative. As described above, despite a disavowal of contextually defined politics the protests indeed remained political in their articulation of collective interests, democratic procedure and interface with authority. However, these permitted politics were pursued and practiced in a manner markedly different from conventional experiences of the political in Israel. Writing in *Ha'aretz* during the summer of protests, journalist Bradley Burston (2011) confirms this claim:

> From an Israeli standpoint, the most radical act of this newborn revolution has already taken place. In a country where, whether on serious television roundtables or the Knesset floor, discourse is defined as everyone screaming simultaneously, the 'Tent People' have adopted a system that sanctifies listening and respect. When a speaker is addressing the group, crowd members respond not with interjection but with sign language – raised, fluttering hands signify agreement, crossed fists show disapproval, and a rolling of both hands means the speaker is going on and on without making a point.

While seeking not to essentialise or reify either masculinity or femininity, these then-formerly aggressive and confrontational modes of communication – "everyone screaming simultaneously" – arise in part from active processes of masculinisation and Israel's "military-masculine hegemony" (Lentin 2000: 188, 217). Linked to Israel's conditions of "total militarism" (Kimmerling 2001: 214) and evocative of the hegemonic '*Sabra*' figure – the tough native-born Israeli constructed in response to the perceived feminisation of Jews in diaspora and during the Second World War (Sharoni 1995: 41; Lentin 2000: 198-201; Katz 2003: 21)[14] – during the summer protests masculinised political practices were replaced by ones ostensibly more feminine, characterised by "listening and respect." Again signalling the significance

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[14] Though concerned with Jewish masculinity more widely than Israeli '*Sabra*' identity, Daniel Boyarin's (1997) work is incredibly instructive here as it elucidates the foundation against and upon which hegemonic Jewish Israeli masculinity has been built.

of shared discourses and practices of protest, this reaction to the perceived machismo of politics was paralleled in the Occupy and anti-globalisation movements from which Israeli protestors borrowed.

Yet simultaneously, this newly 'feminised' political practice in Israel was itself cast in opposition to that same diasporic figure which produced the Sabra and the masculinisation of politics. Referred to in Yiddish as a '*freier*' – a 'sucker' whose masculinity is called into question by his lack of wits[15] – this figure was at times invoked by protestors as an illustration of what/who they were not, as they asserted for themselves a differential mode of resistant masculinity. "*Pit'om anachnu lo freierim yoter*" ['Suddenly we aren't *freiers* anymore'] appeared on signs posted at the Rothschild Boulevard encampment and carried in protests, while at the final Tel Aviv demonstration the popular band HaDag Nachash performed a song containing the repeated refrain "*Anachnu betach lo freierim*" ['We are definitely not *freiers*'].[16] Thus the reviled emasculated Jew of the diaspora was brought squarely into protest discourse and iconography. Historically, this diasporic figure's ostensible impotence, weakness and lawfulness have been situated as central to the construction of 'native Israeliness,' clearly discernable in both the militarised '*Sabra*' motif and masculinised political practices (Sharoni 1995; Lentin 2000; Katz 2003). However, as Simona Sharoni (2005 [1994]), Daniel Boyarin (1997) and Carol Bardenstein (1998) demonstrate in their analyses, the constitution and deployment of the supposedly oppositional anti-*freier* figure remains complex and contradictory. Here gender roles constructed in correspondence with the masculinised 'New Jew' shift during wartime to support the national effort (Sharoni 2005 [1994]: 243); Jewish masculinity additionally arises in opposition to the perceived hyper-masculinity of *goyim* or non-Jews (Boyarin 1997: 4-5); and the cactus from which the Jewish Israeli '*Sabra*' takes its name (*Opuntia ficus-Indica*) is a symbol shared by Palestinians as a marker of resistant steadfastness and resilience (Bardenstein 1998: 11-14). In keeping with this complexity, while Jewish Israeli protestors engaged in and advocated for more 'feminised' political practices during the summer of 2011, they rejected ostensible *feminisation* by insisting upon shared purchase in the acceptably masculinised '*Sabra*'

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[15] For a discussion of the *freier* figure in Israeli politics see Ilan 2007.

[16] Field notes, 3 September 2011.

paradigm. Though practiced in contradistinction to the screaming and interjection which characterise dominant modes of masculinised political practice, this new politics ultimately fed back into existing norms as the feminine remained subject to devaluation, leaving existing systems of meaning largely intact.

As prevailing gender norms and political codes were reinforced, appropriated and selectively transgressed in pursuit of social justice, these negotiations and contestations largely obeyed the 'non-political' frame of the protests, raising the question of what it means to glorify 'feminised' political practices in the absence of contextually-defined politics. Reaffirming the gender norms which relate men and masculinity to politics while associating women and femininity with depoliticisation and social realms, the 2011 social protests ultimately bolstered the *status quo* as they remained dependent upon existing hierarchies and relations of power even in temporary suspension (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]). Returning to Timothy Mitchell's (1990: 561) charge that the evaluation of practice as separate from structure both masks and maintains domination, the embeddedness of the protests' intimate public within its wider frame begs consideration of the work done by insisting on *proximity to* politics. What are the promises offered and realities (re-)produced by *apolitical* political action?

Fashioning an Apolitical Politics

Framed by the broad appeal of a summary symbol and the suspension of normative orders promised by *carnivalesque*, within the intimate public specific to the 2011 social protests the multivalent reproduction of the *status quo* arises in part through the pursuit of aspirational normality as it intersects with belonging. While protest leaders and participants prided themselves on the explicit blurring of boundaries and ostensible transcendence of hierarchies, the persistence of particular terms of inclusion and exclusion actively shaped collective contours and agendas. Here shifting distinctions between 'us' and 'them' again obtained both internally and externally, as prevailing relations of gender, class, ethnicity, race, religion, ideology and geopolitical location resurfaced, often to be negotiated in manners which entrenched the very categories purportedly blurred or transcended. This mode of exclusive inclusion ultimately proved a basis for the protests' relative longevity, garnering wide popular

appeal and participation while simultaneously obeying the limits of the existing political order.

Whether 'Leftist,' Ethiopian, queer, working class or Palestinian, during the summer of 2011 individuals and communities from each sector of Israeli society could in theory place their hats into the box labelled 'social justice,' an object of desire not exclusively bound to Jewishness. However, while the exact content and meaning of this collective demand intentionally resisted clarity in discussions of the protestors' aims, through discourse and practice the image of a desired future emerged much in line with current realities, even if draped in new material trappings. In early August after my first experience of the demonstrations and my visit to the Rothschild Boulevard encampment, I sat at a café near the *namal* – the recently-renovated north Tel Aviv port area, bustling with boutiques and restaurants – with Nili, a Jewish Israeli friend from Tel Aviv who is fiercely critical of Israeli state and society. As the sun set and the heat slowly dissipated, she conveyed her impression of the protests in no uncertain terms: "The idea seems to be 'I want the most for me over here and he wants the most for him over there' – people don't all want the same thing, but the most given their position. Then, maybe once they're *comfortable*, they'll turn their attention to the occupation."[17] As a former activist who worked in Ramallah and East Jerusalem, Nili's criticism of the protests stems from their explicit avoidance of politics in its contextually defined and popularly understood meaning. While highlighting a clear way in which the protest both produced and inhibited participation, through her perception Nili importantly renders visible how the differential desires of participants *rely upon* relations of occupation and domination in order to make particular futures imaginable. Coalescing in a collective demand for and pursuit of 'the good life' – or at least a better life – these acts of imagination resonate with the small words and simple lives outlined in Chapter Three, those fantasies of normalcy

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[17] Field notes, 2 August 2012. Correspondingly, Yonathan Mendel (2013) writes of the connection between the protests' politics of comfort in 2011 and the 2013 elections in Israel, which saw former television presenter Yair Lapid and his party *Yesh Atid* [There is a Future] gain a surprising 19 seats in the Knesset:

> I remembered the reaction of my friend Abigail, who lives in Oxford and who came to visit during the 'social justice protests' in the summer of 2011. 'Why do people here keep speaking about a social protest?' she asked after a trip to Rothschild Avenue. 'This is a consumer protest.' . . . The reason Lapid has been so successful is that he knows that in a consumerist society the candidate who promises to make the most of our money is the star; that it would be a waste of his time to talk about the Palestinians.

'elsewhere' approximated and rendered actual against and through the existence of conflict.

As normalcy thus becomes bound with the vision of social justice advanced in the 2011 summer of protests in Israel, specific mechanisms emerged to preserve its intimate public in a manner similar to the stabilisation of smaller spheres of action and influence. While here joking, bypassing, unseeing and silencing may indeed be found in operation, instances of rupture and repair do not serve to reinforce or entrench the aspiration to normality. Rather, something decidedly *different* lies at stake in the potential loss of an intimate public, jeopardised by the introduction of politics to protests deemed 'social' and 'economic.' As formerly reticent friends and family began to take action toward the end of my time in Israel-Palestine, challenges posed to the (re-)new(ed) consensus assumed a severity apart from the normalised ruptures within small worlds. At stake in this intimate public was the *possibility* created through a collective will and move to action, underwritten by the investment of so many participants who cast their primary political emotions as "despair" and "disillusionment." Borne of disappointment from former days of activism and unrealised visions of 'solutions' or futures, the bitterness of past political action was overcome in a newly depoliticised mode of action, as a differential community – that elusive critical mass – arose beneath the banner of social justice. Here the adopted summarising symbol held more than the promise of inclusive broad-based participation; rather social justice sutured the fragmentation which has come to typify Israeli society. Indeed, as one former interview participant said of the protests in late August, "It's really something for Israelis, who want so much always to *divide*."[18]

As the protestors' central demand invited a multiplicity of claims and interests, so too it built investment and commitment precisely through refusing to define the contours of its possibility. Instantiated in the spaces of encampments, demonstrations and rallies, this newly engendered solidarity stood as the potential price of failure, as the temporariness of the change, renewal and becoming promised by *carnivalesque* was imagined to be lasting. Thus when forcibly introduced to this juxtapolitical intimate public, contextually defined 'politics' elicited responses aimed not at repair but foreclosure, with this rupture deemed world-destroying rather than world-making. In

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[18] Field notes, 31 August 2011.

this, appeals to gradualism and practices of self-exclusion came to act as guardians of community, maintaining its apolitical character within a context suffused by politics.

Gradualism

"Talking with you is different from talking to Israelis," Nili said at our portside meeting, her voice registering surprise and a hint of sadness. "I agree with everything you said about the tent protests, but if I was to say all of this to even my most activist Israeli friends they would become upset with me and tell me to 'be patient' with the protests."[19] Having become close friends during my fieldwork, the infrequent meetings between Nili and myself provided an opportunity to fully express our political views and contemplate the personal cost of these opinions when shared more widely. Thus Nili openly articulated her reasons for scepticism and non-participation in the popular social protests, along with the prevailing response her hesitation garnered among her "most activist Israeli friends." Their reaction to her search for politics – "'be patient'" – was echoed in various incarnations throughout the span of the protests, often by individuals who considered themselves activists, whether former, current or emergent.

Couched as "long-term" and "new resistance,"[20] the omission of contextually defined politics from protest discourses and agendas was cast by those participants critical of Israel's occupation as a deliberately adopted strategy, producing appeals to gradualism with the intention of deflecting criticism. Indicative of the sense of continuity and community at stake in the summer's mass mobilisation, these reassurances that "We'll get there, it just takes time" sought to preserve cohesion and generate participation through satisfying both critics and supporters of the protests' apolitical framing. Interestingly, these appeals were often both issued by and constraining of women's and feminist activist initiatives, groups which have historically been at the forefront of Jewish Israeli anti-occupation activism, as described in Chapter Four. Daphna, an interview participant from Tel Aviv who remains active with Machsom Watch, clarified the tense relation framing the participation of women anti-occupation activists when we met casually in late August. When I posed the question of whether

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[19] Field notes, 2 August 2011.

[20] Field notes, 31 August 2011 and 30 July 2011, respectively.

the social protests had produced increased interest or participation in the activities of Machsom Watch – from routine checkpoint visits to occasional organised tours – Daphna replied that early in the protests the organisation had held a meeting to decide whether or not to "pitch their tent" alongside the others on Rothschild Boulevard. As she related, in the end the group decided against "introducing their radical politics" in the interest of letting younger protestors determine the agenda, opting to support the protests as individuals rather than a feminist, human rights or anti-occupation organisation.[21]

The appeasing phrases "It will get there" and "Let's see where this goes"[22] offered in the summer of 2011 by anti-occupation activists – many of them self-defined feminists – mirror the messages often directed at women and feminists participating in nationalist or liberation movements, including those specific to Israel-Palestine. Though as a category 'women's equality' was enshrined in the 1948 Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel and the 1951 Law of Equal Rights for Women as outlined in Chapter One (Raday 1991: 18–20; Yuval-Davis 2005 [1980]: 122; Yishai 2005 [1997]: 203; Halperin-Kaddari 2004: 17, 20), in the name of 'independence' or 'nationhood' Jewish Israeli feminist activists have historically been told that their agendas remain secondary to collective interests, often framed in terms of security. During summer 2011, many women and feminist activists deferred their anti-occupation agendas to that of social justice, encouraging others to follow suit beneath a summarising symbol inclusive of multiple and often contradictory meanings. "It's there, look in the subtext," seemed to be the word on the street among those participants critical of the occupation yet hesitant to withhold their participation from an apparent social movement brewing among the largely quiescent public. Indeed, another Tel Aviv activist at the late July demonstration deemed the lack of settlers "striking," and cited their absence as the *presence* of the occupation at the event. Her stated reasoning followed that, as the government adequately supports the settlers and meets their needs, not only did they have little material reason to join the protests, but also their absence could be read as a reaction to an implied anti-occupation (Leftist) platform underwriting the demonstrations – to her, the settlers' non-participation

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[21] Field notes, 30 August 2011.

[22] Field notes, 30 July 2011.

clearly reflected the ideological and political opposition of the protest participants.[23]
Thus the insistence by these activists that politics were present at the level of subtext
constituted a differential entreaty to gradualism, seeking to quell criticism in the
interest of a broader agenda.

Yet while this belief in the apparent presence of contextually defined politics – as
subtext or awaiting an opportune moment – speaks to the persuasive influence of
broadly engineered solidarity, it elides the desire for *normality* woven into the fabric
of the protests. As we walked together amidst the sea of humanity at the 30 July
demonstration whose scene of raucous energy opened this chapter, Ilan – a close
friend, interview participant and then newly re-engaged political actor – made explicit
the links between conflict and normality, which not only underwrote appeals to
gradualism, but also maintain the binary order of the protests and their wider political
reality:

> People see that there's no solution to the conflict and they're tired of the issue.
> With these social issues there are solutions. Maybe after the social problems
> are fixed this will spill into the political sphere, but people are tired of hearing
> that security concerns come first. People just want some kind of *normalcy*.
> Once there is normalcy, after a few years maybe people will start to think
> about what that normalcy *is*, what it requires, and then they'll think about the
> occupation.[24]

'Don't Piss in the Well You Drink From'

As the protests extended from July into the heat of August and September, increasing
wariness greeted queries about the absence or presence of the occupation and the links
between conflict and normalcy. "Don't piss in the cornflakes," Guy warned with a
laugh as we met with friends and family whose newly reinvigorated political will
meant that the social protests would be a prime topic of discussion. While similar to
the gendered mechanism of silencing described in Chapter Three, these warnings and
their resulting silence were seemingly *self-imposed* as criticism risked souring
individual experiences of collective action. As voices which pushed conversation

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beyond the accepted boundaries likewise produced confrontation and an eventual hush, here silence protected the protests' intimate public not through reconstituting an approximation of normalcy, but through cementing solidarity. Thus the achievement of belonging stood the prize of participation and the potential cost of dissent, with world-loss threatening a return to fragmentation and alienation.

Rather than instituting a world-renewing cycle of repair, within the protests those conditions productive of silencing bring to the fore processes of exclusion in which the cost of rupture supplants potential benefit. Though participants and supporters professed a shared desire for 'the good life' – a new normality aimed at "the most for me over here and the most for him over there" – the world of belonging and solidarity engineered through protests constituted its magnetising core. While outwardly aimed at the European standard of living desired by the (Ashkenazi) middle-class whose children first catalysed the protests and the domestic focus imagined to characterise decidedly *post*-colonial realities (Massad 2006), those bonds suturing the critical mass came to constitute a social world made anew. Formerly inconceivable to many despite the representation of (Jewish) Israeli society as largely unified beneath the banner of state and nation, the broad solidarities built by the protests necessitated an ostensibly *non-exclusive* mode of protection, an insurance of security from threat which would preserve the protests' central ability to mobilise through inclusivity. Thus much like entreaties to gradualism, which importantly ensured the possibility of future participation by quelling criticism without compromising appeal or inclusion, this differential response to potentially politicising dissent additionally played upon mechanisms of self-selection.

Taken alone, the expectation that criticism would spoil or dirty the experience of committed solidarity seemingly reflects an experience in which ordinarily avoidant individuals faced attack from those regularly politically active, this time paradoxically for assent to participation. However, throughout the summer of 2011 the protests and protestors enjoyed near-hegemonic status, as levels of support reached over 80 per cent among the Israeli public (*Ha'aretz* 2011; Sheizaf 2011). With overwhelming support indeed registered among members and parties of the political Left despite a declared 'non-political' orientation, the dominance of the protests necessarily generated marginal categories, among them actors ordinarily considered 'radical' in their opposition to Israeli political practices and policies. "What is it you said earlier,

Guy? That maybe we're 'pissing in the cornflakes?'" I asked as we discussed the reception of our criticism among friends at a casual gathering. This elicited an eruption of laughter; "The original [phrase] is 'Don't piss in the well you drink from,'" a friend corrected. I considered this for a moment before replying, "But it's okay to piss in someone else's well?" All present nodded in agreement. The well of the protests – that solidarity, belonging and sense of community from which many of the protestors formerly felt themselves excluded or imagined an impossibility – had achieved a sacred status, ostensibly beyond contempt or reproach.

As engagement with and participation in the summer protests assumed normative status, belonging emerged in part a matter of individual reflections – one's politics and world view – recognised or found missing among collective discourses and practices. Recounting a radio interview with the popular Ashkenazi Jewish Israeli singer Aviv Geffen, Nili reflected on the influence both exerted and experienced through the impetus to preserve consensus and define agendas as apolitical. Previously, on a radio programme aired by the army station '*Galatz*,' Margalit Tzan'ani – a well known Mizrahi Jewish Israeli singer – had voiced opposition to the protests on the grounds that they focused on the interests of Israel's Ashkenazi citizens and thus intentionally avoided politics (Lev 2011; Izikovitch 2011). According to Nili, Geffen responded to Tzan'ani's criticism by stating, "'That's *so* 2010!'" and summarily dismissing the question proffered by the interviewing journalist. Nili expressed her amazement at Geffen's suggestion, telling me, "How incredible is it that the agenda and consensus – the community building around these protests – can make all of those issues '*passé!*'"[25] In response to public outcry, Tzan'ani was quick to declare solidarity with the protestors and disavowed her earlier criticism, going so far as to perform at a later protest rally in Be'er Sheva. Appraised as a full narrative arc, Tzan'ani's actions are notable for demonstrating how positions 'inside' or 'outside' the protests – its relations of belonging – were cast as a matter of individual choice rather than external imposition. Like the members of Machsom Watch who decided against introducing their radical politics to the Rothschild Boulevard encampment, these positions were *self-selected*.

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[25] Field notes, 6 August 2011.

Importantly, while self-exclusion or self-selection reveals a marked distinction from the production of silencing outlined in Chapter Three, these mechanisms converge in their entrenchment of hegemonic patterns of gender, if arriving to this shared point by different means. Through the silencing described earlier, a collective subscription to masculinised practices of communication and constructions of politics renders critics silent and seemingly feminised; conversely, within the space of the protests dissenting voices spoke against a politics ostensibly *more feminine* in both discourse and practice. Thus criticism of this 'new politics' assumed the overtly masculinised tones of attack with intention to defeat, as the values of "listening and respect" were potentially jeopardised by the forcible introduction of conflict, occupation and violence. Yet rather than signalling a seeming reversal or inversion of hegemonic gender norms and relations, as the feminine gained purchase above the masculine during the 2011 protests, the active silencing of criticism among protest participants and observers importantly *reinforced* the hegemonic gender regime, as the protests became understood as in need of protection. Ultimately reflective of the militarised gender relations which equate vulnerability with femininity, the well of the protests required (masculinised) defence against the threat of (old) politics, with security retaining primacy anew.

The Politics of Belonging

As processes of inclusion and exclusion unfolded during the summer of protests, individual or private decisions around participation necessarily intersected with the broader public negotiation of its collective boundaries, ushering in an explicit 'politics of belonging' (Yuval-Davis 2011). According to Nira Yuval-Davis (2011: 20), "The boundaries [that] the politics of belonging are concerned with are the boundaries of the political community of belonging, the boundaries which, sometimes physically, but always symbolically, separate the world population into 'us' and 'them.'" Though framed as inclusive of differential social positions, material realities and political orientations, the protests required the continuing presence of prevailing social divisions and hierarchies, reflecting the dynamics central to everyday Jewish Israeli life as detailed in Chapter Two. Here, Tzan'ani's charge that the protests reflected the concerns of *particular* citizens indeed rings true, as the processes of inclusion and

exclusion recounted above reproduced the wider political categories, communities and meanings shaped by conflict in Israel-Palestine.

In sentiments mirroring the admission that "[…] it will have to become political because that's where change happens," as expressed by the protestor interviewed on Rothschild Boulevard,[26] various participants and observers acknowledged a gap in need of bridging as the protests developed. "You can't solve this without solving the political problems – the internal can't be solved without looking at the external," a friend explained as we walked together during a late July protest. "In the next election who ever wins, he will need to represent this and declare it. It just isn't possible that someone will be elected who doesn't engage with the political when talking about solving these social issues."[27] While in part lending support to calls for gradualism, this speaker conveys his perception that the necessary connection between social and political realms will determine the protests' resolution. Relating a similar belief through a somewhat differential position, weeks later another friend and protest participant took interest in Prime Minister Netanyahu's declared desire to enter into *negotiations* regarding the protestors' demands. Rather than exploring alternative routes to resolution through the formation of councils or joint panels, Yael felt that Netanyahu's vision followed in the form of prevailing political processes centred in the "'You're on that side, I'm on this side'" conflict model (see also Lis and Bassock 2011; Verter 2011).[28] For Yael, translation and realisation of the protestors' diffuse demands needed to resist packaging within the (masculinised) conflict-driven approach, even while clearly relying upon an interface with authority for its ultimate success. This political necessity was also emphasised later by Dov, the Tel Aviv artist and DJ who articulated resistance to resistance by "not being a good soldier"; Dov agreed that the protests had opened important new spaces of political discourse and practice, while falling short of addressing Left/Right divisions and their basis in conflict, violence and occupation. "They have to [address politics] ultimately,

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[26] Field notes, 1 August 2011.

[27] Field notes, 30 July 2011.

[28] Field notes, 12 August 2011.

because it *is* all about Left-Right issues!" Dov claimed as frustration with the ambiguity of protestors' apolitical platform mounted during the passing months.[29]

As indicated by these commentaries, protest agendas, discourses and practices needed to retain political intelligibility and currency while working toward the realisation of demands and goals deemed 'social' and 'economic.' While many focused primarily upon cultivating the community of solidarity engendered through the protests, for those in positions of leadership the targets remained material and ostensibly achievable through interaction with government. Yet when coupled with the enmeshment of this very authority with contextually specific and popularly understood meanings of *politics*, this need for intelligibility wielded certain influence over the limits of protest. In order to be heard or recognised on the level "where change happens," the protests ultimately operated within prevailing political boundaries while seeking the very transformation of their meaning. Significantly, the collective agreement around the necessity of a *reversion* to politics – if only in procedure and practice – signals the extent to which the prioritisation of the protests' more 'feminine' politics would indeed be temporary, as the promise of "becoming, change and renewal" was made thoroughly *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]: 10) with the eventual return of prevailing norms, relations and hierarchies.

Who are 'Ha'Am?'

Most clearly negotiated through the shifting divisions between 'us' and 'them' which cut across and framed the protests even in their inclusivity, collective boundaries followed the contours of the national 'we' bound with the politics of conflict, occupation and domination. Yet as Yuval-Davis (2011: 20) importantly argues, "The politics of belonging involve not only the maintenance and reproduction of the boundaries of the community of belonging by the hegemonic political power (within and outside the community), but also their contestation, challenge and resistance by other political agents." Once more, practices of active exclusion remained seemingly absent while groups and communities attempted to locate their interests within the well of belonging, now shaped by the constraints of political intelligibility. Here marginal groups were re-assured of their subordination within a movement ostensibly

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[29] Field notes, 30 August 2011.

aimed at equitable transformation, again mirroring the struggles of women and feminists within nationalist and liberation movements of times past and present. During our portside conversation after the late July protest, Nili spoke of a friend who had attended the same demonstration as part of a group who assembled in Tel Aviv's Levinsky Park – this was a self-professed "radical bloc" who sought to engage with politics in its fullest sense, including contextual definition in relation to conflict while joining the larger protests. Nili said that, like myself, this friend had been astounded by the energy and anger of the protestors, finding himself amazed rather than experiencing the alienation which had initially spurred the formation of the radical bloc in which he participated. According to Nili, her friend tended to be critical of the protests, feeling the *vagueness* of demanded social justice more problematic than its dissociation from the occupation – he was frustrated that participants wielded the term without considering its meaning. "But personally I'm more bothered by the first part of that phrase: *'Ha'am,'* the people," Nili told me. For Nili, *'ha'am'* remained inseparable from the ethnic and religious nation which explicitly underwrites the constitution of 'the people' in Israel. "This goes back to racism," she said heatedly, "social, economic and political racism. . . . If it isn't Right, or Left or Centre then what do we have in common? We are Jews. 'The people' are Jewish people."[30] Substantiated by the displays of Israeli flags at the tent encampments, the singing of nationalist songs from bygone eras at demonstrations and the images and sentiments gracing hand-made signs, the (Jewish) nation indeed circumscribed the protests.

With *'ha'am'* thus clearly bound to 'the Jewish people,' contestations around belonging took on decidedly *political* tones in their intersection with shifting processes of inclusion and exclusion. In particular, the participation of Palestinian and Jewish settler communities brought to the fore the differential ways in which the political boundaries of the nation actively crosscut the protest collective. Among Palestinian citizens of Israel, the nationalised contours of 'the people' were immediately recognised; as Palestinian journalist Sayed Kashua (2011a) wrote in his weekly *Ha'aretz* column in early August:

> "The people want social justice." What exactly is the definition of 'the people'? Will I feel comfortable shouting those words out along with the other

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[30] Field notes, 2 August 2011.

protesters? I know it was borrowed from Tahrir Square, where they shouted, "The people want to topple the regime.' But in Egypt the word referred to the Egyptian people. Meaning everyone who lives in Egypt. And here? Does the term 'the people' really include all of Israel's citizens?

Echoing Nili's concerns, Kashua's hesitancy reflects not a wariness of 'social justice,' but knowledge gleaned from his experiences as a Palestinian citizen of Jewish Israeli 'democracy,' where provision of and access to rights remains *de facto* dependent upon ethnic identity (Shafir and Peled 2002; Lowrance 2004; Semyonov and Lewin-Epstein 2004; Yiftachel 2006; Abdo 2011). Interestingly, one week after the publication of the article cited above, Kashua (2011b) spoke at the second demonstration in Jerusalem upon invitation and later described how his experience – understood as deeply political – reaffirmed the protests' apolitical politics:

> "Talk about the place you come from," the activist said to me on the phone, trying to help. And just what is 'this place that I come from,' goddammit? What ... like, the Arabs? That I come from the Arabs? What can I say about that? I'll get up on stage like an idiot and start talking about the housing problem in the Arab villages? What do I know about that? I come from a neighborhood [*sic*] in West Jerusalem. If they really want someone to talk about that, why don't they invite some Arab council head, or someone who can cite statistics? What, they want me to get up there and say that the Arabs in Israel support the protest? I should say that we too want social justice? Who gave me the mandate to speak on behalf of the place from which I supposedly come?

> Maybe I'll talk about the Likud, about Israel Beiteinu, about Kadima, about the National Home and the racist laws the Knesset is passing left and right. No, no. I can't. This protest is not political, and who knows what the protesters think about the occupation, if they even think about it at all. This is a social protest that has an economic basis, I reminded myself. I can't talk about the settlements, the racist laws, the occupation and all that kind of stuff: It's not relevant, it's insignificant.

However, within the problematic and depoliticised inclusivity of social justice other Palestinian citizens of Israel found a site of resistance, if marginal. Situated at the head of the large second block in Tel Aviv's Rothschild Boulevard encampment, a small group of Palestinian citizens of Israel took up residence at 'Tent 1948,' as recounted briefly above. According to Palestinian rights activist Abir Kopty (2011) from Nazareth, "Tent 1948's main message is that social justice should be for all. It

brings together Jewish and Palestinian citizens who believe in shared sovereignty in the state of all its citizens." Here sat a handful of dwellings adorned by signs written in Arabic, Hebrew and English, where Tent 1948's Palestinian and Jewish inhabitants displayed large plywood placards detailing narratives of expulsion and dispossession, challenging the meaning and scope of 'social justice.' Appealing to the promises of equity held forth by both citizenship and social justice while insisting upon the ways in which these concepts acted to exclude rather than include, the participation of Palestinians in Tel Aviv, in Nazareth, Jaffa, Haifa and other sites more peripheral across Israel served to *politicise* the protests. As politics again threatened the cherished foundation underwriting the protests' collectivity, burgeoning solidarities met with the boundaries of nation. Physically attacked in late July by Right-wing protest participants, the structures and residents of Tent 1948 signified an intrusion of the political into the sanctity of a unified world made anew, as they brought occupation, conflict and violence into the heart of an ostensibly apolitical protected space. While subsequent confrontations remained limited, the mechanism of self-selection ultimately operated effectively as the sea of Jewish Israeli demands and interests largely drowned discussions of Palestinian support or recognition. Indeed, as Kopty (2011) wrote during her time at Tent 1948:

> For me, as Palestinian, I don't feel part of the July 14 movement, and I'm not there because I feel part, almost every corner of this encampment reminds me that this place does not want me. My first tour there was pretty depressing, I found lots of Israeli flags, a man giving a lecture to youth about his memories from '48 war' [*sic*] from a Zionist perspective, another group marching with signs calling for the release of Gilad Shalit, another singing Zionist songs. This is certainly not a place that the 20% of the population would feel belong to. The second day I found Ronen Shuval, from Im Tirtzu, the extreme right wing organization giving a talk full of incitement and hatred to the left and human rights organizations. Settlers already set a tent and were dancing with joy.[31]

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[31] Max Blumenthal and Joseph Dana (2011) cite Kopty in their compelling article entitled 'J14: The Exclusive Revolution,' written for *+972 Magazine* during the protests:

> "The injustice will continue," Kopty declared flatly. "And I don't believe J14 will create changes that are socio-political. But our struggle is completely political. So when J14 finally explodes because the different internal groups have contradicting interests — and they can't remain apolitical forever — our struggle will go on."

Kopty's depiction not only highlights the ways in which exclusion again emerges a matter of seemingly independent choice – importantly reinforced by the *carnivalesque* environment specific to the protests – but also her experience of non-belonging underscores the imbrication of national boundaries with the protest body.

However, while here Kopty presents the ostensible embrace of Right-wing and ultra-nationalist factions as largely uncontested, the arrival and presence of settler contingents generated controversy among protestors as these actors differentially ushered the politics of occupation, conflict, violence and borders into the heart of Tel Aviv. On the same day as a coalition of dairy farmers joined the main protest, Right-wing activists marched from the protests' symbolic centre at Habima Square both in solidarity and as an insistence on inclusion beneath the banner of 'social justice.' Including factions such as Im Tirtzu – a Jewish Israeli ultra-nationalist group named after Theodore Herzl's famous dictum, "*Im tirtzu, ein zo agada*" ['If you will it, it is no dream'] – and the Yesha Council – an umbrella organisation of Jewish settlements in the West Bank – these new participants posed a new challenge to the limits of '*ha'am*.' Paradoxically linked to the tensions raised by Palestinian citizens of Israel, Jewish Israeli settler contingents again tested the inclusivity claimed by the protests' Left-wing and ostensibly non-political leadership (Levinson and Lior 2011). Along with public support expressed by Yesha Council leader Naftali Bennett and West Bank Kahanist[32] Baruch Marzel during visits to the Rothschild encampment, the move for broad-based Right-wing inclusion generated a furore among those protest participants who had earlier responded to appeals for gradualism and set aside anti-occupation politics in the interest of cohesion (Mandel 2011; Frenkel 2011). Bolstering the atmosphere productive of exclusion, Right-wing participants chanted "Tel Aviv is Jewish, Sudanese to go Sudan!" along with "No Left, no Right, cheap apartments are our right!" (Zonszein 2011; Mendel 2013) demonstrating the simultaneous rigidity and fluidity of the protests' internal boundaries. Refuting claims that the clarity of an *absent-present* Leftist orientation kept settler participation at bay, members of the Hilltop Youth – young ultra-nationalists often at the forefront of settlement expansion through their establishment of illegal outposts – pitched a tent on

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[32] 'Kahanists' follow the teaching of Rabbi Meir Kahane, whose political party *Kach* "called for the 'transfer' of all Palestinians, citizens and non-citizens alike, out of the Land of Israel"; in 1988 *Kach* was disqualified from participation in Knesset elections (Shafir and Peled 2002: 127).

Rothschild Boulevard and crucially pushed further the limits of '*ha'am*' as these Jewish citizens of Israel insisted on belonging despite living (illegally) extra-territorially (Levinson 2011).[33] To this end, Marzel couched the demand for inclusion in the explicitly apolitical – yet political – terms adopted by the protestors, claiming, "[…] 'when it comes to social issues, I'm more Left than the Left'" (Mandel 2011). Though ultimately expelled by inhabitants of Rothschild Boulevard after at times violent confrontations, Jewish settler factions continued to participate in the protests as encampments and demonstrations spread to the illegal settlements, with actions in Ariel receiving "official endorsement" from the protests' central leadership (Blumenthal and Dana 2011).[34] While the inclusion of these Right-wing factions resulted in the seemingly self-imposed exclusion of those participants who ideologically refused to stand in solidarity with settlers, their insistence on belonging held an important mirror to the Jewish Israeli mainstream. Frequently scapegoated by the secular middle-class for social ills and occupation practices, during the protests these communities transgressed the boundaries between 'here' and 'there,' 'us' and 'them,' serving to actualise the *national* meaning of 'the people' and render visible those social and political ties which bind beyond territorial boundaries.

Differentially framed and realised, Palestinian and settler appeals to belonging within 'the people' demanding social justice thus reveal the extent to which the ostensibly apolitical orientation of the protests remained underwritten by politics, as here division, convergence and power relations specific to the wider political context indeed shape the collective and its agenda. While both Palestinians and settlers continued to participate in encampments and demonstrations throughout the summer, the national membership and social ties enjoyed by the latter group remained more

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[33] Shortly after Marzel's suggestion that the housing crisis could be solved by the expansion of building in Jerusalem, primarily possible in the city's illegally occupied Eastern sector, Prime Minister Netanyahu's government approved the construction of 227 new units in Ariel, a Jewish settlement in the West Bank; see Levinson and The Associated Press 2011.

[34] Also, the continuing presence of Ayalim – an organisation which advocates building expansion in the Negev and Galilee regions – remained largely uncontested despite their adoption of settlement rhetoric and clear designs on 'Judaising' these majority Bedouin and Palestinian areas. During a later visit to the Rothschild encampment, a representative told me that the organisation aims to increase Jewish settlement "in all of the area given to the Jews" through the establishment of 'youth villages.' He then recounted how members had recently adopted a 'new' strategy to counter the bureaucratic delays which commonly slowed development: "[…] yesterday we did something amazing, really amazing. For the first time we just went to a place and starting building! We built an outpost an put an Israeli flag on it!" Field notes, 1 August 2011. See also http://ayalim.org.il/en, accessed 2 August 2012.

readily recognised and accommodated than the explicitly political demands and appeals to citizenship issued by the former. Yet as these marginal sectors of Israeli society inevitably ushered in the spectre of occupation, conflict and violence – whether passively or actively – both remained in tense relation to the protests' intimate public. In correspondence with the hegemonic patterns of gender framing the protests' *carnivalesque* period of subversion, again a feminine core appeared in need of protection from masculinised politics, as here 'threats' to a body defined as apolitical and social materialised in appeals for inclusion by politicised communities. Thus similarly to appeals to gradualism and self-selected exclusion, negotiations around the constitution of 'the people' and the meaning of 'social justice' within the protests ultimately reinforced prevailing gendered valuations of threat and protection. As these militarised power relations continue to subordinate 'feminine' to 'masculine' and 'social' to 'political,' the temporary *inversion and suspension* offered by the protests served to further bolster an apolitical frame of action.

Engaging (In)action

The argument that Israel's 2011 summer of protests reaffirmed politics as masculine, while temporarily exalting the feminine, makes visible how these mass actions ultimately reinforced the primacy of security and entrenched prevailing values, norms, codes and relations through appeals to 'threat' and 'protection.' Yet importantly, the effects of this framing rippled beyond the summer's events and participants, bearing implications for both the content and arbiter of politics in Jewish Israeli society. Here as negotiations around '*ha'am*' produced a broad politics of belonging, which functioned to secure existing political codes, categories and communities, dynamics of inclusion and exclusion activated more intimate meanings of 'politics,' reifying the state as separate from society and reproducing conditions of political stasis.

As the summer of protests unfolded, conversations among friends and family increasingly focused on the collective will to action, which was for some a renewal of previous investment, for others a new-found site of identity and belonging, and for yet others an occasion for wariness – in all instances the promise of political action touched open 'the personal.' At a friend's apartment in Baka, West Jerusalem the depth of these intimate ties became clear as four Jewish Israeli men engaged in a discussion of participation, individually considering whether they might take part in

that night's protest rally in (West) Jerusalem. Artists, filmmakers and musicians, they

gathered in order to showcase their work, with my attendance made possible through

Guy though I was acquainted with most of the men through prior interviews and

friendship. While waiting for the first film to load, conversation turned to how my

research intersected with the summer's events; understood as "about the occupation,"

the combination of my work and the protests signalled an opening into 'politics,' a

topic which before had largely remained an object of tension and avoidance. As I

began to recount my visit to the Rothschild Boulevard encampment that morning

where I learned of Woodstock, Jim Morrison and The Doors, Zohar asked, "Did

anyone say anything interesting to you?" I replied by explaining how there had been a

clear separation of politics from 'social issues' in the spoken words of the protestors

and the signs adorning tent walls. Rather than causing the anticipated awkward

silence, these observations served to generate further discussion. Sitting beside Guy

on the couch, Zohar responded quickly as he drew on the first of many cigarettes: "It

isn't about politics I think, because to talk about politics brings in things like shame

and family…" His words trailed away as the smoke curled above his head. Guy

broke the silence by adding, "Politics brings up other things too, like responsibility –

people don't want to take responsibility. A socio-economic struggle is something that

people can feel *good* about!" There seemed to be a quiet agreement in the room as Gil

offered a final thought: "The participants and leaders might be keeping separate from

the Old Left because they [the Old Left] are seen as part of the elite – the *Ashkenazi*

elite."[35]

Giving voice to speculation around strategies for inclusion, the ease of exchange

within this conversation indeed attests to the opening of political discussion and

practice actively produced through the protests. Yet the specific terms through which

these men relate the political – shame, family, responsibility and privilege – reveal

intimate ties shaping what it means to engage with politics in its fullest sense.

Suggesting an understanding which extends beyond sociality and into understandings

of self, these terms give texture to that sense of relief additionally promised in the

creation of intimate publics. Indeed, as Berlant (2008: 150) writes of "juxtapolitical

citizenship," "The history of its flourishing reveals individuals en masse hoarding a

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[35] Field notes, 1 August 2011.

sense of belonging *against* what politics as usual seems to offer – a space of aversive intensities, increased risk, shame, vulnerability, exploitation, and, paradoxically, irrelevance."[36] In offering relief from the political and a means of avoidance, the social protests explicitly drew upon these intimate dimensions as understandings of self and constructions of personhood intersected with decisions around engagement and participation.

For Zohar politics emerges bound with family, as his mother helped to found Women in Black and his father practices various forms of "everyday resistance" in his capacity as a university professor. At the same time, here politics becomes linked to shame; in an earlier interview Zohar related how he feels estranged from his family, no longer considering himself an activist as his "passion disintegrated because the hope disintegrated" – among this family of activists, Zohar's relative inaction and hopelessness bring with them a sense of shame now enmeshed with politics.[37] Guy raises the possibility that the nascent protests avoid politics due to its coupling with personal responsibility; having lived away from Israel-Palestine for twelve years and returning for the period of my fieldwork, this pairing of terms reflects feelings around his absence as a political actor in Israel. Indeed, throughout the course of the year when friends suggestively asked what they, as Jewish Israelis, *should do* regarding the occupation, Guy's answer increasingly became, "Take responsibility." Moving into a position of understanding himself as an occupier by virtue of nationality, Guy connects responsibility to participation in political action. As Gil provides the final point, he posits that popular understandings of politics relate closely to specific types of privilege: ethnic and economic. Here, his sense that the protest leaders and participants are actively attempting to distance themselves from the old guard invokes the primacy of Ashkenazim in Jewish Israeli society. Raised near Tel Aviv as the child of Iranian parents, Gil often found himself between ethnic identities due in part to his Ashkenazi physical appearance; yet while assumed to be a member of the elite, maximally enfranchised and possessing full belonging, Gil continues to understand

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[36] Emphasis in original text.

[37] Interview in Jerusalem, 2 July 2011; handwritten notes.

himself as 'other.' For Gil, then, 'politics' brings with it narratives of privilege, perhaps linked to assumptions made falsely about himself by others.

Importantly, the differential meanings ascribed to politics by these men – shame, family, responsibility and privilege – again span the boundary between private and public spheres, with their respective feminine/masculine valuations. Shaped by yet not limited to its wider context, this enmeshment of politics with subjectivity provides many with reasons to *avoid* particular modes of political action, while in this instance augmenting the appeal of participation in ostensibly *apolitical* mass mobilisation. Yet as Jewish Israeli protestors took action while attempting to disentangle themselves from politics and its purchase on intimate dimensions, their ascription to apolitical framing bolstered power relations on levels more macro. In a manner similar to the ultimate entrenchment of those hegemonic patterns of gender temporarily suspended, during the summer of 2011 protest participants and supporters effectively reconfirmed the position of the state as the legitimate arbiter of politics in its contextually specific meaning. Though framed in *opposition* to government policies and practices in social and economic realms, here resistance melds with sanction in political realms, again evoking Mitchell's (1990: 561) entreaty that practice and structure must be appraised together. Indeed, while the summer's social protests were cast as a 'conflict' between a constitutive populace and its constituted sovereign, the former ultimately shored up the latter. In this, the effective parcelling off of politics to the state directly implicates Jewish Israelis in domination, as 'that there' unfolds seemingly irrespective of 'us here,' beyond influence or control. Shaped by, yet again not limited to, the masculinised discourses and practices which fuse the political in Israel-Palestine with violence, power and conflict, this binding of politics with subjectivity provides an impetus for disengagement. Thus arises a possibility articulated by Hannah Arendt (1998 [1958]), which touches open these tensions between individual and collective. As Arendt (1998 [1958]: 233-234) argues, for many freedom to invest in 'the realm of human affairs' – the public sphere of politics – is believed to spell the forfeit of that liberty, as action taken necessitates seemingly endless repetition. If so, Arendt (1998 [1958]: 234) cautions, "The only salvation from this kind of freedom seems to lie in non-acting, in abstention from the whole realm of human affairs as the only means to safeguard one's sovereignty and integrity as a person."

Conclusion

Through the body, framing and agenda of the 2011 summer of protests in Israel, oppositional political action paradoxically reaffirmed state sovereignty under the pretext of subverting the hegemonic relations of power which subordinate domestic to international, social to political and feminine to masculine. In practicing *political disengagement* Jewish Israeli protestors not only confirmed the meaning of politics as bound with conflict and violence, but also they produced and maintained the specific system of meaning which underwrites the centralisation of political power and authority in the state. Here state sovereignty arises through social production, including those acts deemed resistant – rather than destabilising sovereignty through targeting government practices and policies, these mass protests actually *reinforced* beliefs in and experiences of the state as the central, exclusive power. This happens precisely because of the ways in which an intimate understanding of politics blurs the boundaries between public and private, state and society, while at the same time affirming their ostensible separation. Underwritten by constructions of masculinity and femininity, framed by gendered norms and codes of practice, and bound with shame, family, responsibility and privilege, politics remains within the exclusive purview of the Israeli state-as-sovereign through individual and collective action.

Here sovereignty emerges through practices, discourses and beliefs, challenging the notion of pre-existing power or positive truth and destabilising the rigid distinctions between structure and practice, meaning and material reality, to reflect more precisely how domination operates. In this, state sovereignty emerges at the micro level as much the product of *omissions* as commissions, problematising the constructed divisions of private/public, intimate/political and inside/outside which ostensibly define political space. At the same time, in keeping with these assumed binary orders the social production of sovereignty in Israel during the summer of 2011 ultimately brought with it the absolution of collective and individual responsibility for conflict, occupation, violence and domination, those very practices and relations which give shape to the contextual definition of 'politics' as an interest apart from matters deemed social and economic. As this chapter has demonstrated, Jewish Israeli protestors bolstered domination through resistance and produced apparent apathy through action explicitly by fashioning an apolitical politics, a seeming paradox which ensures the *status quo*. Yet this accord of contradiction prevailed throughout the

summer of protests, structuring logics, agendas, collectivities and individual experiences as the protests operated through both the collapse and reification of borders, subverting and reflecting the hegemonic patterns of gender which structure subjectivities, society and state.

Thus, this chapter provides an answer to Maya Mikdashi's (2009) earlier query: when we surrender politics to the politicians, we participate in domination. Indeed, as Jewish Israelis ultimately reaffirmed the political space of sovereignty during the social protests of 2011, they simultaneously freed themselves from responsibility for those practices and policies of occupation, domination and colonisation which define the contours of politics in Israel-Palestine. Yet here the route is as significant as its terminus, as dynamics of inversion, suspension and resistance function to elide, entrench and reify in ways which bridge seeming the seeming divisions structuring lived realities. Through political disengagement, Jewish Israeli protestors pursued a course of action which sought transformation without endangering the wider *status quo* which makes life liveable. Thus 'freedom from' colludes with 'freedom to' as individuals and communities seek to perpetuate their absolution of responsibility through participation in political action. Mirroring the historical tensions which underwrite Jewish Israeli society, here liberalism and collectivism operate in tandem, as individual aspirations for flourishing – "the most for me over here" – coalesce to create a world of belonging made anew, an intimate public whose binding ties might usurp agendas and intentions. Sustained by the "becoming, change and renewal" promised in *carnivalesque* (Bakhtin 1984 [1968]: 10), the suspension of hierarchies and norms is imagined as permanent even as their continuation provides the basis for a world made possible. Yet while separation from and avoidance of 'the political' seemingly ensured the appeal and efficacy of the protests in Israel, this very act of division guaranteed temporariness as political realities remain central to constructions of the Jewish Israeli everyday life regardless of the cost of apartments, cheese or childcare.

Indeed, this necessarily incomplete dissociation became increasingly evident as (masculinised) politics-as-conflict forcibly interrupted the protests in September through instances of violence near Eilat, the impending Palestinian bid for statehood at the United Nations, and the spectre of a future war with Iran. Slowly but surely

energy waned, as friends and family returned unimpressed from visits to the once-robust Rothschild Boulevard encampment and voiced growing criticism along with concerns that the initiative was "losing steam."[38] As a critic of the protests' apolitical politics I felt conflicted about what this decline might mean, though I began to understand the cost of this world-loss, feeling an urgency for *something* to be achieved so that these solidarities might fulfil the gradualist promise of "getting there eventually." On the day of the final march – the proclaimed "March of Millions," which would number 450,000 participants in total – I walked among what felt like drips, dribbles and thin streams of protestors from Habima Square, this time to *Kikar HaMedina* [State Square] where massive scaffolding was set for a now regularised, normalised and professionalised final rally. Making our way through the streets of Tel Aviv with friends once more, I remarked on the comparatively low energy and numbers, expressing my desire for some kind of actualisation to buoy those participants who had surmounted despair in order to (re)invest in political action. It seemed that 'politics' had again supplanted the social issues, economic concerns and engendered solidarities made possible through the protests' ostensible elevation of the feminine and domestic, resulting in an apparent dissolution of the collective. Upon passing *Kikar Rabin* [Rabin Square] we paused on a nearby ledge, scanning the procession in an attempt to appraise the mass ahead, alongside and behind our small group. A friend's mood changed in an instant and his face lit with happy surprise as – though in streams and trickles – the mass of protestors stretched far into the distance in either direction. He proclaimed excitedly, "This is amazing, it has never happened like this in Israel before!" Yet while the dribbles had indeed now amassed into a larger body, there remained a feeling of routine and finality, a shadow of the former energy and conviction which electrified earlier protests.

And "this" *had* happened in Israel before, though in a historical moment profoundly political and politicised: the 1982 Sabra and Shatila massacres of the first Lebanon War. Then over 400,000 Israelis had protested against Israel's role in the massacre of Palestinian refugees at the camps in Beirut (Davidi 2000; Kidron 2004), participating in what had been the largest demonstration in the history of Israel until that night in September 2011. Now we arrived calmly to the Gucci and Burberry storefronts of

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[38] Field notes, 19 August 2011.

Kikar HaMedina, departing before the emotive strains of the national anthem '*HaTikva*' [The Hope] could confirm how politics also underwrote this protest and its boundaries, even if elided. On that night we marched not only toward new promises recognised as fleeting, but also quietly past Sabra and Shatila, signalling a return to politics as usual.

Conclusion
Sof HaDerech? [Best of the Best or End of the Road]

Tall ship on the horizon. It is nearly one year to the day since I departed Tel Aviv for the familiarity of London, trading sandals and sunscreen for an umbrella and wool hat. Striking how life comes full circle. We sit at 'Gilly's,' the restaurant on the old port promenade which has somehow marked my experiences of Israel-Palestine – a first visit with the splendour of sea and savoury 'Israeli breakfast'; meetings and meals shared with family and friends; the memory of a goat cheese omelette and cappuccino paired with the presence of a gunship, my first encounter with the banality of violence. Today we sit at the restaurant's wicker tables beneath taut shades, readying to leave once more. This trip has been five days in total, the first since my year of fieldwork.

So little has changed, disappointingly and sadly reassuringly. The sun still scorches, the sea still sparkles, the air neglects to stir even as helicopters fly invariably south. Families parade the length of the wooden sea-front deck, cafes and restaurants bustle into the early morning hours, cleaners, stockers, attendants and cooks attest to the social divisions which shape lives and cityscapes. Road signs direct traffic to Jewish Israeli settlements in the West Bank as if legal, talk of 'social justice' lingers though fading with time, families sit in tense silence or talk about everything but politics (in the most political way). A city and its people continue to actively 'get by' conflict, violence and occupation, reaffirming the depth of normalcy's promise and with it the relevance of my thesis. These images and thoughts cross my mind as I contemplate yet another omelette, ordered in a Hebrew which has not escaped me after these months away – this is my personal cycle within a larger national cycle, my performance of normalcy while everything inside is buzzing and whirring, ready to escape. We sit three – Guy, his mother and me – passing the time before a flight away from the dull lure of everydayness in Tel Aviv, its predictability, stability and constancy. Glasses which minutes earlier held champagne drinks stand empty. We wait.

With fork to mouth, I stop – what *is* that on the horizon at sea? Feeling impending *déjà vu* I cannot make sense of the shape in the distance. I turn to Guy and find words for a question: "Is that a *pirate ship*?" Squinting, peering and speculating ensue, though still we cannot decipher the form. We decide that it must be part of a new jetty

at the marina, just far enough away to appear abstractly vessel-shaped. Back to eating and small talk. "No," I say after a few minutes' time, "It's moving. That *is* a pirate ship!" Slowly, the form has pulled away from what seemed its mooring at the marina, becoming distinguishable as an unattached vessel. Now diners around us are starting to take notice, while before all were engrossed in their respective omelettes, cocktails and conversations. Murmurs, pointing, the scraping of chairs across deck boards – signs of astonishment grow as smartphones with inadequate zoom functions attempt to capture what is most certainly a tall four-masted ship sailing north along the coast. Strange and enchantingly anachronistic, the ship dazzles with its white sails billowing against blue skies and waters. "*Oohs*" and "*aahs*" rise from the promenade, as life grinds momentarily to a halt.[1]

In its simplicity, this scene reminds me of both the beauty of an unexpected moment and what fails to be remarkable in Israel-Palestine. I cannot help but contrast the shrugs and nods which met my announcement of the gunship almost two years ago with the curiosity and attention now greeting this sea-borne relic. Polished and smooth, this vessel sails into hearts and dreams, interrupting everyday life with its timeless beauty; grey and unmistakably utile, the blocky form of the gunship melded seamlessly with the tapestry of the familiar, reaffirming threat and insecurity for those who took note. Yet if one peered hard enough into the bright horizon of September 2012, today's beautiful old ship travelled with company, escorted by a retinue of delicate sailboats and one small blocky gunship.

This thesis has attempted to make visible how the scene above is made possible, *how normalcy happens*, what kinds of bargains it entails and at what cost. Admittedly, this tale of omelettes, tall ships and impending departure extracts a small toll relative to its wider context. Yet through the narrative above, we might better understand the ways in which 'events' are assessed value and experienced as impactful or not, demarcating the commonplace and the extraordinary (Highmore 2002; Allen 2008; Berlant 2011). So too we might see how emotions and reactions are not only subjective, but also interpersonal and relational – how a single (re)action becomes multiplied and gains meaning through collective repetition (Butler 1993; Ahmed 2004; Berlant 2008). As well the pervasive quality of militarisation becomes clear, illustrating how objects

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[1] Personal diary, 24 September 2012.

take on or repel charges relative to physical space and lived experience (Enloe 1989; Gonzalez 2007). So too this scene reveals how aspiration shapes awareness, demonstrating the ways in which desire may simultaneously displace and entrench material realities (Berlant 2008; Wiegman 2012). At its widest scope, this tale of pirate ship and horizon implicates those present in the active production and maintenance of stasis – through what we choose to see and what is left invisible, what we choose to say and what remains in silence, what we know and what we knowingly do not know, as the textures of conflict resonate with comfort.

Revisiting Normalcy

As the everyday becomes implicated in power, violence, conflict and politics, it is imperative that we evaluate the mundane, banal, ordinary and 'common sense' explicitly for their *effects* (Mohanty 1988). With this guiding politics – a focus on costs and implications borne of postcolonial and transnational feminist critiques – a diagnostic of apathy has become an investigation into how everyday life produces and maintains domination. This research project began with a single question: what can gender tell us about *'Ma la'asot?'* [What can we do?], about what lies beneath this phrase and sustains its relevance in discussions of Israel's occupation? Through a process of unstitching and re-weaving the threads of everyday Jewish Israeli life in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, this thesis has attempted in part to unpick the problem of normalcy in Israel-Palestine, what it conceals, relies upon and makes possible. To grapple with normalcy among Jewish Israelis in the context of Israel-Palestine is to highlight a significant aspect of protracted conflict, one often elided through a focus on physical violence and spectacular events. Yet ultimately this research does not situate violence *opposite* normalcy. Here normalcy arises *as if* against or in spite of violence, yet very much through its continuing presence – in this thesis I have argued that normality for many if not most Jewish Israelis remains dependent upon conflict.

In the context of Israel-Palestine, existing critical scholarship deftly makes visible the ideological foundations, historical trajectory, political economy, material infrastructure and macro-structural logics of Israel's occupation (see Shafir 1989, 1999; Shlaim 2000, 2010; Lentin 2000, 2008; Abu El-Haj 2001; Shafir and Peled 2002; Masalha 2003; Ron 2003; Zertal 2005; Khalidi 2006; Massad 2006; Pappe

2006; Yiftachel 2006; Weizman 2007; Gordon 2008; Hever 2010; Pappe and Hilal 2010; Abdo 2011; Weizman 2013). Together these approaches draw attention to the ways in which 'the conflict,' practices and policies of occupation, and existing relations of power are anything but temporary. Yet even as this body of scholarship reveals the roots from which current political realities arise and the routes they continue to shape and travel, these accounts lack a fine-tuned analysis of the micro-political relations which produce and maintain the *status quo*. While we might better understand the mechanics of why and how *things stay the same* on macro-political scales, we know little of how stasis takes shape on levels more intimate. If we appraise power as a solely a top-down affair imposed by states and governments upon citizens and subjects we miss what has rendered the term 'conflict' empty to the point of euphemism, what makes its material reality comfortable and particular lives liveable, how it provides the foundation for normality and draws strength from its own resistance. In neglecting micro politics we miss the complex and contradictory tensions which sustain domination, as related at length by Mira, a 30 year-old Jerusalemite activist:

> KN: Can you tell me more about what you meant when you said that it is easy to 'disengage or detach' here? How so?
>
> Mira: At the most basic sense, there's "Listen, I have to live my life." People get up, go to work in the morning, come home at night, veg in front of the television or meet friends. This happens in a very socially specific area – for example, in Rehavia. It was built by old rich Germans and now rich Americans and students live there, along with some of the Germans. They don't see it, what's going in the East of the city.
>
> At the second level, it's easy to disengage… it's a mess. It's difficult because the whole situation is difficult. There may be a dialogue between individuals on the Palestinian side and on the Israeli side, but there are very few real relationships being formed. Because what you have in fact is the Israeli Left radical activists driven by what are basically liberal ideals or a sense of altruism. That's the Israeli side. On the Palestinian side of the interaction they have concrete, practical, particular problems – it's not ideologically driven, they just want their lives back! For example, the wells they dig up because they want their houses back. They're tired of being treated like shit. So you have two kinds of… it's an interesting thing to see it coming together. They're [the Israelis are] coming from a place of being guilt-driven, they think they're not really coming to interact with a peer. They don't consider him [the Palestinian] equal if only because they don't know how to communicate in his

own language, linguistically and culturally. This is awkward and it's easy to slip out of. I feel like it's like an Iggy Pop song: they [the Israelis] are passengers, not really living their [the Palestinians'] lives.[2] I can go to the Sheikh Jarrah tent, sleep next to their homes – their former homes – and watch for the settlers to do something. But I'm still not living their reality. I can afford to go home and sleep in my bed at night. There's something not real about it, it's very artificial. So you can do one of two things: you can go like the Sheikh Jarrah group to all the trials – you can get Hoovered into all the places, go to all the trials, get arrested three times a week. *Or* you can try to find balance.[3]

Normalcy in Israel takes *work* to produce, whether through the pursuit of balance, the material labour of 'others' or in the acts of unseeing, "knowingly not knowing" (Cohen 2001) and rationalisation that allow us to bargain with what underwrites the everyday – what is unpleasant or overwhelming about the world we live in (Berlant 2007, 2008). The words "*Ma la'asot?*" – What can we do? – expressed by Jewish Israeli Leftists when grappling with the seeming intractability of conflict then point to an ambivalence about what underpins normalcy, what sustains and produces it. Conveying political emotions of despair, helplessness and disappointment while posing a practical question of power, this phrase signals a subscription to 'getting by' or living out everyday life through particular types of compromise (Allen 2008; Kelly 2008; Richter-Devroe 2011). As stated in the introduction of this thesis, here 'getting by' does not imply equivalency between Palestinians and Jewish Israelis invested in living out everyday life in relation to ongoing occupation, conflict and violence. Rather, while mechanisms might be shared or mirrored, among Jewish Israelis these practices, processes, ideals and aspirations unfold in differential relation to domination – not as 'subject to' but rather 'productive of.' Indeed, as Michel de Certeau (1984) warns, power is at play not only among structures of practice, but also *within* them. While drawing this distinction seemingly estranges 'Israel' from 'Palestine' and Jewish Israelis from Palestinians, it trains focus on power and the wider effects of normalcy produced and maintained. Framed not only by violent events, an interminably stalled peace process and increasing social and political

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[2] Reference to 'The Passenger' by Iggy and the Stooges, 1977.

[3] Interview in Jerusalem, 30 May 2011; handwritten notes.

conservatism, the horizon of *what we can do* additionally takes shape through investment in everyday life. By revealing the logics which make occupation and domination possible at the levels of subjectivity and sociality, this thesis offers a critical point of intervention.

In looking to normalcy in a context of conflict, this thesis has deliberately defamiliarised the everyday, estranging the ordinary for purposes of drawing attention to the inconspicuous (Highmore 2002: 22). Framed by a historical legacy of and continuing commitment to "telling stories differently" (Hemmings 2011), feminist gender analysis presents an "interruptive strategy" particularly suited to the everyday (Brecht 1964 cited in Highmore 2002: 23). As an aspect of subjectivity, relation of power, and structure of states and societies, gender is integral to the practices of everyday life, if often elided. Gender shapes spaces and encounters, impacts our understandings of selves and others, brings militaries into homes, informs experiences of political action, structures degrees of belonging, and influences our relationship to the politics framing narratives, aspirations and material realties. Indeed, following Cynthia Cockburn (1999 cited in Al-Ali and Pratt 2009: 8) gender "is seen to shape the dynamics of every site of human interaction, from the household to the international arena." To foreground gender as a political and analytical category, then, is potentially to make strange the ordinary from its micro-political base to its macro-political logics, particularly in studies of conflict and domination whose histories of gender-blindness limit the scope of both understanding and possibility.

Through this critical lens, normalcy emerges as a desire for the condition of stasis – in the words of Lauren Berlant (2007: 291) "[…] of being able to be *somewhere* and make a life, exercising existence as a fact, not a project" – not merely surviving, but *living*. So too the pursuit of "ordinary life" among Jewish Israelis reflects a gap between experiences of what 'is' and estimations of what 'ought to be' (Kelly 2008), a tension between reality and ideals. Framed aspirationally, here the dependability, stability and constancy of normalcy remain always out of reach, a destination made possible by failure to arrive. Across diverse contexts, many of us settle for living *as if* (Wedeen 1999; Navaro-Yashin 2002; Allen 2013), for proximity to normalcy provided through narratives, relations and desires – these bargains are made and settled for. Yet within the context of Israel-Palestine, these negotiations and pursuits entrench violent conflict, maintain occupation, advance colonisation and bolster the

seeming divisions separating 'us' from 'them' and 'here' from 'there' in ways which spell erasure, oppression and dispossession.

By engaging with these tensions, this thesis has revealed how gender constitutes a central vector of normativity and normalisation within Jewish Israeli society, providing structure to and rendering manageable lives which necessarily fail to attain an ideal. From the formation of subjectivities to the construction of family units and larger collectivities, hegemonic patterns of gender formed by prevailing relations, norms, codes and roles lend familiarity and stability to a context shaped by narratives and experiences of constant precarity. Constructed in terms of masculinised defence and feminised vulnerability, dominant roles and codes ensure the perceived sanctity of home and domestic seen to underwrite the small worlds and simple lives built ostensibly *against* conflict and violence. Here women-as-mothers and men-as-soldiers shed significant light on the ties binding intimacy with politics, domestic with military and fantasy with reality, as purported dualisms collapse to create approximations of normality. So too prevailing norms and relations maintain the hierarchies of power and privilege which demarcate politics as the realm of men and masculinity, providing enclaves of seeming escape within 'the (feminised) social' whether framed as sites of stasis or transformative potential. Intersecting with vectors of race, class, sexuality, religion and geopolitical location, this thesis has demonstrated how hegemonic patterns of gender provide a thread of stability and familiarity within the everyday, buffering bargains made and reproducing wider relations of power. As the privileges of whiteness, middle-class standing, heterosexuality and secularism intersect with constructions and social meanings of masculinity and femininity in urban Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, a particular material reality emerges: one which confers belonging while simultaneously perpetuating occupation, colonisation and domination.

Of Threads and Tapestries

In the context of Jewish Israeli society, gender assumes its normative form and function largely through the hegemonic narrative of Zionism, whose arc recalls threat, persecution and transcendence (Zertal 2005: 2; Lentin 2000: 188). From historical roots to its current incarnation, the framework of Zionism provides templates for practice and belief which both shape and arise from the relationship between state,

society and subject. Rooted in the historical experiences of European Jewry, Zionist ideology and practice have yielded the patriarchal gender relations which situate men – largely heterosexual, middle or upper-class and Ashkenazi – in public and political spheres, while relegating women to the ostensibly depoliticised private and domestic. While complicated by looking to the relative positions of women and men as they intersect with race, ethnicity and projects of modernisation, the logics and norms of Zionism-as-patriarchal-nationalism continue to entrench male privilege. Shaping the political realm in terms of access to political voice and power, these hegemonic narratives also inform the domestic, tracing a thread which connects public and private while at the same time constructing them as separate and unequal.

Through this connective thread, nationalism, militarism and increasingly neoliberalism – ideologies underwriting the pillars of 'fraternity,' 'security' and 'modernity' – gain purchase in everyday lives. Here, gender possesses the capacity to both regularise and normalise as dominant roles, norms, codes and relations produce a hegemonic "gender order," a significant social structure (Connell 1987: 134-139; Connell 2002: 3). In the context of Jewish Israeli society, this gender order privileges heterosexuality, reinforces the role of women as biological and cultural reproducers, and divides 'us' from 'them' as modern subjects, as a militarised patriarchal nationalism becomes infused with the logics of neoliberalism. Critically, this given gender order creates a seemingly predictable and dependable foundation upon which everyday life might unfold, while remaining dependent upon the evolution of norms, codes, roles and relations.

As this hegemonic gender order differently positions women and men within shared ideological and political frames, so too it impacts spatio-social dimensions, constructing further borders while simultaneously relying upon their collapse. Here, a society divides itself through gendered spatial and social relations, creating and reflecting the hierarchies of power and privilege which demarcate 'us' and 'here' as separate from 'them' and 'there.' Read upon bodies, in space and through encounter, hegemonic patterns of gender maintain the relations of belonging and exclusion so central to the formation of collectivity. Yet at the same time, 'we' remain dependent upon 'them,' necessarily entangled through gendered patterns of labour which raise, feed and nourish in material and symbolic terms. Through processes of unfolding and enfolding, social space is encoded as public/private, masculine/feminine and

political/intimate, "reflecting and affecting the ways in which gender is constructed and understood" (Massey 1994: 179) while affirming normative precarity.

Paradoxically emerging through the constancy of changeable conditions, this precarity draws conflict deeply into the everyday as threat, persecution and transcendence are replayed and reaffirmed on scales more micro. While ultimately granting normalcy its very stability, this precarity requires disavowal or concealment of the terms which create its possibility. Indeed, as Michel Foucault (1998 [1978]) and scholars of the everyday have convincingly demonstrated, power operates best when concealed (Mitchell 1990; Abu-Lughod 1990; Weedon 1997; Navaro-Yashin 2003; Gonzalez 2007; Chalfin 2008; Hoffman 2011; Ochs 2011; Richter-Devroe 2011). In this, patterns of gender not only provide the means of rupture – facilitating the passage of conflict between public and private realms coded as separate – but also produce mechanisms of repair, the tools through which seeming order is restored. In this, joking, bypassing, unseeing and silencing give rise to "small worlds," "elsewheres" and "simple lives," which hold the promise of security, influence and moral consistency.

However even as gender facilitates the repair of ruptured order, it does so incompletely as, again, instability paradoxically serves to stabilise. This precarity extends to resistance and oppositional political action, which risk incorporation into hegemonic narratives, relations and practices by virtue of their very challenge to the dominant order. Here gender informs the organisation and experience of resistance, shaping "rules of the game" and horizons of possibility. While feminist activists have historically led anti-occupation and anti-militarist activism in Israel – through groups such as Women in Black and Machsom Watch – their long-time work increasingly becomes normalised and routinised, part of the scenery and practice of normality. While no less meaningful for its familiarity, these actions are often appraised by young activists as 'depoliticised' and stand as the template *against* which new initiatives are envisioned. More 'muscular' forms of action may then replace ostensibly feminised modes of protest, reproducing patriarchal relations and valuations of politics even as they offer important new avenues of resistance.

As practices of resistance continually adapt to meet these shifting forms of power – creating new limits and rules of the game – the depth of normativity ensures a

presumed division between 'political' and 'social' which relates the former to masculinity and conflict, while associating the latter with femininity and the domestic. Even in periods of temporary suspension or inversion catalysed by mass-mobilisation, such as the 2011 summer of 'social protests' against the cost of living, hegemonic patterns of gender serve to structure discourses, practices, agendas and collectivities, bolstering beliefs in and experiences of the state as sovereign – the sole arbiter of politics, defined in masculine terms of conflict, occupation and violence. While reducing risk of fragmentation within the movement by absolving participants of the need to articulate a position on Israel's occupation and its Palestinian citizens, the pursuit of *apolitical politics* reaffirms politics as the realm of state and government, ultimately entrenching 'normalcy' and relations of domination beneath a mask of transformation.

Rethinking Apathy and Domination

Thus gender emerges as a thread structuring the tapestry of Jewish Israeli normality, at the same time as its hegemonic patterns arise through the interweaving of multiple layers of power which constitute 'ordinary life.' Yet as argued and demonstrated throughout this thesis, analyses cannot stop at the production and maintenance of the everyday or normality. Rather, through the lens of gender analysis we might see more clearly the micro politics of domination in Israel-Palestine, the ways in which consent is socially manufactured through both passivity and action (Gramsci 1971). Not solely a matter of coercion or the imposition of power, domination takes shape and gains purchase through the mundane, the ordinary, the everyday – through our investments, pursuits and desires. Regularised and normalised through the familiarity of gendered roles, codes, norms and relations, power becomes not just "tolerable only on the condition that it mask a substantial part of itself," as suggested by Michel Foucault (1998 [1978]: 86), but makes particular lives liveable, as this thesis has illustrated.

Thus a gendered analysis of political stasis among Jewish Israelis must go beyond the construction of normalcy to consider the ways in which power might implicate even those who oppose and resist in the practices, policies and material realities which underwrite the occupation of the Palestinian Territories and annexed East Jerusalem.

Admittedly, a thesis which details how the textures, complexities and contradictions of normality presented here come to constitute the ultimate *success* of the Zionist project might offer a stronger political tool than an analysis that grapples with the theoretical terrain of political disengagement and inaction. Yet the active constitution of Jewish Israeli normality is but half the puzzle. Rather, this thesis has argued that some Jewish Israelis see normality *for what it is* – they experience and understand the dependency of everyday life upon conflict and their implication within prevailing norms, relations, roles and codes. The query posed here is what the disillusionment, despair, hopelessness, silence, disengagement and inaction of *this* group of Jewish Israelis might tell us about a wider society. What can resistance and action desired yet not pursued tell us about power in Israel-Palestine?

In looking to stasis and the work required for its production and maintenance, this research makes visible the multiple textures of apathy – degrees of division and entanglement, modes of avoidance and action, sites of investment and withdrawal, and instantiations of rupture and repair – while foregrounding the gendered subjectivities and sociality central to domination in Israel-Palestine. Normalcy then becomes a *meeting point*, the site in which everyday life becomes directly implicated in domination. Not only a tension (Kelly 2008) or desire (Berlant 2007, 2008), normalcy critically provides the fabric through which power circulates and gains purchase. Normalcy simultaneously arises from and yields systems of meaning, modes of relating and frames for understanding, which produce and maintain existing material realities. Suffused with hierarchies of privilege and power, normalcy exists not a neutral state of passivity or a 'default' setting, but a practice of living politically charged by aspiration and action.

Ultimately, the yes-no question of whether apathy exists among Jewish Israelis in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem is not the subject of this research. As related earlier, Jewish Israelis vote in high numbers, readily demonstrate their politics in streets and conversations, and care deeply about the worlds they live in; this is not the apathy of total disconnection even as individuals articulate despair, disenchantment and hopelessness. What emerges through the tapestry of everyday life is *active disengagement* – a kind of hoping, trying, building, believing, knowing, relating, engaging and acting oriented toward self-preservation as the surrounding world threatens to shred the fabric of the familiar. At the core of that familiarity is a

stabilising narrative of threat, persecution and transcendence – an ideology turned practice, politics and way of life. In wanting intensely to hold fast to this constancy even as it requires insecurity, individuals and communities knowingly enter into bargains whose terms are increasingly costly, whose politics may grate against their own. Apathy, then, is not solely a matter of political practice or participation (see Rosenberg 1954; Sevy 1983; Boyer 1984; Eliasoph 1997, 1998; Dolan and Holbrook 2001; Hay 2007), but through gender analysis emerges from the accord between conflict and normalcy, politics and intimacy, action and inaction – as these assumed binaries and dualisms collapse, they produce and maintain domination. Importantly, this apathy is *active* and problematises victimhood even as many claim paralysis, impotence and fatigue in the face of politics and conflict. Like resistance and normalcy, apathy takes work to produce.

Yet this active labour ultimately demands responsibility, a tension at the core of domination. In work by Hannah Arendt (2006 [1963]), Frantz Fanon (1963), Max Weber (1978), Walter Benjamin (1978 [1921]), Antonio Gramsci (1971), Louis Althusser (1971), Michel Foucault (1997), Pierre Bourdieu (1977), James C. Scott (1990) Timothy Mitchell (1990, 1991), Carole Pateman and Charles Mills (2007), and the critical body of postcolonial and transnational feminist scholarship upon which this thesis draws, domination both begs and abjures responsibility. What are the implications of domination when explicitly maintained through the practice of *disengagement*, through the will to absolution? Often during interviews in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem I heard the desire for normalcy expressed in plaintive or wistful tones, a wish identified by its speaker as fleeting at the moment of articulation. It seemed to me then that this practice of normalcy – living in pursuit or *as if* – might be *sof ha derech*, "the best of the best" for Zionism and Jewish Israelis living in Israel. Resonant with hegemonic narratives, daily life lived as constant aspiration against the backdrop and through the continuation of conflict seemed the ultimate triumph of Zionist ideology – the Israeli state and its people must never arrive to their destination. Here striving assumes an eternal quality despite the creation of a 'homeland' and provision of security, the stated goals of early political Zionism. Yet as argued above, this is but half the puzzle.

Perhaps the normalcy outlined here can be conceived of as its own form of arrival, its own 'promised land' which upends the persistence of liminality. In this, normality

becomes the site where individuals are *freed from* concerns, pressures, complexities, contradictions and tensions – here work is finally not required. Seemingly void of politics, threat, persecution and conflict, 'normalcy' might exist a conceptual Zion as fatigue with perseverance results from the endless iteration of the hegemonic narrative. "I believe both sides are assholes," Dov said at the end of our interview as he crushed a final cigarette and we finished our glasses of Coca-Cola on the dilapidated couch in his Tel Aviv living room. "That's why I want peace. But what is peace? I want my life to be good and theirs too. I want to consider them like Sweden or New Zealand. There are so many countries that have problems that I don't care or think about, I don't stay awake at night over them. Shitty things happen all the time. But this is our life here."[4] As this thesis has illustrated, like Dov many Jewish Israelis have grown tired of 'triumphing over difficulties' as the hegemonic narrative prescribes – then perhaps their adherence to normalcy actually indicates the *failure* of Zionism rather than its apogee. In order for Zionism to persist as an ideology, practice and politics it requires constant threat; yet the interviews and observations which form the basis of this research project point to the ways in which this relation has grown increasingly unsustainable, requiring ever more labour of maintenance and repair. People are tired, exhausted from living life as a project rather than a fact, wearied by surviving rather than living (Berlant 2007: 291). If so, the continuing 'success' of Zionism may be its very demise – if Zionism cannot be separated from its journey and cycles of repetition, fatigue and arrival might spell destruction.

Then the phrase '*Ma la'asot?*' [What can we do?] may indicate a growing fracture even as it makes visible the ways in which apathy takes shape through active disengagement. Indeed, those who expressed this very sentiment did so precisely in an attempt to convey their *lack* of apathy, the ways in which they continue to care despite hopelessness and feel that they should act despite inefficacy, how they remain aware and opposed to what happens around them. These individuals would be or could be moved to act, they want to act, used to act, feel the need to act, or claim scant knowledge of how to act – in its kinetic and potential energy, action lies at the heart of their tension. I argue that this action might be catalysed by an admission of implication in domination, by the recognition and assumption of responsibility.

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[4] Interview in Tel Aviv, 21 March 2011; handwritten notes.

Throughout interviews in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, the term "responsibility" arose explicitly in combination with politics, conflict and activism – who *is* or *feels* responsible for a given situation regardless of actions taken. Messily entangled with victimhood rather than constituting its binary opposite, responsibility brings costs to bear on those whose privilege implies domination. As an activist with Gisha, Zochrot and B'Tselem,[5] Irit made this connection explicit during our exchange at a Tel Aviv café:

> [People are not interested in being involved] because there is a big personal price. I felt that I paid a big price at the time of the [first] *intifada*. [Involvement] requires you to disconnect from society, you have to deal with things which are unpleasant, you have to take responsibility for things. To sympathise and to do something – they are something else… People live small lives. It's disturbing to get out of these lives and deal with things here – it's all so loaded.[6]

Indeed Asaf, a long-time activist filmmaker, similarly reflected on the relationship between privilege, action, responsibility and cost, stating, "When I think about the occupation I feel responsibility. That's the strongest thing I feel. I feel responsible to do what is in my power to do. Sometimes I do more, sometimes I do less… Now I'm very tired from it. It's exhausting."[7] So too a Jerusalem participant active in queer, Mizrahi and anti-occupation initiatives invoked the "responsibility of privilege" when describing how the willingness to acknowledge and sacrifice this position divides "radical" activism from its "non-radical" cousin, potentially causing loss of common ground.[8] In this way, intimate, collective and political costs emerge as individuals

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[5] Gisha – Legal Centre for Freedom of Movement is a Jewish Israeli activist organisation which uses legal assistance and public advocacy "[…] to protect the freedom of movement of Palestinians, especially Gaza residents"; see http://www.gisha.org/content.asp?lang_id=en&p_id=5, accessed 26 March 2013. Zochrot carries out actions including organised tours, cinematic events, demonstrations and preservation initiatives with the stated goal of "challeng[ing] the Israeli Jewish public's preconceptions and promote awareness, political and cultural change within it to create the conditions for the Return of Palestinian Refugees"; see http://zochrot.org/en, accessed 26 March 2013. B'Tselem – The Israeli Information Centre for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories focuses on documentation and aims to "[…]educate the Israeli public and policymakers about human rights violations in the Occupied Territories, combat the phenomenon of denial prevalent among the Israeli public, and help create a human rights culture in Israel"; see http://www.btselem.org/about_btselem, accessed 26 March 2013.

[6] Interview in Tel Aviv, 13 March 2011; handwritten notes.

[7] Interview in Tel Aviv, 30 March 2011; handwritten notes.

[8] Interview in Jerusalem, 7 June 2011; handwritten notes.

assume responsibility for their participation in domination, again drawing attention to *effects*.

Despite these costs, responsibility continues to hold promise for political action as it breaks cycles of repetition in ways which might resist repair. While I have indeed argued throughout this thesis that repairs to ruptured order are necessarily incomplete or partial – catalysing further processes of rupture – in a context of domination the assumption of responsibility potentially creates a platform for solidarity. In keeping with the feminist politics, methodology and commitment driving this research project, mapping the mechanisms through which normality and domination are secured may produce critical points of intervention (Hemmings 2011: 20), opening doors to possibilities once deemed beyond the boundaries of imagination. Indeed, the weft and warp comprising the fabric of this thesis in part illustrate how "[…] narratives are meaning-making structures," which produce not only normality and sociopolitical reality, but also counter-narratives that allow us to envision the future differently (Lentin 2000: 2, 21, 24). Through this radical potential, acknowledgement of one's implication in occupation, discrimination, conflict and violence without reliance upon claims to victimhood, indoctrination or powerlessness opens doors to new political alliances, new movements and partners, even as it exacts potentially heavy tolls.

These solidarities must defy the politics of nation, race, class, gender, ethnicity, generation, religion and sexuality by constantly engaging in self-critique and processes of opening and inclusion – they cannot operate within the confines of privilege even as they will incompletely transcend these limits. From land-based rights movements by Palestinian citizens of Israel (Plonski 2014) to legal challenges brought by both Jewish Israelis and Palestinians (Weizman 2013), to international Boycott Divest and Sanction initiatives[9] and the Palestinian Campaign for the Academic and Cultural Boycott of Israel,[10] a radical politics is beginning to hold not only the Israeli state to account, but also Jewish Israeli society. Those willing to assume responsibility might join in this critical mass gaining shape and strength within and beyond the borders of Israel-Palestine, translating active disengagement into new forms of political relationality – while responsibility indeed requires a degree

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[9] See http://www.bdsmovement.net, accessed 28 March 2013.

[10] See http://www.pacbi.org, accessed 28 March 2013.

of disconnection, as Irit stated above, it may open doors to other constellations of community. Indeed, as this thesis has demonstrated how domination articulates with hegemonic patterns of gender, feminist struggles aimed at substantive political, economic and social change in Israel-Palestine emerge as *necessarily* bound up with movements against occupation, racism, colonialism and capitalism. Ultimately, through the pursuit of a critical transnational anti-racist politics we might collectively know arrival; 'Israel-Palestine' might become a single secular multi-national democratic state, rather than a conceptual state of mind.

The Road's End

As this radical possibility holds promise, this thesis has detailed precisely the deeply rooted obstacles to its realisation. Even as *active disengagement* might produce the very platform upon which solidarities, alliances and new states may one day be built, the processes, practices and beliefs unfolding within these pages immediately present greater difficulty than potential. In this thesis I have detailed the ways in which richly textured apathy materialises at the intersection of history, ideology and encounter, through the entanglement of self, family and community, in the assumed interstice between politics and society; so too I have illustrated how the material and political realities of domination arise through discursive, psycho-social and relational dimensions. In doing so, this thesis has attempted to clarify the micro-political logics of occupation and colonisation which operate even in resistance, revealing how consensus is 'won' through hegemony as the action/apathy binary becomes blurred.[11] Yet the political and analytical lens of gender analysis has allowed the complex fabric of everyday life to be understood as a pattern of interwoven threads, stitched tightly but indeed capable of being re-woven through a politics of responsibility.

Political apathy as active disengagement – as investment, caring, building, knowing and doing – is not unique to Jewish Israelis living in Tel Aviv and West Jerusalem, nor is it solely characteristic of Jewish Israeli society, albeit bearing particular costs in Israel-Palestine. Increasingly, the term 'apathy' appears as a descriptor for individual

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[11] Thanks to Adam Hanieh for his comments at the SOAS Centre for Palestine Studies research student seminar held on 12 March 2013.

and collective responses to *what should move us* across a range of contexts and issues, from OECD member states (Eliasoph 1998; Hay 2007) to the MENA region before the uprisings of 2010 and 2011 (Diab 2009; al-Werfalli 2011), from global climate change (Karpf 2012) to deepening civil war in Syria (Monajed 2012).[12] These wider frames implicate each one of us in the production and maintenance of apathy and domination, in the systems, structures and relations which confer privilege and facilitate the circulation of power as *status quo*. Yet beneath any seeming lack of interest, weakness of will and subscription to fatigue or helplessness, we never cease to act. While we may *do* and *strive* in differential spheres of influence, the effects of our engagement ripple to broader frames and contexts – action in one site or form may indeed translate to inaction in others.

Then this thesis concludes in a flurry of tensions old and new: the yes-no matter of whether apathy indeed exists among Jewish Israelis goes largely unanswered; the project creates its own moments of rupture, potentially at risk of reproducing the precarity so central to Jewish Israeli normalcy; a path to transformation emerges explicitly through the delineation of its impediments. Yet with focus trained on the centrality of gender to normalcy, apathy and domination in a context of protracted conflict, new means, modes and logics become clear, even as new tensions emerge to confront us with shifting limits and contradictions. As Michel Foucault (1998 [1978]: 86) reminds, "[Power's] success is proportional to its ability to hide its own mechanisms" – my hope is that in revealing these mechanisms this thesis offers a point of intervention, contributing to new avenues to transformation in Israel-Palestine.

May one road's end become a new beginning.

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[12] My citation of the final source listed here – Monajed 2012 – is not to say that I support international intervention in Syria; rather it is to draw attention to the use of the term 'apathy' to describe international reactions to ongoing violence and conflict in this context.

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