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# Finding Palestine, Finding Ourselves: a Philosophy of Occupation, Narrative, and Peace

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# FINDING PALESTINE, FINDING OURSELVES

A PHILOSOPHY OF OCCUPATION, NARRATIVE, AND PEACE

by

Sarah E. Decker

April 24, 2017

A Thesis  
Presented to the Faculty of  
Bucknell University  
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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Approved by:



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Adviser: Sheila Lintott



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Department Chairperson: Sheila Lintott

## *Acknowledgements*

To my parents and siblings, for listening to me endlessly ramble about the Middle East at the dinner table, for supporting me in everything I do, and for loving me and instilling in me the importance of loving others.

To my friends, for showing me the meaning of true friendship and for allowing me to travel in your many worlds.

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لن أنساكم أبداً

To my advisor, Sheila Lintott, for your limitless insight, remarkable patience, and moving dedication. Thank you for embracing my chronic habit of procrastination and for inspiring me to always dig deeper. You have taught me to see the connections in everything around me and to always learn and listen along the way.

And to the world's upstanders, may you continue to believe the unbelievable and solve the unsolvable, for as Elie Wiesel once said,

*To remain silent and indifferent is the greatest sin of all.*

## *Preface*

I am interested in the Arabic language and Arab people because I was raised to associate Islam with terror and its people with violence. In my own home, although not marred by explicit prejudice, the Middle East was only ever discussed to the extent that it was a “dangerous place that produced great evil.” Like many Americans, my vision of the Arab world was limited, extending from Aladdin's magic carpet only as far as the bold typeface of headlines in *The New York Times*.

It was an incident in high school that initially woke me up. The thing I remember most clearly is his face. While his body was twisting down the staircase of my high school's English wing, his face was frozen in the reality of what was happening to him. The words of his attackers seemed to bounce around us, “*f\*\*\*ing terrorist!*” I leaned back against the white-tiled walls and watched in silence. Thinking back to September 11th, 2001, when I was in the first grade, I remember the alphabet carpet I was sitting on, crisscross apple-sauce, when my mother appeared at the classroom door. She had watched the collapse of the Twin Towers from our porch. My town, just outside New York City, suffered many losses to the attack. Less obvious is how my community further suffered as intense Islamophobia became deeply embedded and frequently expressed within my community. The violence I witnessed on the staircase in high school, while frozen by fear in silence, is just one example.

As a first-year student in college, I signed up for my first Arabic class on a whim. While the Arabic alphabet and its delicate script are incredibly beautiful, I soon

realized that the root of my infatuation with the language was not just its words, but its people. My professor, Martin Isleem, a scholar from Palestine, spent hours correcting our pronunciation and teaching us unique cultural expressions that illustrated the richness of Arab culture. I remember learning the importance of initially refusing coffee when offered and of engaging in heated debate in an attempt to pay the table's bill at restaurants.

When I decided to study abroad in Madaba, Jordan, although well aware by that time of the prevalence of Islamophobia and the fear/hate of Arabs, the disdainful reactions of my American friends and family shocked me. *Who will be teaching you? ISIS? Do you have to wear a burqa?* I thought about how learning about the actual cultural practices and traditions of Islam— how the hijab represents freedom to many women, and how the *Quran* preaches love and acceptance— allowed me to question the assumptions of my childhood. After witnessing the discrimination and hatred endured by the Arab-American community in my own town and at my university, I developed the aspiration to become fluent in the Arabic language and culture and to help dismantle the stereotypes surrounding Arab representation. Fighting Arab discrimination and Islamophobia, which together shape everything from our presidential campaigns to our foreign policy initiatives, begins by listening to these voices. Learning Arabic taught me many words, but most importantly, it taught me how to listen.

This thesis is my philosophical account of how and why *listening to others*, *learning from others*, and *living with others* is so crucial. My aim is to help reduce the

number and power of dangerous stereotypes and to help foster authentic communication across difference, especially in the context of the Middle East and Western perspectives toward the region. I hope this thesis will do some good. Perhaps it will, as Mohammed says, *the ink of the scholar is more sacred than the blood of the martyr*.

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## *Abstract*

This thesis is a philosophical study of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict employing feminist, epistemological, and social and political philosophy to analyze linguistic processes such as narratives, naming, and stereotype formation. The framework of this thesis is the Wittgensteinian paradox of the *self defined by the other*, according to which individuals are always dependent upon others not merely for the satisfactions of their needs, but for their very conception of self. Following Wittgenstein, I argue that this essential co-dependency is due to the character of our necessarily shared language conventions. Moreover, I apply this framework in an attempt to better articulate the necessary contours of any possible solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Narratives, accounts of a people's memories and experiences that function to connect the past with the present stand at the intersection of the Israeli occupation of Palestine and prospects for peace. Opposing groups often have contradicting collective narratives about the same events, a phenomenon referred to as "dueling narratives." Dueling narratives contain and create images that *other* (as a verb) the opposing side, perpetuating and ingraining an *us vs. them* mentality. Representations of the *other* frequently develop into or further support stereotypes and often contribute to the formation of both implicit and explicit biases.

The complex Israeli and Palestinian "dueling narratives" are informed by reactions to selective humanitarian intervention, the US economic and political

sponsorship of Israel, and the use of the label “terrorist” to characterize exclusively Palestinian, but not Israeli acts. Through stereotypes and bias embedded in language and imagery, Palestinian narratives and corresponding lived realities are misconstrued, obscured, and, often, silenced, creating a significant “moral distance” between Americans and Palestinians and a failure of empathy.

Bridging this distance requires the reconciliation of these dueling narratives and their internal discrepancies, first, through recognizing the complexity of the multiple perspectives at hand. True recognition of *Others* and of the vast diversity of forms and conditions of being human demand the recognition of the *multiplicities* represented in and created by language, which convey many different lived realities constituting what it means to *be human*. In other words, prior to even considering possible solutions to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we must experience, hear, and learn from the lived realities of Palestinians, and these narratives must come from the perspective of empowered and expressive Palestinian voices.

## Introduction

### *On Solving the Unsolvable*

To Alef, the letter  
that begins the alphabets  
of both Arabic and Hebrew—  
two Semitic languages,  
sisters for centuries.

May we find the language  
that takes us  
to the only home there is—  
one another's hearts.

...

Alef knows  
That a thread  
Of a story  
Stitches together  
A wound.

— Ibtisam Barakat

Over the course of seventy years, Palestine's borders have effectively shrunken from the boundaries of the Gulf of Aqaba and Nazareth to the confined, occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank. From a geographical perspective, Palestine has all but disappeared, but its people and their stories remain. Narratives, as accounts of a peoples' memories and experiences, serve to connect the past and the present and stand at the intersection of this conflict — between the Israeli occupation and prospects for peace. Therefore, before we can attempt to address solutions to the seemingly intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, we must take a step back and look at the core problems we have in our *language*, namely within the conflicting Palestinian and Israeli narratives. Due to the

American economic and political sponsorship of Israel, the Israeli narrative has grown to overshadow its Palestinian counterpart. For this reason, I seek to primarily highlight the Palestinian perspective, through the lived realities of Palestinians.

One of the biggest myths about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is the idea that it has been going on for centuries, inevitably and deeply rooted in ancient religious hatreds. While religion *is* involved, the conflict is better understood as a territorial dispute beginning in the early 20th century, centered by the influence of British and American imperialist pursuits, the desire for a Jewish state, the displacement of a people, and the systematic favoring of one narrative over another. Up until the early 1900's, the region along the Eastern Mediterranean that we now refer to as Israel-Palestine had been under Ottoman rule for centuries and included religious diversity, mainly Muslims and Christians with a Jewish minority, all living in relative peace.<sup>1</sup> During this time period, the context of this conflict was changing in two important ways: people within the region were developing a distinct national identity, not as just ethnic Arabs, but as Palestinians; at the same time, in Europe, the Zionist movement was gaining traction among Jews facing religious persecution.<sup>2</sup> The Zionist movement was founded on the concept that Judaism is not just a religion, but a nationality deserving of its own state.<sup>3</sup> After centuries of discrimination, many believed a Jewish state was the only adequate means to safety

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<sup>1</sup> Shafir, Gershon. *Land, labor and the origins of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, 1882-1914*. Univ of California Press, 1996.

<sup>2</sup> Tessler, Mark. *A history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict*. Indiana University Press, 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Goldberg, David J. *To the promised land: a history of Zionist thought from its origins to the modern state of Israel*. Penguin Group USA, 1996.

and that their historic homeland in the Middle East was the ideal location to establish this state. In the decades that followed, thousands of Jews immigrated to Palestine, especially after the atrocities of the Holocaust in 1945, which furthered American and European support for the establishment of a Jewish state.<sup>4</sup>

After a failed UN Partition plan and the breakout of the Arab-Israeli War, the State of Israel was established in 1948, evicting the people occupying the land claimed by the Jews and creating a massive Palestinian refugee crisis, whose numbers have risen to over 5 million today.<sup>5</sup> The following map, using data compiled by the organization *Jewish Voice For Peace*, represents the Palestinian loss of territory over the course of sixty-four years, beginning just before the creation of the Israeli state.<sup>6</sup>

Figure 1



<sup>4</sup> Môris, Bennî. *Righteous victims: a history of the Zionist-Arab conflict, 1881-1999*. Vintage, 1999.

<sup>5</sup> "Palestine refugees." UNRWA. *United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestinian Refugees in the Near East*. Accessed March 17, 2017. <https://www.unrwa.org/palestine-refugees>.

<sup>6</sup> Loss of Palestinian land from 1946-2010. [Map]. (n.d.). In *Jewish Voice for Peace*: Chicago.

Although through official treaty establishments or unofficial implicit agreements, the neighboring Arab states, including Egypt, Jordan, and Syria, have made peace with Israel, the Israeli occupation of Palestine continues today. Alongside the formation of Israeli settlements in the Palestinian territories on the West Bank, Israeli military presence and the formation of a “security” wall has made life for Palestinians in the occupied territories exceedingly difficult. The 280 mile long wall constructed in 2006 along the West Bank negatively affects Palestinian livelihood, limiting access to food, water, medical care, and viable means of economic engagement.<sup>7</sup>

According to *Human Rights Watch*, Israel enforces “severe and discriminatory restrictions on Palestinian’s human rights and it builds and supports unlawful settlements in the occupied West Bank.”<sup>8</sup> These human rights restrictions include the excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators, extra-judicial killings, the practice of punitive home demolitions, and the closure of Gaza, supported by Egypt. The cumulative result is the collective punishment of over 1.9 million civilians and the prevention of infrastructural development and repair.<sup>9</sup> The blockade of Gaza has left over 70% of Gaza’s population completely reliant on humanitarian assistance and, in 2015, the inhabitants received less than half the levels of incoming goods allowed before this closure in 2006.<sup>10</sup> In addition,

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<sup>7</sup> “Israel/Palestine.” Human Rights Watch. Accessed March 17, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine>.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> “Israel and Occupied Palestinian Territories 2016/2017.” *Amnesty International*. Accessed March 17, 2017.

<sup>10</sup> “Israel/Palestine.” Human Rights Watch. Accessed March 17, 2017. <https://www.hrw.org/middle-east/n-africa/israel/palestine>.

Israel has seized control of Palestinian aquifers underneath Gaza, leaving only 10% of Gaza's population with access to safe drinking water.<sup>11</sup> The human rights abuses committed by Israel and the illegality of many of the state's practices are staggering, yet when met by regulatory mechanisms of international law, including UN resolutions and the advisory opinions of the International Court of Justice, the US has used its Security Council veto power to protect Israel from being prosecuted under international law.

As a result of this veto power, granted by its status as a permanent member of the UN's peacekeeping body, the US is uniquely positioned geopolitically in relation to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. An explanation of domestic Arab discrimination, namely through the active perpetuation of American media stereotypes, will illuminate the state's policies abroad. In American television programs, advertisements, and films, ranging from *Disney* animated classics, such as *Aladdin*, to popular television series, such as *Homeland*, Arabs are almost exclusively portrayed as violent criminals, suicide bombers, or generally untrustworthy characters. Moreover, the representation of Arabs typically isolates them within the narrative of the protagonist by placing them outside or beneath generally accepted moral norms. Together, media images help form and maintain collective beliefs about what the Middle East is and who its people are. These beliefs have become internalized, reinforced through repetition in news broadcasting and article headlines, and seem to justify America's foreign policy initiatives that are in conflict with the democratic ethical standard many Americans identify with: humanitarianism.

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<sup>11</sup> "Water Situation Alarming in Gaza." *World Bank*. Accessed March 17, 2017. <http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/feature/2016/11/22/water-situation-alarming-in-gaza>.



Likewise, in American media, the “Middle East” is represented as a vast, monolithic expanse of “-stans,” contorted by Islamic extremism, the oppression of women, undemocratic values, deep hatred for America, and never-ending violent conflict. The distinctions among *Arabs*, *Muslims*, and *Middle Easterners* are often ignored in US media. “Arab” is an ethno-linguistic category identifying people who speak the Arabic language, which in itself has an enormous dialectical diversity. The “Middle East” is an equivocal phrase that refers to a region whose boundaries are highly contested. “Arab” and “Middle Eastern” are not synonymous; countries like Turkey, Iran, and Afghanistan are Middle Eastern, but they are not Arab. “Muslims” are people who practice the religion Islam. Despite common misconceptions, Muslims are not confined to being Arab or Middle Eastern. In fact, Southeast Asia has the largest regional concentration of Muslim people.

In addition to explicit biases, American media stereotypes express and reinforce the implicit biases that exist outside the conscious control of an individual. Ignorance surrounding the distinctions among Arabs, Muslims, and Middle Easterners, concentrated within a monolithic stereotype, can reinforce implicit biases about these social groups. In this manner, stereotypes lead to judgements about the character of *others* that can distort and even conceal the lived realities of those represented. These judgements include delegitimizing the credibility of others, resulting in what Miranda Fricker calls *epistemic injustice*.<sup>12</sup> Character theory, as articulated by John Rawls, accounts for how an

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<sup>12</sup> Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

assessment of moral character is a function of whether or not a person is perceived as morally virtuous.<sup>13</sup> Conceptions of moral character stand at the intersection of issues in normative ethics and empirical psychology. Because approaches to virtue make character and its components central to ethical theorizing, it is critical to frame these philosophical approaches with psychological data involving the perceptions of the character of *others*.

The perpetuation of both implicit and explicit forms of bias is reinforced through the use of narrative. Narrative is a basic human strategy for processing and developing an understanding of experience, situating us in time, process, change, and within complex series of events and happenings.<sup>14</sup> Using the medium of story telling, narratives provide accounts of what happened to a particular people from different perspectives. Collective memory narratives, just one kind of narrative, are biased, selective, and distorted, often omitting certain facts and changing the sequence of events in order to describe a past that is useful for the functioning or even the continual existence of a certain group.<sup>15</sup> This is because the nature of collective memory, as always in flux yet fixed in tone, is controlled by groupthink, making it a particularly unreliable source of information. Shared by group members, collective memory narratives are treated as truthful accounts, including memories of past events as well as more recent, conflict-related events. Daniel Bar-Tal

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<sup>13</sup> Rawls, John. "The independence of moral theory." In Proceedings and addresses of the American Philosophical Association, vol. 48, pp. 5-22. American Philosophical Association, 1974.

<sup>14</sup> Herman, David, James Phelan, Peter J. Rabinowitz, Brian Richardson, and Robyn Warhol. *Narrative Theory*. The Ohio State University Press, 2012.

<sup>15</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. "Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolution, contents, functions and consequences." *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006). P 23.

and Gavriel Salomon argue that “these more recent memories, some of them personal memories that intertwine with the collective memory pool, turn into historical memories the longer a conflict lasts.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, particularly in instances of intractable conflicts such as the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these narratives shape present-day attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors.

In addition to the narrative of collective memory of the past, societies construct narratives about the present, the *ethos*. Bar-Tal and Saloman define the *ethos* as providing “the epistemic basis for the present direction of a society, its major aspirations, goals, means, concerns, and images.”<sup>17</sup> The *ethos* of a people constructs the behavior of society’s members as a coherent and systematic pattern of knowledge within which decisions of leaders and the structure and functioning of the society are justified based on true beliefs.<sup>18</sup> An *ethos* is supported by the collective memory narrative and the same themes appear in both. Opposing groups often have contradicting collective narratives about the same events. For example, two sides of a conflict can view themselves as the victim and the other side as blameworthy. Following Padraig O’Malley, I refer to this particular phenomenon, by which the collective memory narratives and the *ethos* of two groups are conflicting and opposed, as *dueling narratives*.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>16</sup>Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. "Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolvement, contents, functions and consequences." *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006). P 23.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. P 25.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid. P 23.

<sup>19</sup> O'Malley, Padraig. “Dueling Narratives and Addiction to Narratives.” *The Two-state Delusion: Israel and Palestine -- a Tale of Two Narratives*. Print.

Dueling narratives, consisting of elements of both *ethos* and *collective memory*, contain and create images of the opposing side, the *other*, perpetuating an *us vs. them* mentality making conflict seemingly irresolvable. Authoring representations can materialize in common stereotypes, for example the *violent Arab* and the *greedy Jew*, that contribute to the complex process by which even individuals who consider themselves tolerant of a certain group have negative implicit biases towards the group. Naming, the process of whether assigning labels to people, events, or places, plays an enormous role as a functional component of narrative formation. As argued by Julie Peteet, our analytical approaches to lexicons are embedded in historical, political, and cultural frameworks: “Names form part of cultural systems that structure and nuance the way we imagine and understand the world. They embody ideological significance and moral attributes and can be consciously mobilized for various projects of power.”<sup>20</sup> Naming practices and the influence of language formation are major undercurrents of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and its dueling narratives. In what follows, I analyze the interlocking mechanisms of collective memory, narrative, ethos, naming, and bias through the framework of Israeli and Palestinian dueling narratives and their perpetuation of the *us vs. them/ we vs. they mentality*.

In this thesis, I utilize a theoretical framework within which narrative, language use, and naming processes are central to understanding how the particular combination of selective humanitarian intervention, bias, and stereotyping that we see in the US

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<sup>20</sup> Peteet, Julie. “Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine–Israel conflict.” *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 153.

perceptions of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict results. I aim to offer a comprehensive, philosophical analysis of the ways in which narrative and bias, in the case of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, create a self-perpetuating cycle that justifies Israel's occupation of Palestine and effectively prevents the prospects for peace. My argument unfolds in five chapters and draws on social and political philosophy, ethics, feminist theory, and epistemology.

In the first chapter, I analyze several theories that conceptualize the relationship between the self and the other, including Miranda Fricker's examination of "epistemic injustice," José Medina's discussion of the importance of "elsewhere," and, most centrally, Ludwig Wittgenstein's discussion of the paradox of *the self defined by the other*. Together these theories clarify the ways in which empathy and inclusive language use mutually inform one another. In the second chapter, I provide a brief account of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, informed by both Israeli and Palestinian narratives of the events leading up to the reality of the dispute today. The third chapter expands upon this timeline with an analysis of the inner-workings of the Israeli occupation and its American economic sponsorship. Particular attention is given to a philosophical analysis of the naming of persons as *terrorists* or their acts as *terrorism*, as well as the use of "terrorist" to identify certain groups and not others. The fourth chapter analyzes the philosophy behind American foreign humanitarian intervention and how this intervention can result in cynicism towards the "human rights industry." This philosophical analysis is informed by theories of international relations and

corresponding accounts of the conflict itself, revealing the highly political consequences of the dueling Israeli and Palestinian narratives.

These narratives exist in a cyclical relationship with both implicit and explicit forms of bias, through means including American media's use of Arab stereotypes. I understand both the beginnings and the consequences of dueling narratives, psychological components of bias are further contextualized in the fifth chapter. This chapter also features the results of a survey conducted and quantitatively analyzed using *Qualtrics* survey tools. Although the results of this survey are limited by its small sample size of Bucknell University students, the data reveals patterns of behavior that correspond to those found in psychological and philosophical studies involving bias formation. The results of this survey support my recommendation of how best to approach the seemingly intractable Israeli-Palestinian conflict, which is expanded upon in a final, concluding chapter. Ultimately, my thesis is that voicing the lived realities of Arab people is a necessity and an effective tool against Arab stereotypes because it requires an integration of the self and the other.

My aim is not to advocate for a direct solution to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Instead, I approach the daunting question of how to solve the seemingly unsolvable conflict, conceiving of an approach rooted in the ways we use language to construct and support the dueling narratives that contribute to this conflict's intractability. Biased and often politically manipulated discussions of Israel and Palestine must be reckoned with before any feasible solution can even be entertained. In this manner, I argue that by

working to eliminate the perpetuation of the *we vs. they* mentality essential to US foreign policy in the Middle East, we can begin to reconcile the dueling Israeli and Arab narratives, and perhaps unearth the lived realities of Palestinians.

## Chapter I

### *The Philosophy of Peace: Language and Empathy*

“Returning violence for violence multiplies violence, adding deeper darkness to a night already devoid of stars. Darkness cannot drive out darkness. Only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do that.”

— Martin Luther King, Jr.

When conflicts become intractable, the language used to describe acts of war and lapses in humanitarianism pervade everyday life, twisting our understandings of events and further entrenching our conflictual positions. As a tactical force of narrative formation, language is used to identify and label people, places, and events, as a way to systematically separate *them* from *us*, *there* from *here*, *that* from *this*, and *then* from *now*. Within this process, by drawing divisions we can fail to recognize our connections and even dependence upon those around us. Thus, subjective self-understanding is dependent on our relationship with others because it is through the conventions of language and processes of identification-based negation that we come to understand who we are. We witness this process at many of the world’s greatest political fault lines, in which deceptive language processes stall peace processes and even degrade the meaning of the word *peace* itself. This is evident in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, in which decades of naming techniques and selective applications of international law have effectively prevented an empathetic understanding of the suffering of Palestinians. By exploring the paradox of the ways in which the self is defined by the other, the work of philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein has particularly important implications for our understanding of



both self-knowledge and knowledge of others, in terms of recognizing the epistemic value of the *other* side.

### **The Wittgensteinian Paradox: The Self Defined by the Other**

Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* deals with the problems of philosophy in terms of the concept that the *logic* of our language is misunderstood. The connection between world, language, and thought rests in the logical form they share. Wittgenstein constructs a sense of the self that is defined by this connection, stating that "I am my world."<sup>21</sup> In this manner, there is no *subject* that can think or form ideas independent of the world. Wittgenstein therefore argues that the subject is "a limit of the world" in such a way that the subject does not *belong* to the world. This is further exemplified by the use of a visual field diagram, by which the eye (*Auge*) itself is not a part of the visual field because nothing in the visual field allows one to infer that it is seen by an eye.



Thus there really is a sense in which philosophy can talk about the self in a non-psychological way.

What brings the self into philosophy is the fact that 'the world is my world'.

---

<sup>21</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by Pears, D.F., McGuinness, B.F. Routledge Classics, 2001. Print. P 68.

The philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, the limit of the world — not a part of it.<sup>22</sup>

When the eye in this diagram is understood as the *self*, it is clear that the self is not subjectively experienced as within the world to the extent that it can stand independently. Rather, the self, as a metaphysical subject, is the limit of the world, based on one's relationship to the world-thought-language connection and its human conventions.

Therefore, the conventions of language use and their depth take part in the formation of the self. In his *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein adjusts his focus in the *Tractatus* to show that it is the *language use* of the logic that is forgotten. This shift in focus introduces the complexities of language that act as the basic common thread of our life. It is language that allows us to think and speak. Without the harmony of language that sets up the philosophical problems of dualism, tragedy, and the concept of *my* existence, we couldn't have the context to struggle with them. The following remark demonstrates Wittgenstein's understanding of the subjective life and its dependence on the conventions of language use.

Well, everyone tells me that he knows what pain is only from his own case! — Suppose that everyone had a box with something in it which we call a “beetle.” No one can ever look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at *his* beetle. — Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. — But what if these people's word “beetle” had a use nonetheless? — If so, it would not be as the name of a thing. The thing in the box doesn't belong to the language-game at all; not even as a *Something*: for the box

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<sup>22</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. Translated by Pears, D.F., McGuinness, B.F. Routledge Classics, 2001. Print. P 68. (5.641).

might even be empty. —No, one can ‘divide through’ by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is. That is to say, if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of ‘object and name’, the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant.<sup>23</sup>

In this analogy, the “beetle” comes to simply represent what is inside everyone’s box, alluding to what is inside everyone’s mind, as a sense of the subjective *self*. Since there is no way to see what is inside another person’s box, or even to determine if there is anything at all, the usage of the word “beetle,” if it is to have any meaning, would refer to “what is inside the box” or “what is inside one’s subjective mind” — the self. The subjective life is only real because we preserve the basic agreements we have. Even when we speak of the subjective or the self, we are using this term based on a shared, public discourse of what it represents. Our sense of internal *self* is not independent of language because our inner lives depend on the context of its usage. Therefore the meaning of such sensation words as *pain* or *color* is not given by referring to some private, inner thing. Therefore, the actual beetle in the box (what it looks like or if it even exists) is irrelevant to the shared usage of the word.

Wittgenstein’s conclusion that “the thing in the box doesn’t belong to the language-game at all,” parallels his concept of the self in the *Tractatus*. Just as the subject (the beetle) does not belong to the language (or the ‘world’), the self is not a subject *in* the world, but rather the limit of the world. Wittgenstein further clarifies this in combination with considerations of the depth of convention. As clarified by the analogy,

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<sup>23</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Anscombe, G.E.M. Hacker, P.M.S. and Schulte, Joachim, Revised 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009. Print. P 106. (293.).

there can't be more to the public meaning of our knowledge than we are capable of teaching each other, and the private 'beetle' has no role in that public teaching. The meaning or knowledge (world-language-thought) is limited by the subject. *But what mechanism regulates the correctness of the meanings talked about through language use?* Wittgenstein points to the forms of "being human" and the depth of convention as determining the correct or incorrect instances of language usage.

"So you are saying that human agreement decides what is true and what is false?"  
 —What is true or false is what human beings *say*; and it is in their *language* that human beings agree. This is agreement not in opinions, but rather in forms of life.<sup>24</sup>

Human agreement does not determine what is true and false, but rather reflection on the conditions of our forms of life makes true and false possible. The conditions of possibility are within language use. Therefore, while our language is shared, there exists a *multiplicity* in the conventions of language and the ways in which language is used. We can use similes, metaphors, imagery, and other language conventions differently, but they are all based in the *forms* of our language— the *forms of life*.

The forms of life that coincide with the depth of our human convention in language use are further elucidated in Wittgenstein's examination of the temptation of the hidden. The temptation to find what is hidden is related to the notion that there is a singular "essence" of language, something that is beneath the surface of its every day conventions and usage.

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<sup>24</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Anscombe, G.E.M. Hacker, P.M.S. and Schulte, Joachim, Revised 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009. Print. P 94. (241.).

This finds expression in the question of the *essence* of language, of propositions, of thought. —For although we, in our investigations, are trying to understand the nature of language — its function, its structure — yet *this* is not what that question has in view. For it sees the essence of things not as something that already lies open to view, and that becomes *survivable* through a process of ordering, but as something that lies *beneath* the surface. Something that lies within, which we perceive when we see *right into* the thing, and which an analysis is supposed to unearth.<sup>25</sup>

In this remark, Wittgenstein claims that his investigations seek to understand the usage, rules, and conventions that exist within world-language-thought and their connection.

The agreement in the *forms of life* and the condition of *being human* (the type of creature that uses language) are meaningful to understanding the nature of language. However, the desire to find the singular essence of language, as something wholly independent of language use, Wittgenstein argues is misplaced.

This idea of the essence as something hidden can be used to frame Wittgenstein's depiction of the self, and the desire to have a *private essence* of one's self. However, as demonstrated by language use, the idea of a private essence is impossible because of the dependency we have on language and the depth of convention, which together ensure the possibility of even talking about things like *the self*. Wittgenstein rejects the possibility of a private language to relate the concept of the hidden to the relationship between world, thought, and language.

A human being can encourage himself, give himself orders, obey, blame, and punish himself; he can ask himself a question and answer it. So one could imagine human beings who spoke only in monologue, who accompanied their

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<sup>25</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Anscombe, G.E.M. Hacker, P.M.S. and Schulte, Joachim, Revised 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009. Print. P 49. (92.).

activities by talking to themselves. — An explorer who watched them and listened to their talk might succeed in translating their language into ours. (This would enable him to predict these people's actions correctly, for he also hears them making resolutions and decisions.)

But is it also conceivable that there be a language in which a person could write down or give voice to his inner experiences — his feelings, moods, and so on — for his own use? — Well can't we do so in our ordinary language? — But that is not what I mean. The words of this language are to refer to what only the speaker can know — to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language.<sup>26</sup>

The concept of a private language, having usage and meaning completely distinct from that of others, is not possible. In order to prove this, Wittgenstein analyzes the preconditions of language use as they relate to shared phenomena. A private language would be inherently unteachable because it is understandable only by a single individual. Yet, language is governed and driven by rules because these rules and conventions set limits and enable meaning and understanding. When rules are obeyed and practiced, this specific interpretation depends on specific human agreements in action and judgment, which in turn are established by a criteria of correctness and incorrectness. As such, this criteria is learnable and therefore teachable, preventing a private language from ever being able to be practiced, making *private language* an oxymoron.

Wittgenstein identifies a potential hole in this logical construction — the possibility for a subjective justification as a criterion of correctness. However, subjective justifications, like memory for example, cannot alone show that a mistake has or has not been made because they rely on contexts and frameworks provided by the relationship between

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<sup>26</sup> Wittgenstein, Ludwig. *Philosophical Investigations*. Translated by Anscombe, G.E.M. Hacker, P.M.S. and Schulte, Joachim, Revised 4<sup>th</sup> Edition, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2009. Print. P 95. (243.).

world, thought, and language — and the *others* involved in these frameworks. Therefore, Wittgenstein concludes that there cannot be a private language, not by telling us, but by asking us to imagine the possibility of such a language and discovering the logical fallacy that results.

Despite the fact that a private language is not logically attainable, its appeal remains, based in the temptation of the hidden, in order to create a defining boundary between oneself and others. Throughout his *Claim of Reason*, Cavell struggles with the question of how skepticism introduces the problem of others, eventually concluding that Wittgenstein is not providing a refutation, but rather is describing the *truth* of skepticism. Philosophical skepticism can be related to the concept of self because it is based in the notion that we tend to perceive others as outside of ourselves and therefore open to doubt and problems of knowing. Therefore, Wittgenstein concludes, others are needed for skepticism as a condition for the outside — to talk, write, and doubt requires an acknowledgment of others. It is critical to understand that we cannot have skepticism without others, thereby accepting a basic view of humanness by which the very idea that we doubt the knowledge of others presupposes their existence. In the same way that others make skepticism possible, privacy and the appeal of a private language are not attempts to exclude others but rather attempts to use the notion of others to appeal to an inside *something* — an *essence*.

Cavell further explores Wittgenstein's deconstruction of the role of others in language use by looking towards the purpose of asking whether or not we can imagine a private language.

So what is the point of "trying" to "imagine" a "language" which "another person" "cannot" "understand"? Evidently, the effort is to illuminate something about the publicness of language, something about the *depth* to which language is agreed in. I would like to say: its point is to release the fantasy expressed in the denial that language is something essentially shared.<sup>27</sup>

In this way, we cannot even *think* about the possibility of a private language without the shared conventions of language. Cavell's remark supports the concept that the self is inherently dependent on the depth of convention, and therefore others, because of the requirements of language use and the logic that unites world, thought, and language. Yet, *why are we so tempted to hold on to this idea of privacy?* Wittgenstein claims that this temptation, as the desire to "find the hidden," is a result of a fear of inexpressiveness or a fear of what we express being out of our control. Cavell revisits this tension, stating that "I was led to express the fantasy of inexpressiveness as a sense of powerlessness to make myself known, and this turned out, in pursuit of the idea of a private language, equally to be a powerlessness to make myself known to myself."<sup>28</sup> This is directly related to the idea of a powerlessness to make oneself known to oneself and to others through a sense of control, as the negation of privacy.

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<sup>27</sup> Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 344.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. P 352.



Both the desire to be private and the fear of not being understood result from the need to have control over one's own essence. Wittgenstein actively rejects the fantasy of the hidden, expressed through the desire for a private language, because the inner and the outer are already deeply intertwined, as a precondition for this insistence to even make sense. The fantasy of the private language attempts to enforce a connection between inner and outer, but an inside means an outside, so this insistence mistakes both the conditions of possibility and the usage of language. This results in a loss of talking about an inside *something* in a meaningful way, and the fantasy of private language fails. Consequently, as Cavell states "the wish underlying this fantasy covers a wish that underlies skepticism, a wish for the connection between my claims of knowledge and the objects upon which the claims are to fall to occur without my intervention, apart from my agreements."<sup>29</sup> Both skepticism and the failure of the fantasy of a private language are based in a desire to escape the foundational necessity of the other. Such an escape would enable words to be directly connected to objects without the shared conventions of language use.

This fantasy appeals to the same notion that drives skeptics to want a firm unshakable foundation — an effort to gain control of one's life. We want to own our words like private property, yet as Wittgenstein evaluates in the *Tractatus* and in the *Investigations*, this concept is implausible because our language is shared and is fluidly constructed by the depth of our human conventions. To say that one owns one's words is

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<sup>29</sup>Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 352.

to defy the very meaning of language and its usage. This same error is seen in the fantasy of the private language and the skepticism surrounding the *other*.

A dynamic application of this error is demonstrated through Cavell's explanations of phenomena including racism and artificial intelligence.

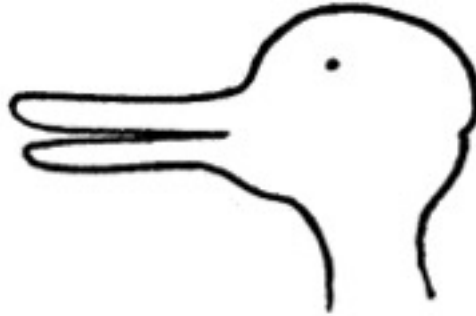
When religion and morality are moved to speak of duties to others simply as persons, this does not imply that duties owed to them under their special titles are as it were duties to non-persons. It is sometimes imperative to say that women or children or black people or criminals are human beings. This is a call for justice. For justice to be done, a change of perception, a modification of seeing, may be called for. But does it follow that those whose perceptions, or whose natural reactions, must suffer change have until that time been seeing women or children or black people or criminals as something *other* than human beings?<sup>30</sup>

Cavell notes that the way we treat a king maintains his humanness, yet when oppressing individuals, such as women or black people, a "call for justice" requires a reaffirmation that these people are persons with moral standing and moral duties owed to them by others. Such a recognition may require a new perspective. It may require "seeing the duck as the rabbit." As a complication, Cavell questions whether or not these initial perceptions that allowed black people or women to be treated unjustly were in fact based on seeing them as non-human. Cavell concludes that if it makes sense to speak of seeing human beings as human beings then as a condition of possibility, it makes sense to imagine that a human being may lack the capacity to recognize *others* as humans.

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<sup>30</sup> Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 372.

Here, we begin to see an interesting and somewhat troubling consequence of Wittgensteinian conceptions of the *other*. Cavell references Wittgenstein's concept of face recognition in the case of the duck-rabbit.



When we see this image, we contemplate a face and then after noticing its likeness to another, decide that it is in fact the face of a duck or the face of a rabbit. This “noticing an aspect” process implies that when we *do* notice similarities between ourselves and others, we notice that human beings are human beings. Yet, this appears to give us the *option* to notice such a thing, implying that there can be cases where such a recognition is not made. Cavell critiques the burden of this concept, stating that “What is implied is that it is essential to knowing that something is human that we sometimes experience it as such, and sometimes do not, or fail to; that certain alterations of consciousness take place, and sometimes not, in the face of it.”<sup>31</sup> The idea that it is possible for someone to not recognize another person as a human being is troubling to theories such as systematic

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<sup>31</sup> Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 379.

racism, which are based in the idea that racism is an active exclusion — the recognition that someone is human but the choice to not treat them as such.

In these instances, when people deny certain rights to others or treat them as fundamentally different from themselves, such individuals are put on the defensive — the burden of prejudice always falls on the *other*. Yet, in these cases, the burden should be on the perceiver, whose prejudice dehumanizes or at best fails to humanize, and not the subject of discrimination. Racists don't miss anything about others, rather they miss something in *themselves*: a recognition of their reliance on the other and the human connections this dependency implies. Our failure to see this connection is related to our fear of losing control over ourselves and thus of our essences. Denying certain rights despite recognizing humanness is the logical equivalent of excluding others from that humanness in order to appeal to a special internal essence. Yet “othering” can also be interpreted as a process of self identification, through erasing and distancing what is seen as dissimilar to oneself.

In order to understand the conflicting implications of this idea, we must examine other Wittgensteinian constructions of the self-other relationship and the paradoxes created. As mentioned, the appeal of a private language is *not* an attempt to exclude others but rather the use of the notion of others to appeal to an inside *something* — an *essence*. Therefore, if we perceive a racist's perception of another as similar to the mental processes of the desire for privacy, this perception must not be an attempt to exclude but rather an appeal to use the other to identify the self. This is consistent with Wittgenstein's

assertion that the other is dependent on the self and gives rise to an associated paradox — though the racist is oppressing the *other* with an assumption of his own private and independent “essence,” the racist remains reliant on the other as the source of self-identification. Therefore, although, as Cavell points out, there are disturbing aspects of Wittgenstein’s view, namely that it is possible for a human to find another human not-human, this concept is consistent with the appeal of a private language.

Thus, we see how Wittgenstein’s philosophy of language elucidates how a failure to recognize and perceive our dependency and connection to others has severe consequences beyond the failure itself. Cavell states that “we should not make life easy for ourselves here, because we are to test, not merely the limits of our identity, but the limits of our humanity. Being human is the power to grant being human.”<sup>32</sup> In order to recognize a human other, a capacity for projecting humanity on another being is a necessary precondition. This capacity is internal to the individual. Deciding whether or not a thing is human is similar to deciding whether the image is in fact a duck or a rabbit. Cavell describes this as a “power” that humans have, but Wittgenstein simply refers to it as a burden — the responsibility to identify an *other* as human. Although *power* and *burden* have different tones, they both underscore the importance of the relationship between self and other. Moreover, the capacity to see others as human despite difference with one’s self is parallel to the precondition of language conventions. Perhaps, just as in

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<sup>32</sup> Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 397.

the case of the beetle and of the field of vision, where the subject limits the language and the self limits the world, the tensions created by the paradox of self defined by the other limit humanity.

Biases are reflections of ourselves and evidence of our own capacities to recognize and identify humanness because such a failure involves a misunderstanding of the shared capacities of language. The concept of the self is only made possible by the very character of language and the depth of its convention. Language is always before us and between us, as a context and a necessary precondition of who we are. I depend on *you* to figure out who I am, and this co-dependence is the source of our collective fear that we cannot be both unique and understood. As Cavell argues, doubt, anxiety, success, failure, and living with others are the given of our lives, not problems to be solved. Readers of Wittgenstein often reject his ideas because they believe so firmly in their own *specialness* — *I'm special but no one understands me*. Wittgenstein gives us a different sense of self, a self never removed from the other. This is inconsistent with the realization of the fantasy of a private language because we seek to control our lives in order to have an essence that we are close to. In Wittgenstein's philosophy, the exclusive character of our lives is lost. Subjective life is only real because we maintain the basic agreements we have. We are in a way formed and defined by others and this terrifies us because it means we lack control over the alleged "essence" we are closest to — ourselves. When we attempt to define ourselves by eliminating others we misunderstand the very basis of ourselves. This is the paradox of the self defined by the other.

### Language and Action

The most important points to be taken from an analysis of the Wittgensteinian paradox involve an understanding of the ways in which language, as a shared aspect of our *being human*, creates an inseparability between the self and the other, and consequently between talk and action. The process of defining ourselves by eliminating or negating those around us relies on the attempt to use language in an exclusive or private way. This in turn has very real implications in our actions because, as Richard Fleming claims in *Evil and Silence*, “talking, whether asking questions, giving directions, or reporting events, is doing something and acting in some particular way.”<sup>33</sup> Fleming uses a Wittgensteinian sense of the connection between talk and action, as “identified with the overlapping, criss-crossing fibers of all things,” in order to explore their implications in the morality of our lives.<sup>34</sup> Both individual and collective action may not be just because what we say and do is not always justified, and “understanding the possible justifications for our actions and talk requires careful, quiet reflection on our conversations with others, including the conditions of possibility for such a life.”<sup>35</sup> This analysis concludes that revelations and justifications of the self, while often placed at odds, are both efforts that are linked by their common understanding of moral confrontation “as that of one person’s examination of another.”<sup>36</sup> In this manner, both are

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<sup>33</sup> Fleming, Richard. *Evil and Silence*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010. P 5.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid. P 5.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid. P 11.

<sup>36</sup> Ibid. P 12.

connected in their reliance on the conversation that is necessary to assess my life and that is meant to make myself intelligible to others “by way of making myself intelligible to myself.”<sup>37</sup>

As argued by Fleming, determining the justice of our actions, as inherently reliant on the conventions of our language use, requires a space for self-reflection through silence. Fleming states that “Words and silence are materially inseparable. This is the fact of language.”<sup>38</sup> A “withholding of our words” can or cannot be placed and used in specific contexts, yet *is silence really meaningful?* Silence is not as commonly understood in opposition to words. It continually expresses the facts of language because together silence and speech provide conditions for meaningful sound. This conception of silence is loosely based on Wittgenstein’s claim that there is no private language by which we cannot use words that have never been repeated — language represents the shared conditions of possibility for all that we say and do and all that we do not say and do not do and “we encounter the communal, the other, in our every utterance and in each silence.”<sup>39</sup> Therefore, silence *is* meaningful as an opposition to speech, and is used in very particular, context-based ways.

Fleming redirects his Wittgensteinian analysis of the linguistic purpose of silence by focusing on the relationship between speechlessness and evil. He states that “the fact

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<sup>37</sup> Fleming, Richard. *Evil and Silence*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010. P 12.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid. P 62.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid. P 64.



of evil reduces us to silence. Whereas the problem of evil asks for talk, action, and solutions, silence and the threat of paralysis inhabit the fact of evil.”<sup>40</sup> Sometimes when confronted by staggering levels of what Fleming calls “just plain evil,” we are reduced to silence. In these cases, we recognize evil, but talking is required in order to eliminate evil because the justice of our actions must be assessed through careful quiet reflection *followed by* conversation with others. Here, Fleming provides a clear link between the meaning of silence and its ability to enable the existence of evil. When confronted by numbing silence in the face of evil “such predicaments push us and others to engage our selves, reflect on and wonder how to talk for ourselves and to others.”<sup>41</sup> This leads evil to either be eliminated or accepted. Evil is accepted when we fail to see the ties between *us* and *them* — when we fail to grasp the Wittgensteinian paradox of the self defined by the other.

Fleming states that “the contrasting positions [accepting vs. eliminating evil] reflectively invite a distinction between epistemological and metaphysical uses of the concept of evil — a distinction, that is to say, between those uses of evil that demand its elimination and those that are resigned to its existence.”<sup>42</sup> In such instances when it is recognized and accepted, evil is not named as “evil” and language bends to accommodate, leaving the victims voiceless within the confines of language use.<sup>43</sup> This

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<sup>40</sup> Fleming, Richard. *Evil and Silence*. Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2010. P 64.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. P 65.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid. P 20.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid. P 19.

philosophical understanding also has concrete implications in the social psychology theory involving the *bystander effect*, by which an individual witnesses a wrongful act and does nothing in response.<sup>44</sup> This form of silence represents what Fleming would refer to as an acceptance of evil, resulting cases of epistemic injustice by which the victim of this process of *othering* is left excluded from our shared language.

### **Epistemic Injustice and Our Linguistic Obligations to Others**

The Wittgensteinian interconnections between talk-action and self-other as the central basis of Fleming's analysis can be directly related the work of Miranda Fricker involving the philosophical intersections of ethics and epistemology. Fricker argues that there is a distinctively epistemic type of injustice by which someone is wronged specifically in their capacity as a knower.<sup>45</sup> This form of injustice is therefore critical to a developed understanding of the oppressive forces of narratives, which contribute to the *knowledge* of a certain group. When we "select" one narrative over another, systematically favoring its nuanced processes of naming and linguistic deception, we discredit the other narrative. This in turn is an act of delegitimizing its speakers by questioning their knowledge. In her analysis, Fricker focuses on two forms of epistemic injustice: *testimonial injustice* and *hermeneutical injustice*. Testimonial injustice occurs when prejudice causes a listener to give a lesser level of credibility to a speaker's voice, while hermeneutical injustice occurs at an earlier stage when a gap in collective

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<sup>44</sup> Garcia, Stephen M., Kim Weaver, Gordon B. Moskowitz, and John M. Darley. "Crowded minds: the implicit bystander effect." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 83, no. 4 (2002): 843.

<sup>45</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007.

interpretive resources puts someone at an unfair disadvantage as they attempt to make sense of their social experiences.<sup>46</sup> An example of testimonial injustice might be that a hiring manager doesn't consider your resume because of your Hispanic last name, while an example of hermeneutical injustice might be that you suffer sexual harassment or assault in a culture that lacks a full recognition of that critical concept. Fricker notes that “we might say that testimonial injustice is caused by prejudice in the economy of credibility; and that hermeneutical injustice is caused by structural prejudice in the economy of collective hermeneutical resources.”<sup>47</sup> While both forms of epistemic injustice have a traceable impact in the formation and perpetuation of narratives, due to its ties to “voicelessness” through linguistic forms, I give testimonial injustice more attention in terms of its relation to Wittgensteinian notions of silence.

Fricker incorporates the theories of feminist legal scholar Catharine MacKinnon in order to explore the role of silence in cases of testimonial injustice. MacKinnon argues that women’s powerlessness in pornography leads to their being given so little credibility by their male interlocutors that their speech is effectively silenced. Fricker states that:

MacKinnon’s central conception of silencing involves an intriguingly different kind of credibility deficit, and one which makes helpfully explicit the dimension of epistemic objectification that we have been exploring: “Pornography makes women into objects. Objects do not speak. When they do, they are by then regarded as objects, not as humans, which is what it means to have no credibility.”<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>46</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 2.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid. P 2.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid. P 139.

In this climate of sexual objectification, women's resulting lack of credibility leads to an acute form of testimonial injustice that has starkly real consequences, such as when a woman's "No" is not even registered by her sexual attacker.<sup>49</sup> It is not the case that the attacker doesn't hear her. Rather, "his stance towards her in the context is such that she is prevented from (fully successfully) performing the illocutionary act of refusal in the first place."<sup>50</sup> This analysis has clear parallels to Fleming's understanding of "accepted evil" through the use of silence. However, while Fleming mostly focuses on the silence of observers, sometimes stunned into this silence by witnessing acts of evil, Fricker adds the critical perspective of when the *other side* is silenced. Such cases of silencing involve a "massive advance credibility deficit" that results in an extreme type of testimonial injustice that is characterized by a "radical communicative dysfunction."<sup>51</sup> This "communicative dysfunction" involves an exclusion of women in the shared language of our world, by which their voices are not recognized or understood. In this manner, the silencing of women has Wittgensteinian contextual meaning, as an active component of the patriarchy.

Fricker clarifies the importance of the capacity to give knowledge to others by relating it to the capacity for reason that is fundamentally significant to human beings.

Therefore, undermining this capacity is so significant in that "in the contexts of

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<sup>49</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 139.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid. P 141.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. P 140.

oppression the powerful will be sure to undermine the powerless in just that capacity, for it provides a direct route to undermining them in their very humanity.”<sup>52</sup> As Wittgenstein states, we talk in such a way that is permitted by our human character. When we are isolated from this ability — excluded from our shared language — we are consequently stripped of our humanity, and others are unable to empathize with us on that same level of basic humanness. José Medina refers to this phenomenon in that social injustices breed epistemic injustices as *two sides of the same coin*: “social injustices typically have a negative impact on our epistemic relations to each other (deteriorating epistemic trust, endangering partiality, weakening the credibility people ascribe to each other, etc.) and also on our epistemic relations to ourselves (undermining our epistemic confidence, self-trust, self-reliance, etc.).”<sup>53</sup> Social injustices and epistemic injustices therefore depend upon and reinforce one another, as demonstrated by Medina’s analysis of the relationship between imposed silences and shared hermeneutical responsibilities.

Medina is in agreement with Fricker’s context-sensitive approach to hermeneutical injustice but he argues that it must be *pluralized* and made relational in more complex ways: “social silences and hermeneutical gaps are incorrectly described if they are uniformly predicated on an entire social context, instead of being predicted on particular ways of inhabiting that context by particular people in relation to particular

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<sup>52</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 44.

<sup>53</sup> Medina, José. *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2012. P 27.

others.”<sup>54</sup> He calls for a more nuanced, *polyphonic* contextualization of what it means to break silences and approach their associated epistemic injustices that serves to make Fricker’s analysis more dynamic and pluralistic. For example, whereas Fricker analyzes the silencing objectification of women as it occurs universally, Medina seeks to qualify this theory in order to make it more relativist, dependent on communicative contexts and the power relations between the specific interlocutors, beyond spatial differences in gender, race, etc. This nods to a more Wittgensteinian understanding of words and language as being given meaning through a purely contextual, ever-changing framework. Because the ways we learn and use language are completely dependent on others, language has a certain *multiplicity* by which it can not be confined by one, universal understanding. If language has this character, as the negation of speech, silence must also be understood as multidimensional and context dependent.

#### **Nowhere and Elsewhere**

This appeal to context when examining the activations and implications of epistemic injustice is also evident in Medina’s discussion of speech in *Speaking from Elsewhere*. Drawing from feminist theory and notions of discursive responsibility, Medina argues for the critical, transformative power of speech from marginalized sources.<sup>55</sup> In order to focus on Medina’s use of Wittgensteinian notions of language, I will limit my discussion to his analysis of silence, exclusion, and marginality. Referring to the

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<sup>54</sup> Medina, José. *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2012. P 90.

<sup>55</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006.

need for Fricker's context-sensitive approach to hermeneutical injustice to be pluralized, Medina also characterizes silence as polyphonic. He illustrates this by stating that "being silent is doing or not doing something: it is a form of action or inaction, a way of engaging or a refusal to engage; and it is a linguistic move regulated by norms and subject to normative assessments."<sup>56</sup> Medina argues that there are many silences that can have many meanings and that *whether* silence has meaning is a context-specific issue.<sup>57</sup> In this manner, the intelligibility of a silence is an achievement that depends on and always remains dependent upon the agency of the speaker.<sup>58</sup>

According to Wittgenstein's view of intelligibility, whatever boundaries are in language are rendered locally and by a set of diverse and heterogenous discursive practices. Such boundaries are never final, following the crucial dimensions of language use in its normativity and performativity.<sup>59</sup> Using this framework, Medina provides three central assertions to his construction of *elsewhere*:

1. Speech acts are embedded in the situated activities that compose our "form of life;" their significance can only be understood in the context.<sup>60</sup>
2. Language and action are interwoven in such a way that we cannot separate questions about language and agency; a philosophical account of language

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<sup>56</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 173.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. P 170.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid. P 173.

<sup>59</sup> Cavell, Stanley. *The Claim of Reason : Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1999. Print. P 302.

<sup>60</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 170.

requires a philosophical account of linguistic performance and the place they occupy in our lives.<sup>61</sup>

3. Language use is always subject to normative expectations, governed by norms and rules.<sup>62</sup>

This characterization of the ways in which language becomes intelligible and expressible to others provides the foundation for what Medina calls the *therapeutic view*: the conclusion that there is no way to speak from the “outside” because it is only through language that we can mean something by something. Therefore, there are no voices outside all possible Wittgensteinian “language games” because there is no such thing as a private language. Yet, Medina points out that there *are* those who find themselves unable to speak in the discursive practices available to them.<sup>63</sup> In these cases, the signifying powers of these excluded individuals fall outside the language games that are their home. Therefore, he argues that the *therapeutic view* “ignores the reality of these radical exclusions and insists that there is no (meaningful) silence when we don’t have the capacity to speak.”<sup>64</sup> This leads Medina to emphasize the need for us to recognize the radical discursive exclusions and silencing processes that are constitutive of the way our language games are played. These radical silences can be very real and call for more than “therapy” or reform, rather they require the dismantling of our language games.

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<sup>61</sup>Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 172.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid. P 173.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid. P 170.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. P 174.



This recognition of *polyphonic multiplicity* suggests that meanings that cannot be expressed from our discursive perspective could perhaps be recognized *elsewhere* from a different perspective.<sup>65</sup> Medina uses an understanding of speaking from this *elsewhere* in order to refute the notion that there is a *nowhere*. He states that “this construct, the *nowhere*, is a direct result of construing the *here* as a hegemonic space: without argument, the therapeutic view construes the internal perspective of practitioners, of those invested with participatory status and endowed with discursive agency, as exhausting the domain of significance.”<sup>66</sup> *Nowhere* represents a construct that requires a particular conceptualization of its counterpart, *here*, in the same manner than *we* requires a recognition of our counterpart *they*. The formation of these linguistic constructs by a process of negation directly parallels the Wittgensteinian way in which an understanding of the self requires distinguishing what is not like us, by pointing to and relying upon the other. Therefore, when we assume that when someone doesn't speak from here they are *speaking from nowhere* we assume that there is nowhere else but *here*, just as we often suppress and disqualify the realities of people outside our own perspective.

Recognizing the presence of this *elsewhere* requires us to conceive of Wittgenstein as an “an enemy to radical skepticism but a friend to radical critique,” by which empowering marginalized voices does not involve the rejection of all practice from

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<sup>65</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 176.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid*. P 178.

an *a priori*, transcendental perspective.<sup>67</sup> This is because we cannot work outside of language, as a fundamental aspect of *being human*. Language, as based in context, cannot be reduced to simplified, universal understandings and as Medina argues, “we should be suspicious of any appeal to *the perspective* of the language user.”<sup>68</sup> This essentially means that we cannot systematically uphold one perspective as *the perspective* because there are places different from but not outside of *here*. The sociology and anthropology of language games teaches us that discursive practices include relations of inclusion and exclusion, bringing select voices to the center of those practices and relegating others to the periphery of the margins. Medina’s polyphonic contextualism attempts to subvert this reality through critical questioning: “the destabilization of the normative relations between what is at the *center* and what is at the *periphery* of a discursive practice.”<sup>69</sup> Therefore, the *view from elsewhere*, representing an acknowledgement of different lived realities from our own, has critical and subversive implications by which the inside/outside dichotomy is collapsed.

The elimination of the inner and outer perspective in favor of a recognition of *different* perspectives coincides with a form of linguistic unity between the self and the other. Medina alludes to this process through the use of Hegel’s concept of “inner diversity” by which people internalize the perspectives of others. This process involves

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<sup>67</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 178.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid. P 178.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid. P 186.

the individual acquiring individuality and becoming a self by being recognized by others. Through symbolic interaction, the individual learns to put herself in the position of others and to anticipate their responses, even responding to herself as if *she were the other*.<sup>70</sup> Hegel's "inner diversity" and its relationship to Medina's *elsewhere* therefore perfectly adheres to the Wittgensteinian paradox of the self defined by the other. In this process, we can see the foundations of self as first and foremost reflected in the other. Through an internalization of this different perspective and differentiation through a second-person perspective, the individual adopts a first-person plural perspective — the perspective of a *We*.<sup>71</sup> Therefore, a failure of an individual to recognize their relationship to other perspectives through the shared character of language would enable the separation of this *We*— a moment of epistemic injustice where others are regarded as the *They* and mistaken as speaking from *nowhere*.

The implications of this failure can be incorporated into the theories of Judith Butler in her argument involving precarity and the ethics of cohabitation. Butler questions our capacity to respond ethically to "suffering at a distance," examining the ironies of instances when we are "up against another group," invariably joined, yet unable or unwilling to understand to their solicitations in language.<sup>72</sup> By alluding to the Wittgensteinian notions of the self-other construction, Butler enables the theories of

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<sup>70</sup> Medina, Jose. *Speaking from Elsewhere*. SUNY Press, 2006. P 190.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.* P 190.

<sup>72</sup> Butler, Judith. "Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 134-151.

Medina and Fricker, particularly the concept of *nowhere* vs. *elsewhere*, to be applied to an understanding of conflicting narratives within the *same* spatial context. Butler does this by illuminating the paradox of “closeness and far-ness” in response to the commonly held assumption that proximity imposes certain immediate demands for honoring principles of bodily integrity, nonviolence, or even territorial claims. Moral outrage often does not depend on the spatial-temporal familiarities granted by a common life grounded in physical proximity, as proven by the instance in which “bonds of solidarity emerge across space and time.”<sup>73</sup> This occurs when we are solicited by images of distant suffering, the rhetorical *starving children in Africa*, that move us to act through concrete political means and serve to construct a public opinion.<sup>74</sup> While some images have this response, others do not. For example, in the case of Syria, the plethora of violent, disturbing images has in a way overwhelmed and paralyzed Americans. The media often distorts the events in Syria, normalizing violence and making the conflict appear unsolvable, a phenomenon that has grown to characterize many popular conceptions of the Middle East.

Butler argues that the answer of why and how we are sometimes moved into action by distant images of suffering lies in an analysis of *ethical obligation*. She notes that there is a certain “sensibility” behind ethical obligation, and that it operates in a manner that precedes our ego, a “form of responsiveness that implies a dispossession of

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<sup>73</sup> Butler, Judith. "Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012): 134-151.

<sup>74</sup> *Ibid.*

the egological.”<sup>75</sup> This dispossession is illustrated by the brief account of what is missing in a photo because what is *unchosen* in the force of the image articulates something about the ethical obligations that impose themselves upon us without our consent. In this manner, consent is not a sufficient ground for delimiting the global obligations that form our responsibility; rather, there is something implicit in our response to certain distant images. Butler traces this implicit something to the limited but necessary reversibility of proximity and distance on which our ethical demands depend upon because “certain bonds are actually wrought through this very reversibility and the impasse through which it is constituted.”<sup>76</sup> This suggests that in negotiating the “multi-locality and cross-temporality of ethical connectedness,” questions of location are confounded in such a way that what is happening *there* also happens, to some extent, *here*.<sup>77</sup> Butler expands upon this assertion by comparing the construction of *here/there* to a personalized “dispossession of the egological,” by which the connections between our lives and the lives of others are materialized: “In my view (which is surely not mine alone) the life of the other, the life that is *not* our own, is also our life, since whatever sense ‘our’ life has is derived precisely from this sociality, this being already, and from the start, dependent on a world of others, constituted in and by a social world.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>75</sup>Butler, Judith. "Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012). P 136.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.* P 137.

<sup>77</sup> *Ibid.* P 142.

<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.* P 141.

Therefore, ethical obligation depends upon our vulnerability to the claims of others and establishes us as types of creatures who are fundamentally defined by that ethical relation, as a process that precedes individuation. Butler describes this as the “unchosen character of earthy cohabitation” as a condition of our very existence as ethical and political beings.<sup>79</sup> This ethical relationship, forged by our cohabitation, explains why great evils, like the prerogative of genocide, destroy not only the political conditions of personhood, but freedom itself, understood “not as an individual act but as a plural action.”<sup>80</sup> This is because individual life makes no sense and has no reality outside of social and political frameworks in which all lives are equally valued. Using this understanding, Butler argues that we have a distinct vulnerability to destruction by others, through genocide or other forms of violence, that follows from a condition of precarity in all modes of political and social independency.<sup>81</sup>

This precarity “exposes our sociality, the fragile and necessary dimensions of our interdependency.” Yet, while Butler is attempting to argue for a conception of ethical obligation that is grounded in precarity, she is not offering a humanist perspective of “global” ethics, as she states that “it is not from pervasive love for humanity or a desire for peace that we strive to live together.”<sup>82</sup> She notes that sustainable interdependency on

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<sup>79</sup> Butler, Judith. "Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012). P 143.

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* P 143.

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* P 143.

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* P 148.

egalitarian terms is very difficult to foster, and that political efforts to manage populations involve tactical distributions of precarity. These political applications rely upon dominant norms regarding whose life is grievable and worth protecting and whose isn't, and these are terms are selectively determined by those in power, the voices that Medina describes as "made central." In order to escape this selective attention to one form of precarity over another, Butler argues that "it is only when we understand that what happens *there* also happens *here*, and that 'here' is already an elsewhere, and necessarily so, that we stand a chance of grasping the difficult and shifting global connections in ways that let us know the transport and the constraint of what we might still call ethics."<sup>83</sup> In this manner we act ethically towards people when we understand the *here* as the proximal twin of the *there*. Butler's analysis, like that of Fricker and Medina, has clear roots in the Wittgensteinian notion of the self defined by the other and its ethical implications in the way we live our lives as humans. The interconnection between *here* and *there* directly parallels Medina's argument that there is no *nowhere*, only an *elsewhere*, yet Butler provides an additional ethical analysis of the paradoxical ways in which we may be blinded by locational proximity.

### **The Epistemic Process of Empowering Lived Realities**

Recognizing the integration of *here* and *there* as a derivative of the Wittgensteinian self defined by the other requires adjusting the scope of our capacities for listening to others *elsewhere*. In addition to her analysis of the ways silence operates

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<sup>83</sup> Butler, Judith. "Precarious life, vulnerability, and the ethics of cohabitation." *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 26, no. 2 (2012). P 150.

within testimonial injustice, Fricker also provides an explanation of the responsibility of “the hearer”:

Let us pursue the idea of the hearer’s critical openness to what she is told, an idea that might make sense of the phenomenology of unreflective alertness to the plethora of prompts and cues that bear on how far one should trust. We are looking for a rational sensitivity such that the hearer may critically filter what she is told without active reflection or inference of any kind.<sup>84</sup>

Here, Fricker refers to what characteristically happens in the reception of any given testimony. The audience for this testimony operates a type of learning mechanism that has certain critical capacities within it. The mechanism is partly innate, but is also modified by experience, particularly in the matter of critical capacities. Therefore, the reception of a testimony is normally unreflective but is not also uncritical.<sup>85</sup> Wittgenstein doesn't philosophize about the reception of testimony in terms of its critical capacities, yet his preoccupation with the shared character of our language has applications here. The understanding that the hearer has some sort of responsibility directly parallels that of Wittgenstein and Cavell in their assertions that the fact that the burden of our prejudices always falls on the other represents a failure of the hearer to understand his or her reliance on the other. However, while a Wittgensteinian solution to this failure would simply involve an awakened attention to their interrelation, Fricker offers a more perceptual response in which the hearer must see his interlocutors in “epistemic color.”

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<sup>84</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 69.

<sup>85</sup> Ibid. P 70.



Fricker notes that a hearer's sensitivity to the occurrences that prompt true *is* his capacity for a certain sort of social perception.<sup>86</sup> This perceptual capacity would have to be informed by a background "theory," or body of generalizations, of the competences and motivations of a certain context-bound social type.<sup>87</sup> This essentially means that the hearer would have to receive the word of his interlocutor in light of the probability that someone of that character would be capable of and willing to tell someone like him something of credibility in that given context. This flexibility in the "trading in" of social types relies on the use of stereotypes as an essential part of credibility judgements. It is only when these stereotypes are prejudiced that a "counter-rational current of identity power" taints this ability.<sup>88</sup> This application of the hearer's responsibility to approach the speaker with a nuanced understanding of their multidimensionality is particularly adept because it doesn't attempt to eradicate the presence of social forces like stereotypes. In this manner, Fricker presents a solution, referred to as *testimonial sensibility*, that requires the hearer to have "rational sensitivity" in such a way that he or she remains critically open to the word of others. Fricker's sensibility importantly relates to Butler's understanding of a certain "sensibility" behind ethical obligation. This type of openness, as a recognition of others' *lived realities*, requires an understanding of the Wittgensteinian

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<sup>86</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 69. P 71.

<sup>87</sup> Ibid. P 72.

<sup>88</sup> Ibid. P 72.

ways in which we are reliant on others through the shared character of our language and our resulting social experiences.

Medina also shares Fricker's insistence that nothing short of a critical awareness of one's social *positionality and relationality* can correct identity-based prejudices. He argues that epistemic responsibility therefore involves obligations to "know oneself and to know others with whom one's life and identity are bound up."<sup>89</sup> This is because in order to acquire and transmit knowledge one must have at least a minimal amount of self-knowledge and social knowledge of others, determined by the context and epistemic interactions one has. Paralleling the differences in their context-bound framing of epistemic injustice itself, Medina and Fricker differ in the expansionary role of the hearer. Medina, while again agreeing with Fricker's baseline assumptions, argues that differently situated subjects' obligations, in terms of resolving hermeneutical injustice, need to be assessed in a pluralistic and relational way. While Fricker states that the virtuous listener is obligated to "help generate a more inclusive hermeneutical microclimate," Medina adds an important qualification.<sup>90</sup> His pluralistic and relational approach adds that:

Differently situated subjects and groups can bear very different burdens and responsibilities with respect to the minimization of hermeneutical gaps and obstacles; and that, occasionally, these hermeneutical obligations can be suspended and even reversed in order to allow for cases in which contributing to

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<sup>89</sup> Medina, José. *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2012. P 55.

<sup>90</sup> Fricker, Miranda. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the ethics of knowing*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P 171.

maintain a social silence or to reinforce the hermeneutical gaps of certain communities may not be blameworthy and unjust, but the ethical thing to do.<sup>91</sup>

This approach argues that different social groups and identities carry different burdens in preventing the silencing of others, in recognition of the idea that contexts are typically populated by differently situated voices with different epistemic agency. This is why movements like *Black Lives Matter* are of critical importance, and must be given exclusive agency over their counterparts, in responses like *All Lives Matter*. Because different groups are oppressed in different ways, under a multiplicity of frameworks and structures, basic humanist approaches to problems like racism are misdirected and problematic. While Fricker's assessment does incorporate Wittgensteinian notions of the self defined by the other in very important ways, Medina gives more attention to the multidimensionality of language use and its many contexts, carefully avoiding a reliance on the unifying character of "simply being human."

In order to avoid a humanist response to problems of epistemic injustice, we must understand the inherent limits to a Wittgensteinian integration of the self and the other. While others are critical of our own self-recognition and the ways in which we speak and act, we cannot take on the suffering of those our society systematically oppresses. This is because, as examined by the philosophies of Butler, Fricker, and Medina, the existence of oppression represents a distinct failure in an integration of *us* and *them*. While we can observe and even seek to understand aspects of the oppression of others, when evil is

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<sup>91</sup> Medina, José. *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2012. P 117.

accepted instead of eliminated we are clearly denying an ethical obligation to these victims. Therefore, fully experiencing the lived realities of marginalized individuals is a *solution* to the dismantling of oppression and not something that can occur while oppression still exists on an individual scale. For example, reframing Cavell's applications of Wittgenstein to acts of systematic racism, when we notice "aspects of similarity" between ourselves and our Arab neighbor, we recognize that he or she is human and we see our own dependence on this *other* person. While we maintain observational differences (*She wears a hijab and speaks Arabic, I wear my hair in a pony-tail and speak English*) there is a level of ethical obligation that results from our understanding of the shared character of our humanity. Yet, importantly, within this "shared character" is an acknowledgment of the multiplicity of forms and meanings because, as maintained by Wittgensteinian conceptions of language, there are limitless ways to *be human*.

Seeking to understand the lived realities of others illuminates these different ways of expressing humanity. In her analysis of the epistemological value of suffering, Lynne Arnault argues that the pitfalls of our discourse about redemptive suffering "provide a rather frugal response to lives shattered by cruelty — so frugal that they 'disappear' the victims."<sup>92</sup> By placing suffering in the context of an agenda for "improving the future," we are consequently blinded to the realities of the suffering of others and to the central moral importance of the victim's suffering. Here, Arnault pinpoints another pitfall of

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<sup>92</sup> Arnault, Lynne S. "Cruelty, horror, and the will to redemption." *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003). P 179.

humanist solutions to suffering by which acts of evil and oppression are made abstract and are universally applied within our discourse. We must be careful to not view the suffering of others as a character of our own experiences *as fellow humans* because this promotes “the possibility of letting bystanders think that what the tragedies are really about are themselves, not the victims.”<sup>93</sup> Although as argued by Fleming, silence does have distinct contextual meaning, reflecting the bystander’s acceptance of the witnessed evil, the real consequences of this silence must be central to the ways in which it is presented within our discourse. By speaking of events such as the Rwandan genocide or South African apartheid as universal occurrences of evil, the voices of the bystanders are centralized, leaving marginalizing the lived realities of the victims and as Arnault argues, “effacing the suffering of victims in this way is surely a high form of moral indifference, if not moral and epistemological arrogance.”<sup>94</sup>

Through her counter-realist explanation of how the politics of compassion is possible and necessary in order to address human security needs, Elisabeth Porter gives particular attention to the experience of marginalized realities and a recognition of their relativist quality. She argues that politics can practice compassion with attentiveness to the needs of vulnerable people who are suffering, an active listening to the voices of the vulnerable, and an open, compassionate, and appropriate response to these particular

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<sup>93</sup> Arnault, Lynne S. "Cruelty, horror, and the will to redemption." *Hypatia* 18, no. 2 (2003). P 179.

<sup>94</sup> *Ibid.* P 179.

needs.<sup>95</sup> Porter uses feminist perspectives on emotions, breaking the gender dichotomy between male reason and female emotion, in order to argue that connection, compassion, and affectivity must be recognized as important sources of moral reasoning in the political sphere.<sup>96</sup> Emotions are particularly important because contrary to patriarchal conceptions, they are inherently based on ethical values and are “suppressed and released in private, as well as directed toward others.”<sup>97</sup> To this extent, compassion is not *too personal* for politics, especially when politics today is centered on the manipulation of things like selfhood, national identity, and inter-group biases. Porter also asserts that “ethical politics is about trying to cultivate decent polities that affirm human dignity. Such politics acknowledges the uniqueness of citizens, and affirms our humanity in making others part of our lives while recognizing their right to be different.”<sup>98</sup> As an ability to understand and share the feelings of another, without fully taking them on as one’s own, *empathy* effectively resolves the tension between the need to see the integration of the self in the other and the need to recognize the relativist status of lived realities. Porter’s argument therefore has applicability in connecting with *others* through this understanding of empathy and by actively listening to the voices of those victimized or marginalized.

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<sup>95</sup> Porter, Elisabeth. "Can politics practice compassion?." *Hypatia* 21, no. 4 (2006): 97-123.

<sup>96</sup> *Ibid.* P 97.

<sup>97</sup> *Ibid.* P 98.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.* P 112.

As exemplified by Wittgenstein's analysis of the duck-rabbit, the facial recognition that leads us to conclude *Its a rabbit!* or *Oh, its a duck!* is reliant on "noticing an aspect" and seeing the connections between images, words, and their associated meanings. However, there are cases where human recognition is not made, as exemplified by acts of racism, sexism, and other forms of prejudice. In such cases, as argued by Cavell, the burden of our prejudice falls on the other, when in reality the racist hasn't missed anything about others but has instead missed something in themselves — the reliance of the self on the other. Because we sometimes do not fully understand this paradox and the ways in which it shapes us, we often approach injustice with *silence*, either through our own voicelessness or through the suppression of others' voices. This failure in granting epistemic recognition to others represents a lack in understanding our ethical obligations to others by affirming the multiplicity of lived realities *within* humanity.

The very idea that one image can produce two completely different conclusions, through the identification of either a duck or a rabbit, perfectly coincides with an exploration of dueling narratives. Particularly in the case of Israel and Palestine, the same intertwined history has produced two completely different stories, with conflicting interpretations within the narrative binaries themselves. Fricker, Butler, and Medina frame the Wittgensteinian paradox in a way that prevents his approach from becoming blurred by purely humanistic values. Although the forms of life and the conditions of being human are meaningful to understanding the nature of language, the relativist aspects of humanity are represented by the Wittgensteinian multiplicity inherent to

language usage. The reliance of conflict narratives on forms of linguistic deception represent a failure to properly understand the nature of our language. Both empathy and language, through parallel epistemic processes, require a recognition of the Wittgensteinian notion of the self defined by the other by collapsing the separations inherent to the *we vs. they* mentality. This process of *otherization* through linguistic chicanery is most visible in the Israeli-Palestinian case through the use of naming practices and the strategic layering of “truths” to bolster conflicting narratives. In this manner, many myths used by forms of political Zionism have allowed the unlawful Israeli occupation of Palestine to continue for decades by manipulating language and preventing prospects for peace. Before we can understand the ways in which these myths function, we must first examine the historical development of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself.



## Chapter II

### *Israel and Palestine: A Brief History*

“The very concept of objective truth is fading out of the world. Lies will pass into history.”

— George Orwell

Due to its convenient malleability, finding a starting point for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is an exceedingly difficult task, requiring a series of challenging and often contentious judgements. The theories that prefer to trace the origins of this conflict to ancient times are usually attempting to use ancient history as a tool to justify their claim on the territory involved. A certain rhetoric often accompanies this history, narratives that fixate on religious values and a *right to the land*. The greatest challenge to constructing a historical timeline of this conflict is presented by the omnipresent Israeli voice, which is systematically favored by the West, often suffocating the Palestinian perspective. We see such discrepancies especially in the use of language, such as when a Palestinian *revolt* is named by the Israelis as a *riot*. The story of Palestine is lost among many dueling narratives surrounding the conflict, not only the disparity between the Israeli and the Palestinian narrative, but also between the many narratives within these larger frameworks, including those used by Zionists and Palestinian groups. In this chapter, I seek to provide a brief, factual outline of this conflict, beginning in 1915 with the Hussein-McMahon Letters and ending with the Obama Administration’s 2016 promise to provide Israel with \$38 billion in military assistance. In an attempt to reveal

the reality of Palestine, finding a balanced history instead of another layered narrative, I feature both Israeli and Palestinian historical accounts.

An understanding of Zionism is critical to approaching the complexities of Israeli narrative. The Zionist movement was founded and developed beginning in 1880 in response to the worsening persecution of European Jews. During this period, fueled by the growth of a community of modern European nation-states, Jews began immigrating to Palestine, which was then a part of the Ottoman Empire. The Palestinian historical narrative, arguably the true legislative beginning of this conflict begins with an exchange of ten letters between Sir Henry McMahon, Britain's high commissioner in Egypt, and Sharif Hussein bin Ali, Emir of Mecca and King of the Arabs. In these letters, written in 1915, Britain pledged to support Arab independence if Hussein's forces revolted against the Ottomans. Hussein, the great, great grandfather of modern-day Jordan's King Abdullah, envisioned a unified Arab state, extending from Aleppo (Syria) to Aden (Yemen). However, while many Zionist accounts begin with religious foundations, the official Israeli perspective, as provided by the government's Ministry of Foreign Affairs, begins in November of 1917 with the Balfour Declaration.<sup>99</sup> This declaration, drafted in part with US President Woodrow Wilson, states its support for "the establishment in Palestine of a National Home for the Jewish people."<sup>100</sup> The letter addresses a leading

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<sup>99</sup> "The History of Israel." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2013. <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>100</sup> Balfour, A. J. (n.d.). Balfour Declaration. Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://www.cfr.org/israel/balfour-declaration/p9761>

British Zionist, Lord Rothschild, and was motivated in part by the British desire to rally Jews on the side of the Allies.

In 1918, as a result of World War I, Britain obtains control over Palestine from the Ottoman Empire and the area becomes known as *British-Mandate Palestine*. Although Britain maintains control over this area until 1948, the mandate gives the land east of the Jordan River to Emir Abdullah and this area becomes the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. The first major incident of inter-communal violence occurs on May Day in 1921 along the Jaffa-Tel Aviv border. While the Jews describe the violence as “pogrom” or “riots,” Palestinians conceive of it as a “revolt.” The second major incident of inter-communal violence erupts in Jerusalem in 1929, spreading to Hebron and resulting in the death of sixty-seven Jews. In April of 1936, in response to the killing of Sheikh Izz al-Din al-Qassam by the British, Arab residents of Palestine begin the “Great Arab Revolt,” which continues until 1939, when the British, seeking to obtain Arab support for the recently erupted war with Germany, ban most land sales to Jews. From 1941- 1945 Nazi Germany systematically murders six million Jews in Europe, making it the deadliest genocide in history.<sup>101</sup> In November of 1947, the General Assembly of the United Nations recommends the partition of the British-mandate into two separate states — one for the Jews and one for the Arabs. While Zionist leaders accept this proposal, Palestinians consider it unrepresentative of the demographic distribution of Jews and Arabs living in Palestine at that time, rejecting it.

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<sup>101</sup> Bergen, D.L., 2009. *War and genocide: A concise history of the Holocaust*. Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.

In May of 1948, Zionist leaders proclaim the state of Israel, and as British troops leave the country fighting breaks out between the newly declared Israelis and the Arabs. The war is known by the Israelis as the *Milhemet Hatzana 'ut*, the War of Independence.<sup>102</sup> Over 700,000 Palestinians leave the territory and Israel gains control over roughly five hundred Palestinian villages, systematically destroying them. Arabs know this war as *al-Nakbah*, the Catastrophe. Jordan establishes control over the West Bank, with the implicit agreement of Israel, and Egypt controls the Gaza Strip. Jordan and Israel divide their control over the city of Jerusalem. On December 11, 1948, the UN General Assembly passes *Resolution 194*, stating that Palestinian refugees who wish to return to their homes should be permitted to do so and that those who do not wish to return should be compensated by the state of Israel.<sup>103</sup> There remains ongoing violence from 1948-1967, but in May of 1964, following an Arab League decision, 422 Palestinian national figures meet under Ahmad Shuqeiri, founder of the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) and formulate the Palestine National Council (PNC), the PLO Executive Committee, the National Fund, and the Palestine Liberation Army (PLA).<sup>104</sup>

On June 5, 1967, Israel conducts a pre-emptive attack against Egypt, gaining control of the territory previously controlled by Egypt, Syria, and Jordan, including the Sinai Peninsula, the Golan Heights, the West Bank, and East Jerusalem. In six days, Israel

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<sup>102</sup> "The History of Israel." Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2013. <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>103</sup> Resolution, U. N. "194 (III),(1948)." Online: <http://domino.un.org/UNISPAL>, 2008.

<sup>104</sup> Frangi, Abdallah. *The PLO and Palestine*. Zed Books, 1983.

triples the size of its territory and begins establishing settlements, referring to them by biblical names *Judea* and *Samaria*. While Israel calls this the “Six Days War,” it is remembered by Palestinians as *al-Naksah* — the setback. Palestinians view Israel’s developing settlements as a violation of international law, regarding territory seized during war, and the PLO moves its operations from the West Bank to Jordan. In response, the UN Security Council passes *Resolution 242*, calling for:

The withdrawal of Israeli armed forces from territories occupied in the recent conflict, termination of all claims or states of belligerency and respect for and acknowledgement of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of every state in the area and their right to live in peace within secure and recognized boundaries free from threats or acts of force.<sup>105</sup>

This resolution, particularly its formula of “land for peace,” becomes the basis for all subsequent peace negotiations between Israel, Palestine, and the neighboring Arab states. The next major conflict occurs on October 6, 1973, when Egypt and Syria organize a surprise attack on Yom Kippur and during the Muslim month of Ramadan against Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula and the Golan Heights. Israelis refer to this war as “the Yom Kippur War” and see it as a military victory, maintaining physical and political possession of the attacked territories. Arabs, calling this conflict “the Ramadan War,” also see this battle as a victory because it revealed the weaknesses of the Israeli military. From the Arab perspective, without a large, US air-lifted supply of weapons, Israel would have not been as successful in defending its territory.

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<sup>105</sup> Resolution, U. N. “242 (S/RES/242), (1967).” Online: <http://www.un.org/Depts/dpi/palestine/ch3.pdf>

In October of 1973, the UN Security Council passes *Resolution 338*, calling for an immediate cease-fire and the commencement of UNSCR 242 with the goal of “establishing a just and durable peace in the Middle East.”<sup>106</sup> Within the period of 1978-1981, the *Camp David Accords* were signed by Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat; Israeli Prime Minister, Menachem Begin; and US President, Jimmy Carter. Under this agreement, Israel agreed to return the Sinai Peninsula to Egypt in return for peace and normalization. This was the first time an Arab country signed a peace treaty with Israel, thereby accepting the state’s existence and initiating great criticism of Sadat from Egyptians and other Arabs in the region. As a result, Egypt was expelled from the Arab League. Yet, in 1980, Egypt and Israel establish diplomatic relations, leading directly to Sadat’s assassination by his own soldiers on October 6, 1981. On June 6, 1982, Israel invades Lebanon and established a “security zone” in order to block Hezbollah forces. Hezbollah was actually weak and undeveloped at this time, yet there are two reasons for this invasion: to force PLO to move out of Lebanon, and to gain control of water resources. The Israeli Army reaches Beirut and successfully drives out Yasser Arafat’s Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), which moves to Tunisia. In September 1982, Israel-allied Christian militias enter the Sabra and Shatila refugee camps in Beirut and massacre 2,000 unarmed Palestinians. An Israeli official inquiry finds Defense Minister Ariel Sharon indirectly responsible. From 1983-1985, Israel makes a phased withdrawal from most of Lebanon, excluding the “security zone” on the southern border.

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<sup>106</sup> UNSCR 242. (338)(1973). United Nations Security Council Resolutions. (n.d.). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://unscr.com/en/resolutions/388>

On December 9, 1987, a Palestinian *Intifada*, “uprising” in Arabic, begins in the West Bank and Gaza. In the Palestinian narrative, the Intifada is in protest of continued Israeli occupation of the West Bank and Gaza, and involves demonstrations, strikes, riots, and acts of violence. The most symbolically important act involves the stoning of Israeli security forces, often by young men and boys, which becomes the image of Palestinian resistance for Palestinians and Arabs, but a representation of Palestinian violence for Israelis. This uprising marked the first time Palestinians living within the occupied territories became the driving forces of the opposition, which until then was organized mainly by the PLO neighboring Arab countries. Israel addresses the Intifada as a series of “riots,” and suppressed the movement with police, armed forces, curfews, the closing of universities, arrests, and deportations, but the protests continued for six years, leaving 1,284 Palestinians killed between 1987-1993 by the Israeli army, including 332 children. From 1988-1993, in the Gaza Strip alone, approximately 60,706 Palestinians were injured from shootings, beatings, or tear gas. In the same six-year period, *B’Tselem*, an Israeli human rights organization, calculates that 179 Israelis were killed. However, on December 14, 1988, Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat condemns all forms of terrorism and recognizes the state of Israel. US President Ronald Reagan authorizes the US to enter into a “substantive dialogue” with the PLO, which Israel remains hostile towards. The next day, the UN shows clear support for the PLO, with the General Assembly passing *Resolution 53/196*, which “reaffirmed the inalienable rights of Palestinians and Syrians

in the Golan,” calling on Israel to not exploit natural resources in the occupied territories.<sup>107</sup>

In October of 1991, the Madrid Peace Conference, including delegations from Israel, Syria, Jordan, Lebanon, Egypt, and Palestine, marked the first time since Israel's creation in 1948 that most of the Arab parties agreed to bilateral and multilateral negotiations with Israel. From January- September 1993, Israel and the PLO engaged in a series of secret talks in Oslo, Norway, culminating with Arafat and Israeli Prime Minister, Yitzhak Rabin, signing a Declaration of Principles in Washington. With this agreement, Israel recognized the PLO, giving them limited autonomy in West Bank and Gaza and in return the PLO gives up its claims to Israel's other territory and agrees to end the Intifada. The process by which the two sides would gradually exchange land for peace becomes known as the “Oslo Peace Process.” Oslo effectively ended the politically existential conflict between the Israelis and the Palestinians and the two sides no longer claimed that the other did not have the right to exist as a state. In 1994, Israel and the PLO reach the “Cairo Agreement,” including an Israeli withdrawal from 60% of the Gaza Strip and Jericho, allowing Arafat to make a triumphant return to Gaza to become the head of the new Palestinian Self-Rule Authority (PA) after twelve years of running the PLO from Tunisia. In 1995, Arafat and Rabin sign the Taba Agreement (“Oslo II”) to expand Palestinian self-rule in Gaza and the West Bank, allowing democratic Palestinian

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<sup>107</sup> Documentation, Reports, Resolutions, Decisions, Meeting records. (n.d.). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from <http://research.un.org/en/docs/ga/quick/regular/53>



elections. However, shortly after this agreement, Rabin is assassinated by an orthodox Jew opposed to the withdrawals, and Shimon Peres assumes Israeli leadership.

In 1997, Netanyahu gives over 80% of the West Bank town of Hebron to Palestinian rule and in 1998, he signs the Wye River Memorandum outlining further withdrawals from the West Bank. In July of 2000, after fourteen straight days of negotiations at the *Camp David II* presidential retreat, President Bill Clinton, newly elected Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Barak, and Arafat were unable to reach a reconciliatory conclusion. The Israeli narrative frames the agreement as overly generous, handing over 95% of the West Bank and Gaza for the formation of a Palestinian state. However, the Palestinians believe they should not have to accept less than 100% of Gaza and the West Bank because the total of both of the territories compromises only 22% of what was originally Palestine. In terms of the proposed territorial arrangement, Israel believes their maintaining control over settlements and security zones in these regions is necessary for their national security, while Palestine views the divided Palestinian state negatively, with the West Bank and Gaza completely isolated and separated by over thirty miles of Israeli territory.

Amid this stalemate, on September 28, 2000, Ariel Sharon, the leader of Israel's right wing party visits a holy Muslim sanctuary with 1,000 Israeli soldiers, sparking violent Palestinian demonstrations. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs terms these demonstrations as the "Terror Intifada." Israeli narratives point to Palestinian attacks on Joseph's tomb in Nablus and Rachel's tomb in Bethlehem in order to argue that

Palestinians do not respect Jewish holy sites and therefore should not be granted sovereignty over the Muslim sanctuary, the Temple Mount. Sharon and his supporters argue that the Palestinian violence was planned before his visit to the Temple Mount; however, because Jews do not normally visit this temple except as tourists, Sharon has been accused of provoking a reaction that would undermine the peace process.

Palestinians term these demonstrations and attacks the “al-Aqsa Intifada,” in the name of the mosque. This *intifada* is particularly significant because it marks the first time Palestinian citizens of Israel have participated in demonstrations and protests against Israel, in solidarity with the Palestinians in Gaza and the West Bank. Israelis then cited the participation of Arab Israelis in this intifada as a reason for not allowing Palestinian refugees to return to live in Israel. Arab Israelis argue that their protests are targeted not only toward the continued occupation, but toward the treatment of Arab Israelis within Israel. For example, the Nazareth-based Arab Association for Human Rights claims there is a massive disparity in local government budgets between Jewish and Arab towns and municipalities.

In February 2001, one week after Ariel Sharon is elected Prime Minister of Israel, a Palestinian bus driver ploughs his vehicle into a waiting line of passengers, killing eight Israeli soldiers and civilians. In response, Israel implements a total blockade on the occupied territories. Palestinians claim that the blockades are preventing the delivery of humanitarian and medical supplies, as well preventing Palestinians from attending their jobs in Israel and traveling between towns in the territories. A month later, Israel seizes

territory controlled by the Palestinians in the Gaza Strip for the first time since the Oslo process.

In May 2001, the Mitchell Commission, an international fact-finding committee, calls for an immediate ceasefire and renewed peace negotiations, including a freeze on the expansion of Jewish settlements in the occupied territories. In addition, the European Union accuses Israel of using disproportionate force in the occupied territory, also calling for the dismantling of Jewish settlements in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In June, a suicide bomber kills nineteen Israelis at a night club in Tel Aviv, and Arafat orders his forces to enforce a ceasefire. A month later, the Israeli security cabinet votes to give the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) a broader license to target Palestinian terrorists. These new guidelines allow the IDF to act against known terrorists, even if they are not on the verge of committing an attack. Israeli narratives state that this preventative action against imminent terrorist threats is necessary, citing international law in that it “recognizes that individuals who directly take part in hostilities cannot claim immunity from attack or protection as innocent civilians.”<sup>108</sup> In contrast, the Palestinian narrative takes issue with this policy of “targeted assassinations,” arguing that these killings constitute extra-judicial executions where the victims have been killed without trial or opportunity for a fair legal process. They cite the Fourth Geneva Convention, in that as the occupying power, Israel “has the right to arrest and bring to trial those suspected of violent hostile

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<sup>108</sup>*Jewish Virtual Library*. Database: “The History of Israel.”<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

activities.” However, in this same convention, extra-judicial executions are considered willful killings, which constitute war crimes and are subject to universal jurisdiction.<sup>109</sup>

The Israeli-Palestinian conflict escalates once more after the assassination of Israeli hard-line Tourism Minister Rehavam Zeevi on October 17, 2001. It is important to note that in addition to his role in the tourism sector, Zeevi also has a distinct political agenda that is based on “transferring” the Israeli-Palestinians from Israel to the West Bank. In response, in January 2002, Israel seizes a ship carrying fifty tons of military equipment from the Palestinian Authority. On March 13, 2002, the US sponsors a UN Security Council Resolution calling for a Palestinian state alongside the state of Israel. A few days later, the Arab League adopts the *Pan-Arab Initiative for Peace in the Middle East*, offering Israel security and “normal relations” in exchange for withdrawal from Arab territories. On March 27, a Hamas suicide attack kills thirty Israeli civilians in Netanya, and Israeli sources claim that this is the “final catalyst for action.”<sup>110</sup> Sharon green-lights operation “Defensive Shield,” issuing an emergency call-up for over 20,000 Israeli reserve soldiers, the largest action since the 1982 Lebanon War. Israeli narratives justify these actions by stating that between September 2000 and February 2002, around 300 Israelis were killed by Palestinian terrorists. The Operation begins on March 29 with an incursion into Ramallah. Within weeks, Israeli seizes control of six of the West Bank’s largest cities, occupying their surrounding towns and refugee camps. According to local

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<sup>109</sup> "International Humanitarian Law - Fourth 1949 Geneva Convention." International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) - Home. N.p., n.d. Web. 3 Apr. 2017.

<sup>110</sup> *Jewish Virtual Library*. Database: “The History of Israel.”<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/>

human rights groups, over 8,500 Palestinians were arrested during this operation, 6,000 of them being held for weeks without outside contact.<sup>111</sup> A total of 497 Palestinians were killed and 1,447 wounded in this IDF reoccupation.<sup>112</sup>

On July 22, 2002, Israel assassinates the military leader of Hamas, Sheikh Salah Shehadeh, using F-16 warplanes to bomb his home in Gaza City. The explosion killed eleven other Palestinian civilians, including seven children, and wounded 120 others. On August 1, 2002, the UN issues a report disputing the Palestinian claim of the Jenin “massacre.”<sup>113</sup> The Palestinian Authority and human rights organizations claim that in the conduct of their operations in the refugee camp, Jenin, the IDF used human shields, disproportionate use of force, arbitrary arrest, and torture. In contrast, the Israelis point to breaches of international humanitarian law on the part of Palestinian combatants within the camp for basing themselves in a civilian area. Interviews with witnesses conducted by human rights organizations suggest that tanks, helicopters, and troops were used for two days before armored bulldozers were used to demolish houses and other structures. The UN report details “that the Israeli Defense Forces encountered heavy Palestinian resistance is not in question. Nor is the fact that Palestinian militants in the camp, as elsewhere, adopted methods which constitute breaches of international law that have been and continue to be condemned by the United Nations. Clarity and certainty remain

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<sup>111</sup> "UN Report Details West Bank Wreckage," *theguardian.com*, Aug. 2, 2002.

<sup>112</sup> Palestinian Red Crescent Society. “*Documents and Reports.*” <https://www.palestinercs.org/en/>

<sup>113</sup> United Nations (UN) "Report of the Secretary-General Prepared Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution ES-10/10 (Report on Jenin)," was released on Aug. 1, 2002.

elusive, however, on the policy and facts of the IDF response to that resistance.”<sup>114</sup> The UN report ultimately rejects Palestinian claims of a massacre, but blames both sides for endangering civilians. However, it is critical to note that UN investigators were not permitted to visit Jenin and did not have Israel’s cooperation. In fact, the Israeli government blocked a fact-finding mission after the UN refused to meet its conditions.<sup>115</sup>

In 2003, notably the beginning of the US invasion of Iraq, Arafat names Mahmoud Abbas the Prime Minister of the PA.<sup>116</sup> Hours later, the US released its long-awaited “road map” of a Middle East peace settlement, with the aim of creating an independent, viable Palestine by 2005. Two months later, the Mideast Peace Summit convenes in Jordan, with President Bush and Prime Ministers Sharon and Abbas. Sharon promises an immediate dismantling of the unauthorized Jewish outposts on the West Bank, while Abbas asserts that the armed Intafada, a 32-month Palestinian uprising, must end. However, on June 19, Israel begins the construction of a West Bank security wall, continuing for 200 miles and coinciding with Israel’s 1967 border with the West Bank. The wall takes several convenient detours to ensure that major Jewish settlement communities, including Ariel and Immanuel, are on the Israeli side of the wall. The wall’s eventual cost rounds to an estimated \$220 million, justified by Israeli narratives as

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<sup>114</sup> United Nations (UN) "Report of the Secretary-General Prepared Pursuant to General Assembly Resolution ES-10/10 (Report on Jenin)," was released on Aug. 1, 2002.

<sup>115</sup> National Public Radio (NPR) "Analysis: UN Releases Long-awaited Report on Israeli-Palestinian Fighting in Jenin Refugee Camp," npr.org, Aug. 1, 2002.

<sup>116</sup> Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC) "Arafat Asks Deputy to Assume PM's Role," abc.net.au, Mar. 19, 2003.

necessary for protection against Palestinian terrorists, most of which they claim come from the West Bank. Shortly after the 2003 Geneva Accords, establishing a symbolic peace agreement between Israeli and Palestinian politicians, the EU formally condemns the Israeli West Bank Wall. The EU claims that the wall prevents the creation of a viable Palestinian state, urging Israel to refrain from extra-judicial killing and civilian deaths.<sup>117</sup>

On March 22, 2004, Hamas founder and spiritual leader, Sheikh Ahmed Yassin, is killed by Israeli rockets, which also wound sixteen and killing an additional seven civilians. The Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs highlights that Yassin, as the head of “the Hamas terror organization” was responsible for numerous terror attacks. A month later, the military leader of Hamas is also killed by an Israeli missile strike. June 28, 2004 marked the first Israeli fatalities from Hamas rockets, killing two Israelis in June and another two Israeli children in September. In response, the IDF launches a three week operation, killing 130 Palestinians, 68 Hamas militants and 62 civilians.<sup>118</sup> On July 9, 2004 the International Court of Justice rules that the separation wall in the West Bank is in breach of international law. The court’s non-binding advisory on the legality of the fence calls on the UN Security Council to consider “further action” to stop the wall’s construction.<sup>119</sup> Three months later, Israel’s parliament votes 67 to 45 to dismantle all

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<sup>117</sup> Guardian Unlimited "EU Hits out at Israeli Fence," guardian.co.uk, Nov. 18, 2003.

<sup>118</sup> Pike, John E. "HAMAS Rockets," globalsecurity.org (accessed Oct. 15, 2015).

<sup>119</sup> Ha'aretz "ICJ: West Bank Fence Is Illegal, Israel Must Tear It Down," haaretz.com, July 10, 2004.

Jewish settlements in Gaza, evacuating 8,100 residents and withdrawing thousands of Israeli troops.<sup>120</sup>

Yasser Arafat dies “due to his failing health” towards the close of 2005 and Mahmoud Abbas is elected President of the PA in January 2005. Later that year, Talia Sasson, an Israeli Attorney commissioned by Sharon, issues a report revealing illegal Israeli outposts in the West Bank and Gaza. The findings criminalized the international body the *World Zionist Organization*, describing it as a pivotal player in the scheme, in which “midlevel officials in various government ministries secretly channeled funds and resources to the illegal West Bank outposts.”<sup>121</sup> The report created a sensation by documenting the fact that outposts had been formed in contravention of the laws both before and after the March 2001 cutoff date. The Palestinian narrative held the report as further evidence for the international community to call on Israel to remove the illegal outposts. Israeli settler leader Shaul Goldstein claims that Sharon should face questioning, stating that his administration “sent settlers in order to protect the roads and land.”<sup>122</sup> The blame is then diverted to Effi Eitam, an Israeli military commander, who in turn claims that the illegal outposts he had approved during his time in office were approved in coordination with Prime Minister Sharon, sometimes even initiated by him. Eitam also holds that Talia Sasson was not an objective surveyor, arguing that the reports

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<sup>120</sup> Washington Post. "Sharon Wins Vote for Gaza Pullout," [washingtonpost.com](http://washingtonpost.com), Oct. 27, 2004.

<sup>121</sup> “Opinion concerning unauthorized outposts.” Israel Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2013. <http://mfa.gov.il/MFA/AboutIsrael/Pages/default.aspx>.

<sup>122</sup> "Politics: Settlers confirm state complicity in building outposts in Judea and Samaria". *Israel-Insider*. March 8, 2005. <http://web.israelinsider.com/Articles/Politics/5126.htm>



were politically motivated.<sup>123</sup> The Sasson report represents legal confirmation of Prime Minister Sharon's controversial political decision to dismantle the outposts constructed during his time in office. However, despite substantial evidence provided by the report alongside a written commitment by the Israeli government to the Bush administration to do so, no settlements were dismantled.<sup>124</sup> By highlighting the disparities between Israeli law and the actions of Zionist political organizations, the Sasson report and its surrounding responses reveal the tensions within the Israeli narrative itself.

On January 5, 2006 Israeli Prime Minister Sharon is replaced after a stroke, and his powers are transferred to Deputy Prime Minister Ehud Olmert. Olmert's new Israeli Centrist Party also wins the election in March, bringing the Kadima party to power, which is committed to a further pull-out from the occupied West Bank. Later that month, Hamas wins the Palestinian Parliamentary Election, defeating the governing Fatah party. From July to August 2006, Israel engages in war with Lebanon, sparked after Hezbollah fires rockets into northern Israel. The IDF claims that over 4,000 rockets were fired into northern Israel during the 34 days of fighting, which resulted in the death of 159 Israelis and over 908 Lebanese.<sup>125</sup> In June 2007, Hamas takes over Gaza as Palestinian Authority President Abbas swears in an emergency government, reasserting his authority over the

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<sup>123</sup> "Israel 'funded illegal outposts'". BBC News. March 9, 2005. Retrieved May 23, 2010.

<sup>124</sup> Kurtzer, Daniel, Riju Agrawal, Myra MacDonald, and Daniel R. DePetris. "Israel's Illogical Settlement Decision." *The National Interest*. Accessed April 03, 2017. <http://nationalinterest.org/commentary/israels-illogical-settlement-decision-7175>.

<sup>125</sup> "Special Report: Crisis in the Middle East 'Background: Mideast Conflict Timeline'," *cnn.com* (accessed Oct. 23, 2007).

West Bank. Israel responds by ordering a blockade of all cargo shipments to the now Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip. Under this blockade, Israel controls Gaza's airspace, territorial waters, and land borders, cutting off civilian access to electricity used for water availability and sewage treatment. The blockade also prevents Palestinians from leaving Gaza, with Israelis seizing control of telecommunications, the population registry, and the customs and tax revenues.<sup>126</sup>

On November 27, 2007, the Annapolis Peace conference results in US President Bush announcing an agreement by Israeli and Palestinian leaders to work towards a peace pact by the end of 2008, perceives as essentially a 'road map' to a permanent two-state solution.<sup>127</sup> Over a year later, in December 2008, Israel begins a bombardment and occupation of Gaza. US and Israeli news sources claim that the seven day Israeli aerial bombardment was designed to detonate buried explosives and mines in an attempt to take control of areas used by Palestinian militants to fire rockets into southern Israel.<sup>128</sup> Israeli officials stress that the objective was to deal "punishing blows" to Hamas in order to deter future rocket fire. The six-day air strike campaign kills over 450 Palestinian civilians, and fails to prevent Hamas from launching more missiles. On January 21, 2009 Israel announces a unilateral ceasefire and Israeli troops leave Gaza. The UN urges Israel to fully open all of Gaza's borders to allow reconstruction work to begin, a move not

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<sup>126</sup> Human Rights Watch "Israel/Gaza: Israeli Blockade Unlawful despite Gaza Border Breach," hrw.org, Jan. 25, 2008.

<sup>127</sup> New York Times "Framework for Mideast Peace Talks Set at Conference," nytimes.com, Nov. 27, 2007.

<sup>128</sup> CNN (Cable News Network) "Israel Invades Gaza, Hoping to Pummel Hamas into a Truce," cnn.com, Jan. 3, 2009.

included in the ceasefire agreement. During the entire three-week conflict, Palestinian medical sources claim that over 1,300 Gazan civilians were killed. The Israeli army states that thirteen Israeli soldiers were killed, including three civilians.<sup>129</sup>

In March, Benjamin Netanyahu becomes Israel's prime minister. Following President Obama's 2009 Cairo Speech affirming US support of a two-state solution, on June 14, 2009, Netanyahu endorses a Palestinian state to exist beside Israel for the first time. This is a reversal of his previous stance due to US pressure, but he attaches conditions such as the prevention of the formation of a Palestinian army and the Palestinian recognition of Israel as a Jewish state, preventing Palestinian refugees from returning to Israel.<sup>130</sup> While Israeli narratives claim that Palestinians rejected these conditions, leaked documents show that Palestinians are actually willing to make major concessions to cut a peace deal. Al Jazeera television begins leaking hundreds of pages of documents belonging to the Palestinian negotiating team in January 2011. In contrast with the Israelis portrayal of Palestinian leaders as rejectionists, the documents reveal a series of detailed maps, charts, and compromises, even broaching controversial trade-offs that went beyond what their own people were ready to accept. For example, PA President Abbas was quoted in March 2009 recognizing that deep concessions would have to be

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<sup>129</sup> British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) "Last Israeli Troops 'Leave Gaza'," [bbc.co.uk](http://bbc.co.uk), Jan. 21, 2009.

<sup>130</sup> Huffington Post "Netanyahu Peace Speech: Israeli Prime Minister Appeals to Arab Leaders for Peace," [huffingtonpost.com](http://huffingtonpost.com), June 14, 2009.

made because “it is illogical to ask Israel to take 5 million refugees or indeed 1 million,” referencing the right of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes in Israel.<sup>131</sup>

In May 2011, rival Palestinian factions Fatah and Hamas sign a landmark reconciliation pact aimed at ending their four-year rift. The pact provides the creation of a joint caretaker Palestinian government before national elections in 2012 involving an interim government to run the occupied Abbas- based West Bank and the Hamas-controlled Gaza Strip.<sup>132</sup> This leads Abbas to seek full UN membership for a Palestinian state, which the US and Israel claim could spurn hope for resuming peace talks. Washington threatens to veto any Security Council vote attempting to grant this membership. Obama’s deputy national security advisor, Ben Rhodes, is quoted stating that “we have made our position clear, which is that we oppose actions to achieve a Palestinian state through the United Nations.”<sup>133</sup> In October, 2011, Palestine becomes the 195th full member of UNESCO (the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization), causing the US to pull its annual \$70 million contribution. The Palestinian foreign minister Riad al-Malki described the acceptance as “the best step toward peace and stability,” insisting that the membership in UNESCO is “linked in no way to our request to join the United Nations.”<sup>134</sup> In November 2012, the Palestinian Authority seeks

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<sup>131</sup> Sanders, Edmund. "Leaked documents show Palestinians ready to deal at 2008 peace talks." Los Angeles Times. January 26, 2011. Accessed April 03, 2017.

<sup>132</sup> Guardian Unlimited "Palestinian Rivals Hamas and Fatah Sign Reconciliation Deal," guardian.co.uk, May 4, 2011.

<sup>133</sup> Reuters "Abbas Presses Palestinian UN Bid, despite Warnings," reuters.com, Sep. 20, 2011.

<sup>134</sup> New York Times "Unesco Accepts Palestinians as Full Members," nytimes.com, Oct. 31, 2011.

non-member state status from the UN and the Israeli Foreign Ministry responds by stating that a successful Palestinian bid for enhanced status at the UN could lead Israel to cancel the Oslo peace accords and to possibly dismantle the PA, ousting President Abbas.<sup>135</sup>

In addition, the IDF announces the beginning of “Operation Pillar of Defense,” which they claim is intended to protect Israeli civilians from rockets being continually fired from Hamas’ Gaza. The IDF also claimed that it is doing its best to avoid civilian casualties, although over half of those killed in Gaza have been women and children according to Hamas officials. Although Hamas is the elected political party of the Gaza Strip, Israel, the US, and the EU refer to Hamas as a terrorist organization. Shortly after the start of this Israeli operation, the UN accepts Palestine as a non-member observer, voting by an overwhelming majority.<sup>136</sup> In April 2014, Hamas and Fatah announce an agreement to form a unity government after previous attempts had failed, causing Netanyahu to accuse Abbas of sabotaging peace efforts by seeking rapprochement with Hamas.<sup>137</sup> Several months later, Palestinians in Gaza begin a series of rocket attacks against Israel, and Israel launches ‘Operation Protective Edge’ against Hamas militants. This Israeli operation represents the rising tensions between Israelis and Palestinians after the kidnapping and killing of three Israeli teenagers in the occupied West Bank.

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<sup>135</sup> New York Times "Israel Heightens Warnings Over Palestinians' UN Bid," [nytimes.com](http://nytimes.com), Nov. 14, 2012.

<sup>136</sup> United Nations (UN) "General Assembly Votes Overwhelmingly to Accord Palestine 'Non-Member Observer State' Status," [un.org](http://un.org), Nov. 29, 2012.

<sup>137</sup> National Public Radio (NPR) "Abbas, Rival Hamas Give Reconciliation Another Try," [npr.org](http://npr.org), Apr. 23, 2014.

According to the UN, the violence following the Israeli operation led to the death of over 2,189 Palestinians, 1,486 of which were civilians. On the Israeli side, 67 soldiers were kills alongside six civilians.

The months of September and October 2015 are characterized by escalating violence, including violent riots surrounding the Temple Mount in Jerusalem. *The Palestinian Red Crescent* reports that nearly 2,000 Palestinians were injured in the span of one month alongside the death of 41 Palestinians and nine Israelis. On September 14, 2016, the US commits \$38 billion over a period of ten years to military assistance for Israel. This security agreement is unprecedented, as the largest military aid deal the US has ever had with any country.<sup>138</sup> However, three months later, the US abstains from signing a UN Resolution condemning Israeli settlements, allowing the motion to pass. Described as an unprecedented diplomatic rebuke of Israel, the resolution calls for Israel to “immediately and completely cease all settlement activities in the occupied Palestinian territory, including East Jerusalem.”<sup>139</sup> It declares the establishment of settlements by Israel has “no legal validity and constitutes a flagrant violation under international law.”<sup>140</sup> US Ambassador to the UN, Samantha Power, urges that the US position on Israel has remain unchanged, quoting a 1982 statement by then-President Ronald Reagan that the US “will not support the use of any additional land for the purpose of settlements.”

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<sup>138</sup> Associated Press (AP) "US, Israel Sign Massive Military Aid Deal; \$38B, 10 Years," Sep. 14, 2016.

<sup>139</sup> Gramer, Colum, Lynch, Emily and Robbie Tamkin. "U.S. Abstains From U.N. Vote Condemning Israeli Settlements." *Foreign Policy*. December 23, 2016. Accessed April 03, 2017.

<sup>140</sup> UN Resolution 2334. (2334)(23 Dec 2016). United Nations Security Council Resolutions. (n.d.). Retrieved April 01, 2017.

However, she also states that “our vote does not in any way diminish our steadfast and unparalleled commitment to the security of Israel.”<sup>141</sup>

Most recently, on February 6 2017, Israel passes the law retroactively legalizing approximately 4,000 settler homes built on Palestinian land. Settlements are viewed by Palestinians and the international community as an crippling obstacle to peace, with the Israeli newspaper *Haaretz* describing the measure as an extremely controversial “land-grab bill.”<sup>142</sup> Although the status of Israeli settlements and the legality of certain territorial measures remain central to this conflict today, it is critical to note that the real issues lie in the sustaining human rights abuses that characterize everyday life for those living in Gaza and the West Bank.

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<sup>141</sup> Gramer, Colum, Lynch, Emily and Robbie Tamkin. "U.S. Abstains From U.N. Vote Condemning Israeli Settlements." *Foreign Policy*. December 23, 2016. Accessed April 03, 2017. <http://foreignpolicy.com/2016/12/23/u-s-abstains-from-u-n-vote-condemning-israeli-settlements/>.

<sup>142</sup> Lis, Jonathan and Barak Ravid. “Israel passes contentious Palestinian land-grab bill in late night vote.” Feb 07, 2017 from <http://www.haaretz.com/israel-news/.premium-1.770099>

## Chapter III

### *The Philosophy of Occupation: Politics and Terror*

“If the olive trees knew who planted them, their oil would become tears.”

— Mahmoud Darwish

As demonstrated by a synopsis of the historical context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, many of the events and statistics have been skewed within their respective narratives, using different words and names, such as *independence* vs. *catastrophe* and *terrorists* vs. *revolutionaries*. Palestinian terrorism, especially in the instance of Hamas suicide bombings, has been political Zionism’s most effective tool in defending everything from the extensive West Bank “security barrier” to the “targeted killings” of Palestinians. The use of the name “terrorist” and its corresponding moral implications is especially important to an analysis of this conflict because it dominates the rhetorical lexicon used by outside political forces, including the United States. In analyzing the use of the language surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is critical to look at the acts of violence committed by all actors and how this violence exists in a suspension surrounding both politics and terror. Terrorism presents a particularly dynamic phenomenon because it is both a cause and an effect of the perpetual cycle of US-Middle East relations, used as both a justification tool for US intervention in the War on Terror and as a source of Arab resistance to these forms of imperialism. In this chapter, I will analyze the ways in which select Zionist discourse has effectively used a combination of



politics and terror to sustain the occupation of Palestine, namely through its alliance with the US.

***“A Land without a People for a People without a Land” And Other Zionist Myths***

The birth of modern Israel sixty-nine years ago and its resulting occupation of Palestine took place against a backdrop of terror, including the shocking horror of Nazi Germany’s Holocaust. The atrocities of the Holocaust, by which Jews in Europe were systematically eradicated in order to pursue the political agenda of Adolf Hitler, are indisputable. In this thesis, though I reference the relationship between the Holocaust and the formation of Israel, I make no attempt to discredit a recognition of this genocide or the impact it had on shaping Jewish and Israeli identity. However, there exists a direct lineage between the disturbing bystander role played by great political powers, including the US and Britain, during WWII, and the actions of US foreign policy today, with respect to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. In his analysis of the culture of memorialization surrounding the Nazi Holocaust, Brian Klug argues that memory can play tricks, not in the accuracy of our recollection of the past, but in our perception of the present. Klug refers to this phenomenon, the “Auschwitz mindset,” as an awareness of the present structured by a sense of the past.<sup>143</sup> This mindset becomes problematic when it is used “to view the affairs of Israel in the Middle East through the lens of the catastrophic Jewish experience in Nazi-occupied Europe.”<sup>144</sup>

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<sup>143</sup>Klug, Brian, “Terror” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and Terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 202.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid. P 205.

Norman Finkelstein expands upon Klug's conception of the politicized use of Holocaust memorialization, arguing that after 1967, Zionism and WWII became inextricably linked. Finkelstein notes significant changes in the US in relation to the Nazi Holocaust post-1967, by which the Holocaust became an "indispensable ideological weapon" for the justification of the formation of an Israeli state.<sup>145</sup> Klug connects the US use of the Holocaust as a justification tool for the condemnation of Palestinian resistance through the use of acts named as 'terrorist activities': "viewed through this prism, Palestinian terrorism (by which I mean terrorist acts aimed against Israel and carried out by groups of individuals who are Palestinian Arabs) tends to be seen as a form of persecution of Jews and thus an expression of anti-semitism."<sup>146</sup> As a result of the parallels drawn between the Holocaust and the creation of Israel, Palestinian political acts, as diametrically opposed to this occupation, have become morally tainted. In this manner, the Israeli occupation of Gaza and the West Bank, which is denoted in Israeli policy, is understood as representing the interest of the Jewish people as a whole. While this dominant mindset does have a tangible effect on Israeli policy, it is important to note that Israeli society is characterized by multiple opinions, many of which object to the use of Holocaust rhetoric to justify the occupation.

This internal dispute over the use of the Holocaust to justify the occupation of Palestine, while not the focus of this chapter, points to larger sources of fragmentation

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<sup>145</sup> Finkelstein, Norman. "The Holocaust Industry." *Index on Censorship* 29, no. 2 (2000): 120-130.

<sup>146</sup> Klug, Brian, "Terror" in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and Terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 202.

within the different forms of Zionist narrative. Within the broader category of Zionism, there are three relatively distinct tendencies: political Zionism, labor Zionism, and cultural Zionism. Although they are all tied to the demand for a Jewish majority, their base arguments are constructed for different reasons particular to the strategic goals of each subgroup.<sup>147</sup> Political Zionism presents itself as the most problematic in the context of the Israeli occupation of Palestine, as a result of its reliance on political frameworks to achieve its state status. It is critical to note that a Jew is not necessarily a Zionist and political Zionism differs from other Zionist ideologies. A Zionist also does not need to be a practicing Jew. In fact, there was significant conflict historically between Zionists and assimilationist Jews in the Diaspora, who insisted that their loyalty was to their individual nationality, alongside their separate Jewish faith.<sup>148</sup> The basic aims of political Zionism were precisely defined by its founder, Theodor Herzl over fifty years ago. As a catalyst of the Zionist movement, Herzl's pamphlet, *The Jews' State*, outlines its principal objectives as the promotion of an organized, large-scale colonization of Palestine, the acquisition of an internationally recognized legal right to colonize Palestine, and the formation of a permanent organization to unite all Jews in the cause of Zionism.<sup>149</sup> Herzl's political movement organized the first *World Zionist Congress* in 1897, in order to discuss the homeland options. States were proposed in places including Alaska and Uganda, yet

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<sup>147</sup> Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict*. Verso, 2003.

<sup>148</sup> Goldberg, David J. *To the promised land: a history of Zionist thought from its origins to the modern state of Israel*. Penguin Group USA, 1996.

<sup>149</sup> Herzl, Theodor. *The Jews' State: A Critical English Translation*. Jason Aronson, Incorporated, 1997.

Jerusalem held the most religious meaning for Jews and was therefore held as the highest priority option.<sup>150</sup> Today, the World Zionist Organization works alongside the Israeli government with its main purpose to encourage Jewish immigration to Israel.<sup>151</sup>

In his analysis of various Zionist texts, including the scripture references in religious works and the original proclamations of Theodor Herzl, Walid Khalidi explains the origins of Zionist thought as being at its very core reliant on a 'religious right' to the land.<sup>152</sup> One aspect of Zionist claims, the claim to fulfill scripture by the establishment of a Jewish state in Palestine, cites the first explicit promise of Palestine to the descendants of Abraham at Shechem, now Neblus, in Genesis XII.<sup>153</sup> This concept of Zionism's religious core is replicated by the analysis of Yosef Gorny, by which he seeks to identify the 'ideological consensus' within which most of Zionist thinking unfolded. He argues that "at the core of the Zionist belief is the principal obstacle to any reconciliation with the Arabs, that Palestine should one day contain a Jewish majority."<sup>154</sup> This theory is directly relevant to Herzl's original proclamations for the creation of the state of Israel and also represents one of the sources of fuel for the intractability of this conflict.

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<sup>150</sup> Taylor, Alan R, *Prelude to Israel: An Analysis of Zionist Diplomacy, 1897-1947*-Philosophical Library, New York, 1959.

<sup>151</sup> Ibid.

<sup>152</sup> Khalidi, Walid, ed. *From haven to conquest: Readings in Zionism and the Palestine problem until 1948*. No. 2. Institute for Palestine Studies, 1971.

<sup>153</sup> Ibid. P 25.

<sup>154</sup> Gorny, Yosef. *Zionism and the Arabs, 1882-1948: a study of ideology*. Oxford University Press, 1987.

This desire for a state comprised of one singular ethnic group seems at odds with Western democratic values, particularly under the contextual lens of post-WWII politics. However, political Zionism presents the creation of Israel differently, highlighting the importance of the nation-state as a consensual relationship and the citizen as its irreducible unit, a concept that theoretically anchors democratic values, particularly those of the United States. Herzl's blueprint is importantly reliant on nation-building frameworks approved by the Western powers, layering the myth of Palestine as a unpopulated abyss with the idea of the creation of a highly democratic state in the Middle East. In addition to his theories regarding the impact of the Holocaust in Zionist narratives, Norman Finkelstein also argues that the Zionist analysis of the Jewish Question, through this process of nation-building, effectively duplicates the very reasoning of anti-Semitism. He draws parallels between political Zionism's logical constructions and those of the arguments used to justify the hatred of the Jews, by which this ideology "proposed that the Jewish nation resolve the Jewish Question by (re-)establishing itself in a state that 'belonged' to it."<sup>155</sup> In his historical mapping of the development of Zionism prior to 1948, Dina Porat argues that the "the origins of Zionist identity are based in the need to draw a clear distinction between Zionism and earlier forms of diasporic existence."<sup>156</sup> The Zionist movement was created as a way to solve

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<sup>155</sup> Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict*. Verso, 2003. P 8.

<sup>156</sup> Porat, Dina. "Forging Zionist Identity Prior to 1948—Against Which Counter-Identity?." *Israeli and Palestinian Narratives of Conflict: History's Double Helix* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2006) (2006): 47-71.

the miseries of the Jewish situation in the Diaspora, as essentially a negation of the Diaspora itself. In this manner, political Zionism was not constructed to combat anti-Semitism but to achieve a *modus vivendi*, coexisting with it.<sup>157</sup> In order to achieve this, Jews had to constitute themselves as a majority somewhere because in every place they attempted to immigrate to during the Diaspora, due to their statelessness, they formed a numerical minority.<sup>158</sup> Therefore, Jews were historically always *othered* by nation-states in Europe and the Middle East. Yet, instead of dismantling the *we vs. they* structure, internalized by the institutional, state-run process of otherization, the political Zionists maintained this framework by transferring the Jewish status from the minority to the majority, from *them* to *us*.

While the theories provided by Finkelstein, Gorny, and Khalidi, concerning the central ideological basis of political Zionism do reflect its role in the formation of Israel, it is also important to note that Zionism, although dominated by this discourse, also had inner fragmentation along the fault lines of Arab consent. For example, the cultural Zionist Ahad Ha'am believed that both peoples in Palestine should be treated justly despite the fact that he viewed Jewish historical rights to the land as stronger than those of Palestinians.<sup>159</sup> The Brit-Shalomist, Ernst Simon, calling for a peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Jews, held that Zionism's reliance on a historical right to Palestine

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<sup>157</sup> Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict*. Verso, 2003. P 64.

<sup>158</sup> Goldberg, David J. *To the promised land: a history of Zionist thought from its origins to the modern state of Israel*. Penguin Group USA, 1996.

<sup>159</sup> Ratsabi, Shalom. *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925-1933*. Vol. 23. Brill, 2002.

was “a metaphorical rather than political category, binding to us rather than to the Arabs as it relates to the inner depths of Judaism.”<sup>160</sup> Scholars and Zionist figures therefore cannot be prescribed as monolithically dedicated to the religious core of political Zionism and many argued instead that Jews *don't* have a religious right to land without the consent of the Arabs.

In recognition of the many forms of Zionism and the secular lines of reasoning used by some pro-Israeli scholars, perhaps the most dynamic argument in favor of Israel's statehood is that of American lawyer Alan Dershowitz. Dershowitz's argument in *The Case for Israel* is extremely compelling because he directly rejects radical Zionist claims, which are rooted in the intangible religious ideologies that serve as the central platform of the criticisms of Finkelstein, Gorny, and Khalidi. When addressing the accusation that Israel is an imperialist state, Dershowitz claims that unlike colonial settlers serving the expansionist commercial and military goals, the Jewish refugees were escaping from the countries that had oppressed them for centuries. In this manner, he constructs the Jewish settlers in Palestine as “far more comparable to the American colonists who had left England because of religious oppression than they were to 18th and 19th century English imperialists who colonized India, the French settlers who colonized North Africa, and the Dutch expansionists who colonized Indonesia.”<sup>161</sup> This comparison is linked to Dershowitz's analysis of the term *yishuv*, meaning “return.” He argues that the use of this

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<sup>160</sup> Ratsabi, Shalom. *Between Zionism and Judaism: The Radical Circle in Brith Shalom, 1925-1933*. Vol. 23. Brill, 2002.

<sup>161</sup> Dershowitz, Alan. "The case for Israel." *Dublin ULJ* 25 (2003): 44. P 14.

term in fundamental aspects of his pro-Israeli argument refers more to “an immigration of refugees than a determined political or nationalistic movement.”<sup>162</sup> Yet this reinterpretation of the meaning of ‘return’ neglects to address the use of *yishuv* in political Zionism. While it is true that not every Jew entering Palestine was a political Zionist or had the specific motivations of achieving Herzl’s original platforms, their actions perfectly correlated and responded to the agenda of political Zionism. Even if *yishuv* is used to refer to the fleeing of refugees, its political consequences, in displacing a pre-existing population and occupying that territory, remain at odds with the humanitarian principles Dershowitz attempts to appeal to.

Dershowitz’s appeal to the approval of Western democratic frameworks is most apparent in his defense of the occupation itself and the high disproportionality in Israeli and Palestinian death tolls. He argues, in response to disproportionality in death toll, that this comparison is misleading because “these include the fact that Palestinians count the suicide bombers themselves as victims and ignore the large number of foiled and prevented terrorist attacks against Israelis.”<sup>163</sup> The inclusion of ‘suicide bombers,’ perceived as ‘freedom fighters’ by Palestinians does not account for the massive Palestinian death tolls in the face of comparatively minimal loss of Israeli civilian life. According to a study conducted by Israeli human rights organization, *B’Tselem*, the number of Palestinians killed compared to Israelis was 6,792: 1,102 since September

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<sup>162</sup> Dershowitz, Alan. "The case for Israel." Dublin ULJ 25 (2003): 44. P 21.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid. P 123.



2000, and 3,457:125 since the 2005 Gaza pullout.<sup>164</sup> Much of this disproportionality can be attributed to Israel's *Iron Dome*, an air defense system developed by Rafael Advanced Defense Systems and Israel Aircraft Industries. The "foiled attacks" Dershowitz refers to are thus made possible by the military advancement and wealth accumulation of Israel, largely resulting from billions of dollars in US funding annually. In addition, Dershowitz bases his debunking of this disproportionality argument on the concept that most of the Palestinians killed don't qualify as "innocent civilians." This is because Dershowitz, following suit to many American and Zionist perspectives, thinks of any Palestinian military or political activity not as resistance, but as terrorism. In many Israeli death tolls, similar to the statistics relied upon by justifications of Afghanistan drone operations, any male between the ages of sixteen and forty-five is referred to as a militant.<sup>165</sup> Here, the use of select rhetorical labels also warps the reality of the exponentially higher Palestinian death rate by dictating what constitutes a 'non-combatant.' Israel refers to its settler populations, individuals in violation of international law by illegally living within Palestinian territory, as simply *Israeli civilians*, while it refers to targeted refugee camps as *terrorist headquarters*.<sup>166</sup>

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<sup>164</sup> B'Tselem | The Israeli Information Center for Human Rights in the Occupied Territories. Accessed March 21, 2017. <http://www.btselem.org/>

<sup>165</sup> Kendall, J. Nicholas. "Israeli Counter-Terrorism: Targeted Killings under International Law." (2001): 1069.

<sup>166</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. "Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolvement, contents, functions and consequences." *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006): 19-46. P 26.

Perhaps most telling is the fact that Dershowitz's weakest point is his defense of Israel against claims that it is the *prime human rights violator in the world* by stating that "Israel is the only nation in the Middle East that operates under the rule of law."<sup>167</sup> This statement is stunningly inaccurate and represents a complete lapse in the use of skewed, yet sound rationality that Dershowitz uses in responses to other condemnations of Israel. In this statement, Dershowitz attempts to monolithically collapse and discredit over twenty distinct, internationally recognized, and functional states. He supports this assertion by noting that Israel's pragmatic Supreme Court and judiciary system has an 80% approval rating among Israelis, while the Palestinian Authority, the governing body of a proportion of the West Bank, has a mere 20% approval rate. This, along with the acknowledgement that "Israel has among the best records in the world with regard to the rights of women, gays, the physically and mentally challenged, and so on,"<sup>168</sup> represents elements of Dershowitz's argument that lie outside the basic realities of the political ramifications of occupation. The low PA approval rating can be directly attributed to the internal fracturing of Palestinian political parties, including Hamas, Fatah, and their narratives, in response to its cooperation with the two-state solution. While Israel *does* have high functioning democratic institutions that cater to its marginalized populations, this simply reflects Israel's human rights in terms of its treatment of its *own Jewish citizens*, completely excluding its treatment of Arab Israelis and Palestinians living in the

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<sup>167</sup> Dershowitz, Alan. "The case for Israel." Dublin ULJ 25 (2003): 44. P 183.

<sup>168</sup> Ibid. P 187.

occupied West Bank and the Gaza Strip. In conclusion, Dershowitz's defense of Israel involves his comparison of a single, unified, internationally recognized state to the occupied territories of Gaza and the West Bank, separated by Israel, contained by massive barriers, and subject to complete control by Israeli government with no access to the resources to make the human rights of its citizens attainable.

Dershowitz's attempt to defend Israel's statehood represents the groundless use of context manipulation in order to justify the Israeli narrative by assessing individual 'truths' outside the larger reality of the occupation. In his analysis of the systematic inner-workings of the Zionist myth, Ted Honderich discusses the importance of strategically layering several 'truths' in order to provide one, comprehensive proposition. Honderich provides a specific exploration of the myth of Palestine as a depopulated place, by which "Palestinians had not formed themselves into a state, they had not separated themselves from other Arabs, the place was most recently defined by way of the British protectorate, they did not have the culture and past that is exactly a national state."<sup>169</sup> The separate statements forming the coherent proposition together conclude that the Palestinians were not *fully a people*. Honderich argues that the persistence and logical palpability of this construction is a result of Palestine being held to imperialistic, Western standards of statehood, reflective of Dershowitz's belief that no state in the Middle East "operates under the rule of law."<sup>170</sup> In this manner, the complexity of the Zionist myth, as a direct

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<sup>169</sup> Honderich, Ted. "Terrorisms in Palestine," in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 4.

<sup>170</sup> Dershowitz, Alan. "The case for Israel." *Dublin ULJ* 25 (2003): 44. P 186.

result of its basis on layered, wrongly perceived yet *rational* ‘truths,’ resulted in the concept that the Palestinians were not a ‘people’ in a way that warranted statehood. The fallacy of these ‘truths’ was not realized until their actual circumstances became blatantly observable. In this manner, all of these Zionist myths regarding the peoplehood of Palestinians were proved to be inaccurate because the Palestinians did suffer an overwhelming kind of catastrophe. As Honderich describes, “by their sacrifices, they have proved that they must have been fully a people. They did not come out of a hat later. They were not created as a people by Neo-Zionism.”<sup>171</sup> This realization of a mistake made regarding the statehood of Palestinians demonstrates the power of strategically layering truths in order to construct a larger myth.

This larger myth coincides with the Israeli narrative itself, which has visible linkages to political and cultural Zionism. Daniel Bar-Tal and Gavriel Salomon argue that the ethos of the Israeli conflict narrative consists of eight themes of societal belief that have changed according to sociopolitical context in the decades between the 1940’s and 1970’s, evolving different functions for each time period.<sup>172</sup> Providing an an epistemic basis for present direction of a society, its images, and beliefs, the Israeli ethos consists of: the justness of Israeli goals, security, positive collective in-group images, one’s own

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<sup>171</sup> Honderich, Ted. “Terrorisms in Palestine,” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 11.

<sup>172</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. "Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolvement, contents, functions and consequences." *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006): 19-46. P 26.

victimization, delegitimizing the opponent, patriotism, unity, and peace.<sup>173</sup> Peace, as the final stage of this ethos, represents Israel's dominant image in resolutions and 'peace talks' aimed at finding a two-state solution. Peace acts as the ultimate goal of Israel, causing Israeli Jews to be stereotyped as a peace-loving people forced by circumstances beyond control to engage in a violent, intractable conflict with the Arabs. They are viewed as eager to pursue peace negotiations, while the Arabs represent the only obstacle to this achievement, unwilling to negotiate. As Bar-Tal and Salomon argue, "such beliefs inspired hope and optimism, strengthened the Israeli Jew's positive self-image, and contributed to an empathetic self-image in the outside world."<sup>174</sup> The evolution of these eight themes demonstrates the complementing of collective memory and the ethos of a conflict, together constituting a holistic narrative that society members share.<sup>175</sup> The themes shared across these two narratives, the ethos changing to accommodate new political events, provide the focal points that contribute to the continuation and intractability of the conflict itself.

### **Americanizing Zionism**

The Zionist myth is heavily reliant on the use of altered perceptions via Western frameworks and imperialistic mindsets. This has been consistently demonstrated by the geopolitical strategic alliance between Israel and the United States, by which American

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<sup>173</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. "Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolvement, contents, functions and consequences." *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006): 19-46. P 26.

<sup>174</sup> *Ibid.* P 31.

<sup>175</sup> *Ibid.* P 26.

acquiescence has enabled the Zionist myth to gain traction through parallels in the imperialist tendencies in the Middle East, namely the use of terror to justify occupation. The use of Western frameworks includes the range of linguistic to legal interpretations in the fields of policy work, human rights, and international law, and has often been used to justify the Israeli narrative to serve American political interests. In her article involving the relationship between Israel and America, Avishai Margalit argues that the perception that the states' relationship is one of 'pure love' is collapsed by a history of characterized ambivalence, namely that "helping is not a recipe for being loved."<sup>176</sup>

The period of Jewish immigration to America from 1881-1914, resulting in a permanent migration and the formation of a stable community, occurred directly alongside the creation of the Zionist movement, with 2 million Jews emigrating from Europe before the start of WWI. In comparison, during this time period, 85,000 emigrated from Europe to Palestine.<sup>177</sup> This enormous quantifiable difference provides context to Margalit's argument that initially, it appeared that the promised land for the Jews was not Palestine, but America. This seeming reality was a fear of the Zionist movement, whose distinct goal was the creation of a purely Israeli state, resulting in heightened tensions between the Zionist movement and the reality of Jewish life in America. Margalit describes the phenomenon by which "Jews outside the United States

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<sup>176</sup> Margalit, Avishai. "A story of ambivalence or pure love: Israelis and America." *social research* (2005): 825-830.

<sup>177</sup> Goldstein, Sidney, and Calvin Goldscheider. "Jewish Americans. Three Generations in a Jewish Community." (1968).

and especially the Zionists in Palestine had a strong feeling that Jews in America did not lead authentic Jewish lives: they were bound to be assimilated into the American way of life, which was perceived culturally and religiously as the negation of Jewish life.”<sup>178</sup> This resulted in an experience of mutual alienation between American and Israeli Jews, the ambivalent attitude of repulsion *and* attraction toward America.

This ambivalence is directly translated into the US foreign policy initiatives that reflect American domestic politics and in turn influence Israel’s own political parties, creating a dipole between the Israeli political left and right. While the left hopes for America to impose a solution, the right fears that the American solution will drive Israel from its territories, especially if the anti-Semitic elements in American life joined forces with oil interests in the Middle East.<sup>179</sup> This dangerous tension and the resulting connectivity between American and Israeli domestic political currents demonstrates what Margalit refers to as the most unstable aspect of an American solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: the fact that it is “hinged to the delicate black and white area between who Americans choose to hate more, the Jews or the Arabs.”<sup>180</sup> In this manner, Margalit’s ethnographic analysis shows that the belief in a strong, unbreakable bond between Israel and America—one of shared values, customs, and beliefs—is fictitious and consequently disproven by an analysis of the history between American and political

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<sup>178</sup> Margalit, Avishai. "A story of ambivalence or pure love: Israelis and America." *social research* (2005). P 827.

<sup>179</sup> *Ibid.* P 830.

<sup>180</sup> *Ibid.* P 830.

forms of Zionism. The relationship between the two states is one of political and economic convenience, based in deeply rooted geopolitical interests. An idea of mutual 'pure love' is simply a component of a larger network of narratives used to justify American imperialist initiatives in the Middle East, a tool enhanced by the Americanization of Zionism.

These imperialist initiatives have materialized within US foreign policy to the extent that this form of Americanized Zionism has been constructed to perfectly align with the ideological backing of the War on Terror. In his analysis, George Kateb argues that there is an inherent logical fallacy in the reality by which Americans fear only the terrorists and not their own government as it fights the terrorists. Kateb doesn't call for a redirection of fear away from terrorists, but rather the expansion of the scope of this fear to include the American government and its collaborator, Israel.<sup>181</sup> He argues that "Muslim terrorism is an enemy, but it is an enemy that these two administrations find it immensely useful to have. This realization should affect the way in which Western analysts conceive of the enemy."<sup>182</sup> This concept of extending suspicion toward the American and Israeli administrations of Bush and Sharon when Kateb constructed his analysis, and of Trump and Netanyahu today, is a response to the politicized narratives innate to the relationship between the two states and their corresponding defense of the Israeli occupation. In this manner, terrorism is used to further the project of imperialism

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<sup>181</sup> Kateb, George. "A life of fear." *Social research* (2004): 887-926.

<sup>182</sup> *Ibid.* P 890.



in the Middle East, and is made sustainable, rhetorically and publicly, by falsely associating terrorism with exclusively Muslims and Arabs — a form of xenophobia principally driven by fear.

Fear often has an abstract quality by which there may not be a visceral fear or psychological dread, but rather a vague sense that there is something big to be afraid of, making people comply because they accept the pattern of conduct initiated by leaders.<sup>183</sup> This form of abstraction creates a response by which “direct experience doesn't circumscribe the play of imagination or the flow of media representations,” meaning that American acquiescence confirms sets of stereotypes that link Palestinian resistance exclusively and absolutely to the notions of terrorist activity.<sup>184</sup> This form of stereotyping is increased because the US administration and media platforms yoke Palestinian terrorism to that of 9/11, despite the fact that there is no actual link. Yet Sharon's and now Netanyahu's policies help to spread a pervasive anger among Arabs and Muslims, creating a deepened reservoir of sympathy for terrorism directed at either the US or Israel.<sup>185</sup> As a result, the US and Israel are intertwined, and their status as victims of terror, confirmed by Arab and Muslim frustration and anger that provides evidence for many stereotypes involving these identities, perfectly matches the political initiatives of their respective administrations.

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<sup>183</sup> Kateb, George. "A life of fear." Social research (2004). P 900.

<sup>184</sup> Ibid. P 902.

<sup>185</sup> Ibid. P 902.

The abstract character of fear and its ability to be politically manipulated mimics the ambivalence surrounding the term “evil” in the context of the American and Zionist usage of terrorism to justify the War on Terror. Through her philosophical analysis of the use of evil in the rhetoric surrounding terrorism, Bat-Ami Bar On concludes that terrorism can and *should* be regarded as an evil, but only when considered among a multiplicity of evils comparable to it— for example, war crimes, repression, and human rights violations. When evil is secularized without reference to religious morality, it becomes abstract, like fear, but there remains a distinguishing factor in that it “disregards one of the most important constraints on the violence of war — the distinction between ‘civilians’ and ‘combatants’”<sup>186</sup> This is arguably the most contentious aspect of terrorism — its explicit targeting of civilian populations, often through attacks involving public transportation and highly populated public spheres, making terrorism a buzzword with strong associations with the abstraction of evil. Yet Bar On provides an interesting analysis in the distinguishing between Palestinian terrorism, such as the suicide bombings performed by Hamas, and the violence perpetrated by Israeli forces:

There are always rules of engagement that, though not necessarily and lately not even frequently complied with, do restrict Israeli military personnel from terrorizing one and all Palestinians. The presence of such rules of engagement, probably admixed with self-interested or indifferent bad faith, prevents Jewish Israelis and others from appreciating the parity between the “evil” of Israeli repression of the Palestinians and the “evil” of Palestinian terrorism.<sup>187</sup>

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<sup>186</sup> Bar On, Bat-Ami. "Terrorism, Evil, and Everyday Depravity." *Hypatia* 18, no. 1 (2003): 158.

<sup>187</sup> *Ibid.* P 160.

The concept that as a recognized state, Israel is held to certain institutional mechanisms that prevent it from engaging in acts of terror, creates an artificial separation between the acts of violence committed by Israel and those committed by Palestine, even when Israel does not comply with its obligations to international law. The terrorist label is therefore applied exclusively to political parties that work outside the traditional, Western conception of statehood, including the existence of Palestinian political structures within the Israeli occupation.

This assertion reflects the tangible importance of language in creating forces of justification from the abstract notions of fear, evil, and security. For example, in 2002, the Bush Administration referred to the Al-Qaeda network as the *Axis of Evil*, a referential nod to the Axis Powers of WWII. This allusion is two-fold in its rationalization: it equates terrorism with the ultimate bipolarity of WWII politics, and, by carefully providing a metaphor associating the Axis Powers and terrorism, it aligns the subjects of this label with Nazi Germany and broader contexts of anti-Semitism. This is particularly useful in America's alliance with political Zionism and the Israeli administration because it allows Palestinians to be conceived of as anti-Semitic, generating further justification for the creation of a Jewish state. In order to understand the ways in which phenomena including the layering of 'truths' within political Zionism and the selective distribution of the naming practices effectively delegitimize Palestine, it is critical to understand the depth of American support for the Israeli occupation.

### **A Factual Account of US support of Israel**

For over half a century, Israel has been accused by both Western and Arab states of violating international law in its treatment of Palestinians. Perhaps one of the most contentious points of legality concerns a barrier wall constructed by Israel along the border of the West Bank, roughly following the 1949 Armistice Line. The wall is currently 280 miles long and 26 feet high. While Palestinians argue that the wall has directly impacted their access to medical care, economic activity, and the transportation of goods and people, Israel claims that it acts as a ‘security barrier’ in response to Palestinian suicide bombers. Israeli Defense Minister Binyamin Ben-Eliezer is quoted in 2003 arguing that “this fence has one single goal — to defend the lives of Israeli citizens.”<sup>188</sup> Because Palestine is a semi-recognized territory, it does not hold full statehood, and is therefore limited in its ability to represent itself on the international stage. In response, the United Nations has made repeated attempts at condemning Israel on behalf of Palestine, even declaring the wall illegal under international law in 2004.<sup>189</sup> By a majority of fourteen to one, the ICJ found that the barrier’s construction violates principles outlined in the UN Charter and long-standing global conventions “that prohibit the threat or use of force and the acquisition of territory that way, as well as principles upholding the right of peoples to self-determination.”<sup>190</sup> In addition to the illegality of the

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<sup>188</sup> "International Court of Justice finds Israeli barrier in Palestinian territory is illegal." UN News Center. July 09, 2004. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid.

<sup>190</sup> Ibid.

wall itself, its construction does not correlate with the exact 1949 Armistice boundaries, often dubbed the “Green Line.” Observing that 80% of Israeli settlers in the occupied Palestinian territory lived between the barrier and the so-called Green Line, the ICJ also ruled in 2004 that the structure’s route could “prejudge the future frontier between Israel and Palestine.”<sup>191</sup>

The construction of this wall and the 2004 settlements between it and the agreed upon Green Line, which have since expanded tremendously, represent a larger problem in the illegality of Israel’s actions. The wall is tantamount to *de facto* annexation by which it creates potentially permanent ‘fait accompli’ on the ground.<sup>192</sup> Specifically, the illegal Israeli settler populations are in direct violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention’s Article 49, which states that “the Occupying Power shall not deport or transfer parts of its own civilian population into the territory it occupies.”<sup>193</sup> This means that alongside illegal Israeli settlements, the wall alters the demographic composition of the occupied Palestinian territory, directly impeding the Palestinian’s right to self-determination. It is also detrimental to the lives of the Israelis living in these illegal settlements, because it creates a form of Israeli attachment to land that legally belongs to the Palestinians, making the likelihood of peace via the ‘two-state solution’ much more unlikely. In response, Israel has dismissed the advisory opinion of the court and no binding resolution

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<sup>191</sup> "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory— ADVISORY OPINION." International Court of Justice. July 9, 2004. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid.

<sup>193</sup> Morello, Carol, and Ruth Eglash. "U.S. declines to veto U.N. Security Council resolution for Israel to stop Jewish settlement activity." The Washington Post. December 23, 2016. Accessed March 22, 2017.

has been enacted. The construction of the wall is not the only abuse committed by the Israeli government, but it is the only concern of the Palestinians, alongside the illegality of settlements, to be brought to court through the UN's principal judicial organ.

In the past thirty years, the US has vetoed every UN Resolution attempting to condemn Israel for its treatment of Palestine, up until Resolution 2334, calling for an end to Israeli settlement building, in which the US abstained from voting.<sup>194</sup> In addition to using its geopolitical power and Security Council status to support Israel, the US also provides an economic sponsorship of the state. In the Fiscal Year 2015 foreign assistance request, Israel has maintained its position as America's top recipient of aid, followed by Afghanistan, Egypt, Pakistan, and Nigeria. The 2015 report calculates US aid to Israel to be approximately \$3.1 billion, compared to, for example, Nigeria's \$720,892,00.<sup>195</sup> However, this data is somewhat understated, given that countries like Nigeria are much more populous than Israel. In per capita terms, Israel's lead is staggering, with \$378.33 in foreign aid compared to Nigeria's \$4.04 and the #2 recipient, Afghanistan's \$62.74. It is also critical to note that most of these top aid recipients have low per capita GDPs.<sup>196</sup> For example, Afghanistan's per capita GDP is \$1,150, compared to Israel's \$34,770.<sup>197</sup> Compared to the other countries on this recipient list, Israel is extremely wealthy.

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<sup>194</sup> "Legal Consequences of the Construction of a Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory— ADVISORY OPINION." International Court of Justice. July 9, 2004. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>195</sup> Sharp, Jeremy M. "US Foreign Aid to Israel." *Congressional Research Service*. December 22, 2016.

<sup>196</sup> Sharp, Jeremy Maxwell. *US foreign aid to Israel*. DIANE Publishing, 2010.

<sup>197</sup> "GDP ranking." World Bank | Data. Accessed March 22, 2017.

However, American foreign aid is not mostly economic assistance to countries in need. Even Egypt and Pakistan are not particularly poor countries, and if this were the case, Haiti and India would surpass all of these states as aid recipients. Rather, the majority of this foreign aid is spent on buying American military equipment and thus serves as an indirect subsidy to the military-industrial complex.<sup>198</sup>

Given the spectrum of blatant human rights abuses and a disregard for international law, *why does the US support Israel?* While virtually all Western countries share the US's strong support for Israel's 'legitimate right' to exist in peace and security, these same nations have refused to provide arms and aid while the occupation of lands seized in the 1967 war continues.<sup>199</sup> US foreign policy in Israel can be understood as motivated not by objective needs or even strong moral commitments to the country itself, but rather as a means to advance its own perceived strategic interests. The US began sending billions of dollars in aid to Israel annually as a direct response to the Cold War tensions that prompted the USSR to begin courting Arab nations after the generally anti-Western Arab Nationalist Movement.<sup>200</sup> It is critical to note that the US didn't always support Israel; America sent some humanitarian aid after WWII, but this was relatively common among Western nations and wasn't perceived as a form of preferential

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<sup>198</sup> Alesina, Alberto, and David Dollar. "Who gives foreign aid to whom and why?." *Journal of economic growth* 5, no. 1 (2000): 33-63.

<sup>199</sup> Losman, Donald L. *International economic sanctions: The cases of Cuba, Israel, and Rhodesia*. University of New Mexico Press, 1979.

<sup>200</sup> Bass, Warren. *Support any friend: Kennedy's Middle East and the making of the US-Israel alliance*. Oxford University Press, 2004.

treatment.<sup>201</sup> However, during the Cold War, with the USSR and the US actively competing for ideological influence in almost every region in the world, the US sought to maintain relevance in the Middle East through an alliance with the anti-Communist Israeli state.

The strategic reasons for the US alliance to Israel in the context of Soviet opposition are clear: Israel's air force has become predominant throughout the region; its frequent wars have provided battlefield testing for American arms, often against Soviet weapons; its intelligence service has assisted the US in intelligence gathering and covert operations; the state has missiles capable of reaching as far as the former USSR that includes a nuclear arsenal of hundreds of weapons; and it has cooperated with the US military-industrial complex with research and development for new jet fighters and anti-missile defense systems.<sup>202</sup> The pattern of US aid to Israel is also extremely revealing, in that it increases in response to Israeli victories. Had the aid actually been intended for Israeli security, it would have been proportionally at its highest during the formation of the state in 1948, and not today when the nation has become economically and militarily stabilized. Immediately following Israel's victory in the 1967 war, US aid increased by 450%, perfectly coinciding with the nation's demonstrated military superiority in the region.<sup>203</sup> Periodic increases like this one can be traced to Israeli victories following the

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<sup>201</sup> Zunes, Stephen. "The strategic functions of US Aid to Israel." *Middle East Policy* 4, no. 4 (1996): 90-101.

<sup>202</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>203</sup> Lipson, Charles. "American support for Israel: History, sources, limits." *Israel Affairs* 2, no. 3-4 (1996): 128-146.



1971 civil war in Jordan, the fall of Iran's Shah in 1979, the 1982 Israeli invasion of Lebanon, as well as during and immediately after the Gulf War. Even when Israel dramatically increased its repression in the occupied territories, including incursions into Palestinian territory provided in treaties guaranteed by the US, American aid continued to increase, shooting up again following the 9/11 terrorist attacks. The correlation is obvious — the stronger and more cooperative with US interests Israel becomes, the stronger the support and foreign aid it receives.

This correlation is not exclusive to US support of Israel, but rather is mirrored elsewhere in foreign imperatives including US support of Indonesia's twenty-four year occupation and repression in East Timor. It appears that as long as the amoral imperatives of realpolitik continue to remain unchallenged, US foreign policy in the Middle East and elsewhere will not reflect the American public's conception that US foreign policies are being guided by the ethical standards of humanitarianism. With US support, in the form of an strong political alliance, extensive funding, and the vetoing of UN Resolutions intended to condemn the state's illegal practices, Israel has been able to act with impunity when violating international law.

### **Naming Terrorism**

The strategically important application of the terrorist label is grounded by the historical process of delegitimizing Palestine through the use of language to create moral barriers that effectively isolate and separate Palestinian groups from other political actors. The vastly unequal power relations between Palestine, Israel, and the US can be traced to

the ethnographic and linguistic applications of colonist mindsets. As argued by anthropologist Julie Peteet, colonialism generates a set of terms to describe conquered lands as uninhabited, *terra nullius*, regardless of any existing population — a practice demonstrated by the Zionist myth of Palestine as *a land without a people for a people without a land*.<sup>204</sup> Peteet expands upon this theory, noting that “inhabitants of these colonized lands have been historically referred to as savages, barbarians, and most recently, ‘terrorists.’”<sup>205</sup> The terrorist characterization is especially adept because it fits perfectly into a justification narrative that portrays an occupation as simply the containment of the radical opposition of the colonized people. In this manner, any social, political, or military-based retaliations become “terrorist attacks” that perfectly conform to the image of the violent, barbaric Arab.<sup>206</sup> The process of naming itself is defined by Yasir Suleiman as “a linguistic phenomenon in which the decision-making process, the product and its reception interact in a complex manner involving psychology, aesthetics, ideology, politics, history, culture, and instrumentality.”<sup>207</sup> Suleiman argues that naming processes are of particular importance in intractable conflicts because the symbolic meaning of a name is derived from cultural and ideological values associated with it at

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<sup>204</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine–Israel conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 155.

<sup>205</sup> *Ibid.* P 155.

<sup>206</sup> *Ibid.* P 155.

<sup>207</sup> Suleiman, Yasir. *A war of words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. Vol. 19. Cambridge University Press, 2004. P 159.

the points of production and reception, meaning that names assume greater value when narratives conflict with one another.<sup>208</sup>

The terrorist label is especially effective in Israeli and American narratives of the occupation because it creates a *moral barrier* that makes Palestinians distinct in their values, a process of moral distancing combined with systematic *otherization*. The term ‘terrorism’ is understood differently within different narratives, perspectives, and normative frameworks because it is a term that is, in its very definition, morally charged.<sup>209</sup> In her examination of the practice of naming events, actions, places, and people in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, Peteet argues that names, as a “part of cultural systems that structure and nuance the way we imagine and understand the world,” embody ideological meaning and moral attributes that can be mobilized in order to achieve various projects of power.<sup>210</sup> This is because the analytical approaches to lexicons are embedded in historical, political, and cultural frameworks, through which they reference a *moral grammar* that backs and reproduces power.<sup>211</sup> Due to the fact that Israel and Palestine are vastly disparate in terms of weapon possession, support from the US, institutional infrastructure, and the prevalence and circulation of narrative in the West, contests over names in the Israeli-Palestinian conflict are an example of this political

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<sup>208</sup> Suleiman, Yasir. *A war of words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. Vol. 19. Cambridge University Press, 2004. P 159.

<sup>209</sup> Honderich, Ted. “Terrorisms in Palestine,” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 11.

<sup>210</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine–Israel conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 153.

<sup>211</sup> *Ibid.* P 153.

dynamic, by which changes in naming practices must be traced along the lines of power.<sup>212</sup>

Concerning historical dates and collective memories of these events, Peteet states that “sustained attempts have been made to deny Palestinian memories and narratives of what transpired in 1948. That 15 May is annually celebrated as *Independence Day* in Israel is a sign of the Israelis power to define the historical events of the time ‘cleansed of traces of power.’”<sup>213</sup> The Israeli *Independence Day*, known as Al Nakba, *the Catastrophe*, by Palestinians, is intended to grant Israel victim status by alluding to colonial narratives, a mirror-image of the actualities of its occupation. This name carries enormous moral weight, reframing the context of the events of 1948. Likewise, the Israeli assigning of Hebrew names to replace the Arabic titles of places, mountains, roads, and towns demonstrates an effective linguistic takeover that gives the occupation a rhetorical groundwork. The biblical names given to areas in Palestine, such as the use of *Judea and Samaria* to refer to the occupied West Bank, complements the political and religious Zionist angle of a ‘religious right to the land.’ Suleiman argues that “by removing most of the Arabic place names from the map, Israel did not just create a new map, it also inscribed a new reality in which Hebrew won the battle over Arabic, just as the early Zionists hoped it would in the cartographic domain.”<sup>214</sup> In this manner, Israeli naming

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<sup>212</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine–Israel conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 154.

<sup>213</sup> Ibid. P 156.

<sup>214</sup> Suleiman, Yasir. *A war of words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. Vol. 19. Cambridge University Press, 2004. P 162.

practices are not limited to the politicized use of the terrorist label and attempt to rupture the connection of the Palestinians to the land and delegitimize their claims to statehood.

These forms of Israeli naming practices are easily incorporated into the US's restructured global role post-9/11, in a world order of "absolute dualities," allies of the West vs. *forces of evil*, with links to the vast global terror network. Peteet states that this duality has concrete moral implications in that "the term 'terrorist' is often applied to any act of resistance and constructs a subject that is a legitimate target of military intervention and the violation of human rights."<sup>215</sup> In this manner, an application of the terrorist name implicates whole populations and becomes the rationale for collective punishment. The terrorist name has this power because it places the terrorist as beyond the *pale of civilized society*, as an 'evil.' For example, *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting* (FAIR) noted in its 2002 advisory that CNN, *The New York Times*, and National Public Radio's reporting on suicide bombings failed to mention that they occurred in areas of Jerusalem such as French Hill and Gilo, that have been occupied territories since 1967.<sup>216</sup> This in no way excuses or justifies these attacks, but this kind of reporting, through the use of naming practices, neglects the context provided by international law. In this manner, the Palestinians are classified as violent terrorists bombing civilian neighborhoods instead of

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<sup>215</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as interventions: naming in the Palestine-Israel conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 169.

<sup>216</sup> FAIR. "2002 Media Advisory." *Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting*. March 01, 2002. Accessed April 02, 2017. <http://fair.org/extra/think-tanks-in-a-time-of-crisis/>.

an occupied people denied basic civil and human rights, who resist Israeli illegal settlements.

Definitions that explicitly mark terrorism as illegitimate are contentious classifications because it is much more informative to base moral assessment on a case-by-case basis rather than through *a priori* conditions. In his philosophical examination of the definitional uses of *terrorism*, Tomis Kapitan provides a succinct breakdown of the term's usage, defining terrorism as having three central components:

- i) a deliberate use or threat of violence
- ii) politically motivated
- iii) directed against non-military personnel<sup>217</sup>

By contrast, Ted Honderich describes terrorism as “small-scale violence, driven by political aim, that violates national and international law and is *prima facie* morally wrong.”<sup>218</sup> Honderich's definition adds the component of conditional morality, with moral error accepted as correct upon *first impression* until proved otherwise. Its framework therefore also includes resistance activity and guerrilla warfare, which seems to ignore the common currency and the negative connotations of the word. Both Honderich and Kapitan avoid the use of “terrorism” to describe exclusively non-state actors, Kapitan stating that “exempting states from being agents of terrorism yields an unfair rhetorical advantage to established governments in any political struggle,

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<sup>217</sup> Kapitan, Tomis. “Terror,” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and Terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 17.

<sup>218</sup> Honderich, Ted. “Terrorisms in Palestine,” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and Terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 3.

especially since the weaponry and organization that states use in pursuing their ends through violence against civilians consistently dwarfs any amount of hard achieved by non-state actors.”<sup>219</sup> This form of linguistic inclusivity ideally captures the disparity in naming terrorists within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Because Israel has been granted internationally-recognized state status, it holds an enormous rhetorical advantage over Palestinian political actors, so that the same violent acts are called ‘political maneuvers’ when committed by Israel, but ‘terrorist attacks’ when committed by parties including the PA, Hamas, and Fatah.

The essence of the definitions of terrorism provided by Kapitan and Honderich alludes to the importance of exacting the set of circumstances required to permit a terrorist categorization, namely the use or threat of violence, the targeting of civilian populations, and the character of political motivation. Therefore, as argued by Kapitan, “the moral concerns with terrorism have to do with the nature of its victims, the methods employed, or the intentions with which it is done, not the identity of its agents.”<sup>220</sup> This shift in focus away from the nature of its agents and towards the nature of its victims is dramatically contrasted by terrorism’s image in popular society and its functional usage in Israeli and American narratives. The way Americans perceive terrorism is tied to the conceptual understanding of events like 9/11, the Boston bombing, and the Orlando

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<sup>219</sup> Kapitan, Tomis. “Terror,” in Law, Stephen. *Israel, Palestine and Terror*. Continuum Intl Pub Group, 2008. P 18.

<sup>220</sup> Ibid. P 18.

nightclub shooting.<sup>221</sup> Here the lines are clear— these attacks were all politically motivated, and resulted exclusively in civilian death. Their means were horrific, intentional, and deadly. The problem rests in this definitional understanding is being applied seamlessly to other uses of the label in other places in the world, particularly in the middle of state-sponsored conflicts.<sup>222</sup>

The actions of Israel in its occupation of Palestine reflect a sovereignty-based definition of terror based on Hobbesian notions of terror. For example, in *Leviathan*, Hobbes describes the tension between state sovereignty and peace: “For by his authority, given him by every particular in the commonwealth, he hath the use of so much power and strength conferred on him, that by terror thereof, he is enabled to conform the wills of them all, to peace at home, and mutual aid against their enemies abroad.”<sup>223</sup> Campaigns of terror traditionally sponsored by states, such as Hitler’s Third Reich or Stalin’s Soviet Union, are often justified using narratives that capitalize upon *us vs. them* mentalities with an end goal of ‘peace at home.’ This form of state-perpetuated violence is inherent to Hobbes’ philosophical argument, which attempts to justify terror as an instrument used in the name of reason, nation, and humanity. He does this by claiming that the existence of a sovereign powerful enough to control the wills of the people was in the interest of everyone who desired peace.<sup>224</sup> Hobbes recognizes the implicit limitations of his

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<sup>221</sup> Honderich, Ted. *Humanity, Terrorism, Terrorist War: Palestine, 9-11, Iraq, 7-7...* A&C Black, 2006.

<sup>222</sup> Ibid.

<sup>223</sup> Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. A&C Black, 2006. P 114.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid. P 127.



argument, noting that no one is obligated to submit to their own execution.<sup>225</sup> Yet if all attempts at justification are based in the interests of the individual, the needs of the collective collapse and allow for a manipulation of Hobbesian notions of *peace through terror* to become central components of occupation narratives.

In contrast, Locke's rhetoric is very different, situated alongside a place in Western liberal democracy for armed resistance against oppressive regimes and a reliance on the assertion of the rights of individuals as distinct *agents* of the collective.<sup>226</sup> Lockean philosophy, as demonstrated by the *Second Treatise of Government*, has a component of consent in order to address the disparity in the power of a state over its citizens: "Men being, as has been said, by nature, all free, equal and independent, no one can be put out of this estate, and subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent."<sup>227</sup> This consent is often seen in narratives that diverge from the religious core of political Zionism, including those of the Brit-Shalom political organization, the *Jewish–Palestinian Peace Alliance*, arguing that Jews don't have a religious right to land without the consent of the Arabs. Locke's political philosophy defends the resistance to occupation, parallel to the concept the infringement of human rights by states is seen today as explaining and typically *justifying* the armed resistance to the state.<sup>228</sup> As noted

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<sup>225</sup> Hobbes, Thomas. *Leviathan*. A&C Black, 2006. P 114.

<sup>226</sup> Locke, John. *Second Treatise of Government: An Essay Concerning the True Original, Extent and End of Civil Government*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.

<sup>227</sup> Ibid.

<sup>228</sup> Honderich, Ted. *Humanity, Terrorism, Terrorist War: Palestine, 9-11, Iraq, 7-7...* A&C Black, 2006.

by Kapitan and Honderich, the state can be dialectically viewed as a human rights offender without being classified as a terrorist organization, as a result of the common conception that terrorists *must* be non-state actors. In this manner, even when states like Israel use deliberate force that is politically motivated to kill Palestinian civilians, it is not classified as terrorist activity and is instead justified using a series of carefully crafted and morally charged ‘truths.’ Both Hobbes and Locke have attempted to provide arguments that support the type of regimes they favored within their respective philosophical perspectives — such arguments are justifications in themselves. In this manner, terrorism philosophically becomes *the other side*, with moral implications that filter the actions of the other to those which are morally condemnable.

This form of moral condemnation provides a monolithic understanding of the operational purposes of Palestinian political groups, including the ethical frameworks of groups like Hamas. As a Sunni-Islamist organization, Hamas has been internationally denounced for its violation of human rights: committing suicide attacks against Israeli civilians, firing rockets into heavily populated areas, and even torturing and endangering its own citizens in the Gaza Strip.<sup>229</sup> Although its actions are impermissible, Hamas is often depicted as nothing but a terrorist organization, with a social sector that serves only to recruit new supporters to enforce its violent agenda.<sup>230</sup> In her analysis, which includes extensive fieldwork in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank during the Oslo Peace Process,

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<sup>229</sup> Allen, Lori. *The rise and fall of human rights: Cynicism and politics in occupied Palestine*. Stanford University Press, 2013.

<sup>230</sup> *Ibid.*

Sara Roy argues that Hamas' social service activities do not emphasize political violence, but rather community development and civic restoration.<sup>231</sup> She notes that “the denial of society, of any collective and communal sense of being — something Hamas understood and once worked hard to provide— is the greatest threat facing Palestinians.”<sup>232</sup> Through her examination of Hamas' engagement with the Islamist social sector, Roy concludes that it reflects a deep commitment to stimulate a social, cultural, and moral renewal of the Palestinian community.<sup>233</sup> A denial of Hamas' legitimacy as a political party results in the delegitimization of not only Palestine's political structures, but of its civic and social institutions as well. Although Hamas has in instances violated the standards of international human rights, the American and Israeli narratives surrounding its character are resoundingly inaccurate. In the next chapter, I will provide a closer analysis of Hamas as a response to these collective narratives that are driven by the limitations set by its classification as a terrorist organization.

As a specific and rational political form, terrorism should be understood as the use of violence to achieve a multiplier of fear through a civilian population in order to achieve a political initiative of some kind. Israeli and American narratives limit this definition to only be applicable to non-state actors and groups and individuals of Muslim or Arab identity. In this manner, deeming popularly elected Palestinian political groups,

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<sup>231</sup> Roy, Sara. *Hamas and civil society in Gaza: engaging the Islamist social sector*. Princeton University Press, 2013.

<sup>232</sup> Ibid. P 235.

<sup>233</sup> Ibid. P 134.

like Hamas, terrorist organizations explicitly delegitimizes their influence as political actors within the international system, including in the communal institutions that they sustain within Palestinian society. The following chapter will expand upon the theoretical underpinnings of US foreign intervention and the concept of international human rights; however, it is critical to first further explore the tension between the American public's perception of its government's international relations and the realities of US foreign policy.

### **Alternatives for Americans: The BDS Movement**

A report published by *Human Rights Watch* in January 2016 details the involvement of private and international businesses in Israel's ongoing occupation of the West Bank, as they help to build, finance, service, and market settlement communities.<sup>234</sup> In many cases, businesses themselves, like many Israeli citizens, are drawn to settlements by low rents, favorable tax rates, government subsidies, and access to cheap Palestinian labor.<sup>235</sup> The HRW report regarding the legality of settlement businesses' practices reads:

Settlement businesses depend on and benefit from Israel's unlawful confiscation of Palestinian land and other resources, and facilitate the functioning and growth of settlements. Settlement-related activities also directly benefit from Israel's discriminatory policies in planning and zoning, the allocation of land, natural resources, financial incentives, and access to utilities and infrastructure. These policies result in the forced displacement of Palestinians and place Palestinians at an enormous disadvantage in comparison with settlers.<sup>236</sup>

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<sup>234</sup> "Occupation, Inc." *Human Rights Watch*. March 10, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>235</sup> Lein, Yehezkel, and Alon Cohen-Lifshitz. *Under the guise of security: routing the separation barrier to enable the expansion of Israeli settlements in the West Bank*. B'Tselem, 2005.

<sup>236</sup> "Occupation, Inc." *Human Rights Watch*. March 10, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2017.

Businesses that provide goods and services to the illegal Israeli settlements have become an essential backbone to the enterprise, compromising a physical footprint even larger than that of the residential settlements themselves. There are approximately twenty Israeli-administered industrial zones in the West Bank covering 1,365 hectares, in addition to the 9,300 hectares of land seized for agricultural cultivation. In comparison, housing areas cover 6,000 hectares of land, although their municipal borders in reality encompass a larger area.<sup>237</sup> For example, *Remax*, a global real-estate firm, sells and rents properties in the settlements. Its website advertises homes and apartments in Ariel, a settlement community in the West Bank, as properties in “Ariel, Israel,” promoting the narrative that Ariel is a city inside of Israel, when it is in fact illegal under international law.<sup>238</sup> A German cement company, *Heidelberg Beton*, operates a quarry in the West Bank, exporting its natural resources for profit.<sup>239</sup> Under international law, it is illegal to export these natural resources from an occupied territory to its occupier, Israel.<sup>240</sup> Israel also effectively prevents the Palestinian operation of these quarries through an exceedingly complicated permit process, that exhibits discriminatory practices towards the Palestinians.

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<sup>237</sup> "Israel/Palestine." *Human Rights Watch*. January 12, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>238</sup> "Find the perfect property." Israel real estate | RE/MAX Israel. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>239</sup> "Welcome to HeidelbergCement Group." Welcome to HeidelbergCement Group | HeidelbergCement Group. Accessed March 22, 2017.

<sup>240</sup> "Israel's Settlements Have No Legal Validity, Constitute Flagrant Violation of International Law, Security Council Reaffirms | Meetings Coverage and Press Releases." United Nations.

In response to the use of settler communities and businesses to further oppress Palestinians under the Israeli occupation, the BDS (*Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions*) movement developed as a “Palestinian-led movement for freedom, justice, and equality.”<sup>241</sup> The movement argues that Israel is occupying and colonizing Palestinian land, discriminating against Palestinian citizens of Israel, and denying Palestinian refugees the right to return to their homes. However, BDS is unique to other Palestinian resistance movements because, inspired by the South African anti-apartheid movement, BDS urges initiative from international actors, namely individuals, to pressure Israel to comply with international law.<sup>242</sup> The boycott aspect involves withdrawing support for Israel and Israeli and international companies involved in the violation of Palestinian human rights, as well as complicit Israeli sporting, cultural, and academic institutions. Divestment involves withdrawing investments from these companies via banks, pension funds, etc. Sanctions campaigns apply pressure to governments to end military trade and free-trade agreements with Israel, in addition to expelling the state from international forums, such as the UN and FIFA.<sup>243</sup> In this way, the BDS movement directly targets the underlying source of the sustained occupation of Palestine — the US sponsorship of Israel economically and politically. Because this movement is uniquely reliant on individual advocacy, in undermining the frameworks of the international state system, it

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<sup>241</sup> *BDS Movement*. March 18, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2017. <https://bdsmovement.net/>.

<sup>242</sup> Barghouti, Omar. "BDS: A Global Movement for Freedom and Justice." *Civil Society*, May 5 (2010).

<sup>243</sup> *BDS Movement*. March 18, 2017. Accessed March 22, 2017. <https://bdsmovement.net/>.

has the potential to limit the linguistic power of naming certain groups as exclusively terroristically inclined by recognizing the actions of Israel as also within the definitional scope of terrorism.

The right to resist an occupation, inherent to Locke's political philosophy, is heavily guarded by liberal conceptions of human rights theory. If we have human rights, we must also have the right to resist, through even violent means, those who attempt to eradicate our human rights. Therefore, the morally loaded and isolating use of the terrorist indicator to refer to Palestinian acts but not Israeli acts of the same, if not greater, devastation and magnitude is inherently unjust. As a result of the US's strategic economic and political support of the Israeli occupation, reliant on the embracing of aspects of the Zionist myth within its own narrative, the use of the terrorist label has created a phenomenon of moral distancing between Palestinians and other political agents within the conflict. International actors, particularly the US, have used intervention to support one side of the conflict, compartmentalizing the Palestinian narrative and selectively ignoring Israeli breaches of international law and the human rights abuses in the West Bank and the Gaza Strip. The fact that there is no standard definition of terrorism is precisely why, complicated by ambiguity and subjectivity, the word has such potency, creating divisive lines between politics and terror in order to justify the morality of occupation.

## Chapter IV

### *The Philosophy of Intervention: Human Rights Cynicism and the Narrative Paradigm*

“The power of accurate observation is commonly called cynicism by those who have not got it.”

— George Bernard Shaw

The problems inherent in the international application of human rights are seemingly intractable, ranging as they do from disparities in language use to a lack of universal accountability. These difficulties are materialized in part through the selective application of foreign intervention in instances of human rights abuse. Humanitarian intervention is a tool for the regulation and prevention of human rights violations, yet it has been inconsistently applied, sometimes fulfilling the moral duty to protect, and other times subject to misuse as a justification for imperialism. The Israeli-Palestinian conflict presents a dynamic example of an uneven application of humanitarian intervention, as demonstrated by the many unaddressed human rights violations in Gaza and the West Bank. As a result of the systematic favoring of Israel over Palestine by many Western governments, including the United States, Palestinian cynicism towards human rights applications has led to the formation of two distinct responses in the models of Al-Haq, a Palestinian human rights organization, and Hamas, a Palestinian political party that governs the Gaza Strip. In the following chapter, I explore the causal relationship between selective humanitarian intervention and human rights cynicism by synthesizing Noam Chomsky’s theory of reflective democracy, Harold Koh’s international law



analysis, and philosophical frameworks of cynicism and intervention. I argue that the many contrived narratives surrounding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict have resulted from and relied upon the vagueness of universal human rights mechanisms. The key to resolving this problem in the implementation of both domestic and international law rests in the tension between external enforcement and internal obedience. In order to eliminate the selective applications of humanitarian intervention, we must understand the Wittgensteinian notion that our own human rights are reliant on the human rights of *others*.

### **Human Rights Cynicism and its Theoretical Underpinnings**

In order to understand the cynical response to the phenomenon of uneven, selective humanitarian intervention, a clear distinction must be drawn between ‘human rights’ and the ‘human rights industry.’ Human rights invokes a set of principles with origins tracing back to the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, a declaration of fundamental human rights to be universally accepted that was adopted by the United Nations in 1948.<sup>244</sup> In contrast, the ‘human rights industry’ refers to the material and financial infrastructure that buttresses human rights work, such as “the complex of activities and institutions that function under the label human rights, including the professionals who work within those organizations, the formulas they have learned in order to write reports and grant applications, and the funding streams that this industry

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<sup>244</sup> "Universal Declaration of Human Rights." United Nations. Accessed March 31, 2017. <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>.

generates and depends upon.”<sup>245</sup> Human rights cynicism is a perspective on the ‘human rights industry,’ its parts, the relations among them, and how the system interacts with people. Victims of human rights violations often develop this cynical perspective on the ‘human rights industry,’ evidenced by their mistrust of all human rights mechanisms, including foreign aid. The cynics themselves, victims of this selective application, uphold the standards of human rights, and use this to highlight the disparity between ‘human rights’ and the ‘human rights industry,’ which often parallels the inconsistencies between theory and practice. In order to understand human rights cynicism as a direct result of selective humanitarian intervention, foreign intervention, as a mechanism of the human rights industry, must be analyzed in terms of its applications along the lines of states’ political, social, and economic interests.

In his article “Are Human Rights Essentially Triggers for Intervention?,” John Tasioulas provides a philosophical perspective on the evolution of human rights into a systematic industry. In his analysis, Tasioulas frames an orthodox conception of human rights as one based on the notion that human rights are moral rights possessed by all human beings simply by virtue of their humanity. In discussing this orthodox conception, Tasioulas evaluates the critical perspectives of John Rawls and Joseph Raz, both of whom consider human rights as political entities intertwined with intervention politics. Tasioulas points to a key tension between the ‘orthodox’ and ‘political’ conceptions of human rights. They share two similarities that soften their contrast: both can reject the idea that the condition of existence for human rights is their institutional recognition and both

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<sup>245</sup> Allen, Lori. 2013. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford: Stanford UP. P 4.

recognize the significant political implications of these rights. These similarities point to the philosophical space between *human rights* and *human rights industrial complex* — their applicability to intervention and whether or not that practice should be a political tool.

Tasioulas characterizes Rawls' conception of human rights as follows: "what it is for a right to be a human right is that its violation can act as a defensible trigger for military intervention against the society that perpetuates the violations."<sup>246</sup> In this manner, the political conception of human rights argues that these rights are *defined* by whether or not they could justify intervention. This raises the question, *if a conflict is not met with international intervention, does that mean that there are no violations of human rights taking place?* The case study of Palestine will provide a more factual account, but the implications of Rawls' perspective would suggest that the people living in Gaza and the West Bank, with limited access to food, clean water, healthcare, and education, let alone little in terms to the *right to life*, in fact *do* have human rights. Tasioulas' analysis would therefore correlate Rawls' political conception of human rights with the *human rights industry*. Tasioulas also provides a less radical political perspective of human rights by paralleling Rawls with the theories of Raz, who "preserves what he considers to be Rawls' core insight, the conceptual yoking together of human rights and state sovereignty by means of the notion of *pro tanto* grounds for intervention."<sup>247</sup>

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<sup>246</sup> Tasioulas, John. "Are Human Rights Essentially Triggers for Intervention?." *Philosophy Compass* 4, no. 6 (2009). P 940.

<sup>247</sup> *Ibid.* P 943.

Raz's proposed link between human rights and sovereignty points to a key weakness in 'orthodox' human rights, as well as universalism-based notions of these rights in IR theory. The institutions that govern and frame international law, including human rights legislation, are dominated by Western perspectives and therefore threaten non-Western nations, known as the North-South divide in political theory. In this manner, Western nations, like the United States, could perceive cultural norms in another nation as a violation of human rights and use this understanding as justification to intervene militarily. Tasioulas acknowledges the weaknesses of both conceptions, but concludes that the importance of rights guaranteed by the orthodox conception outweighs the political fixation on interest and sovereignty instead of morality. When placed in the context of *human rights v. human rights industry*, this philosophical debate reveals that these tensions are based in the *implications* of human rights and whether they are created to serve the purposes of the state or the protections of the individual. Providing these philosophical perspectives before the analysis of international relations theory highlights the discrepancies between different conceptions of human rights and their definitional purposes.

#### **Humanitarian Intervention: Terminology, Usage, and Failed Applications**

Humanitarian intervention has a controversial place in the theory and practice of international relations as a result of coercive interference in the name of humanitarianism and the tension between a state's sovereignty and the universal standards advocated by international human rights legislation. Through her work *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*, Jennifer Welsh succinctly defines humanitarian intervention as:

“the coercive interference in the internal affairs of a state, involving the use of armed force, with the purposes of addressing massive human rights violations or preventing widespread human suffering.”<sup>248</sup> However, Welsh’s corresponding analysis shows that even though this definition frames humanitarian intervention functionally, in terms of confronting human rights violations as the *purpose* of said intervention, the post-Cold War period is evidence that states remain reluctant to address these abuses without the consent of the offending state. This is exemplified in both Bosnia and East Timor. Intervention in both cases required the regimes’ consent before an international mission could proceed.<sup>249</sup> This indicates that the rationale for intervention can in fact shift during the course of military action. This is also evident in Kosovo and Somalia, where unintended consequences led to changed objectives among the intervening states. Welsh’s definition of humanitarian intervention is severely limited in practice because she conceives of coercive interference in terms of consent. Catherine Lu’s analysis of the ways in which the purpose and inner mechanisms of intervention work presents an active critique to the inconsistency between Welsh’s offered definition and her corresponding analysis.

In her essay entitled “Whose Principles? Whose Institutions? Legitimacy Challenges for ‘Humanitarian Intervention,’” Lu describes the beginning of the use of ‘humanitarian’ to describe certain interventions in the post-Cold War era. She notes that

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<sup>248</sup> Welsh, Jennifer M. *Humanitarian Intervention and International Relations*. 2004. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

<sup>249</sup> Nardin, Terry, Melissa S. Williams, and American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy. 2006. *Humanitarian Intervention*; *Nomos*, 47. New York: New York University Press.

“the term ‘humanitarian’ referred to [the intervening states’] claim that the military action proposed was prompted by humanitarian concerns rather than geopolitical or self-aggrandizing aims.”<sup>250</sup> Lu further maintains that this humanitarian terminology was not only a strong indicator of the expressed intentions, but also a form of evaluative judgement. In this manner, labelling a military action ‘humanitarian’ amounted to declaring it to be morally legitimate or justified. Consequently, selective failure to identify a crisis as humanitarian seems to perpetuate a lack of legitimacy in the larger framework of the international system. Lu points to one of the greatest failures of selective intervention— the Rwandan genocide. As the result of multiple failures at all levels of governance, including the weakness of international institutions such as the United Nations, and the indifference of capable international agents such as the US, the Rwandan genocide claimed the lives of over 800,000 people before it was even *labelled* a humanitarian crisis within the international framework of intervention.

In his collection of articles entitled *Interventions*, Noam Chomsky further examines this dynamic. To Chomsky, the humanitarian intervention failures in Rwanda represent a larger, global phenomenon by which abstract notions of human rights are selectively applied, inconsistent with the idea that human rights are universal. Chomsky argues that the mechanisms of international intervention are particularly interesting because they rely on the moral and intellectual values of the intervening state. He notes that when we speak of abstract principles or discuss cultures we do not comprehend “we are speaking of ourselves, and the moral and intellectual values of the privileged

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<sup>250</sup> Nardin, Terry, Melissa S. Williams, and American Society for Political and Legal Philosophy. 2006. *Humanitarian Intervention*; *Nomos*, 47. New York: New York University Press.

communities in which we live.”<sup>251</sup> Therefore, the critiques presented by cultural relativism do not apply to instances of humanitarian intervention because they are a direct reflection of the internal principles of the state that is choosing whether or not to end human rights abuses abroad. As a result of the terminologies that define and regulate human rights legislation, what we determine to be a *violation* of international standards depends on our own cultural values and perceptions of democracy. The failure to intervene in response to humanitarian crises constitutes what Wittgenstein refers to as a misunderstanding of our shared language. While there are variations in conventions of language and its usage— *the multiplicity*— our language remains shared, as a part of ‘us being human.’ Just as racism is a reflection of the racist’s failure to see her resemblance to the *other*, failure to act in response to human rights violations abroad is our failure to recognize these acts as *abuses* and to see ourselves reflected in these abuses. Therefore, to not intervene in the case of a known genocide doesn't say something about Rwanda or East Timor, it says something about the US or Australia— the international forces that refuse to act in a meaningful way. I will further refine his principle as a potential solution to acts of politicized intervention through Chomsky’s the theory of reflective democracy.

When conceptually aligned, the theories of Lu, Welsh, and Chomsky argue for a dynamic depiction of humanitarian intervention by which a network of interests— for example, economic incentives, political alliances, and public opinion— determine whether or not a state will intervene. Similarly, humanitarian intervention presents a justification that can be used to disguise motives or ends that require intervention, but are

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<sup>251</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *Interventions*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2007. Print. Open media series; Open Media book. P 123.

not themselves justifications for it. In instances where states are unlikely to intervene as a result of misaligned interests, strong domestic pressure and media attention play a critical role in convincing governments to act. The theories of Lu, Welsh, and Chomsky all suggest multiple, politicized responses to foreign human rights abuses that depend on an alignment of the intervening states' interests. Therefore, the lack of uniformity in the application of human rights legislation causes the subjects of intervention, often those suffering from these abuses, to mistrust of the human rights industry. Human rights cynicism arguably presents a binary of potential responses to human rights violations: those that work *within* the human rights industry, appealing to universalist notions of human rights, and those that work *outside* or even *against* this framework. These two kinds of responses are represented throughout the formation of organizations and political groups involved in various ways with Israel's ongoing occupation of Palestine.

#### **The Israeli-Palestinian Case Study and The Theory of Dueling Narratives**

The human rights abuses in Palestine committed by its occupier, Israel, are staggering. The occupation, beginning in 1967, allowed Israel to successfully pursue its expansionist strategies by confiscating Palestinian land, building Jewish-only settlements, controlling the Palestinian economy, and denying Palestinian people basic civil and political rights. These strategies remain in effect today, as *Human Rights Watch* has effectively named and factually supported a spectrum of human rights abuses, including but not limited to the discriminatory restrictions on Palestinians' access to food and water, the use of excessive force against Palestinian demonstrators, limitations on movement that confine most Palestinians to narrowing territories, and the practice of punitive home



demolitions.<sup>252</sup> Israel's blocking of all regular movements of goods and people has had perhaps the most severe consequences for the civilian population, as it blocks access to food, medicine, and clean water. Palestinians are also unable to access building materials necessary to repair infrastructure damage inflicted almost daily by Israeli forces. As a result, more than 70% of Gaza's 1.8 million people are forced to rely solely on humanitarian assistance.<sup>253</sup>

In this conflict, US foreign policy maintains a close alliance and economic sponsorship of Israel, which is an example of selective intervention. US support of Israel is justified to the American people through a carefully constructed network of narratives. These multiple narratives often compete with one another, in ways that affect popular conceptions and understandings, or lack thereof, of current events. Narratives are the product of human factors such as behavior, culture, communication, and perception that play meaningful roles in the ideas surrounding a political conflict.<sup>254</sup> Philosophical theory involving the use of narrative often creates a marked distinction between the narrative paradigm and the rational world paradigm. Twentieth-century philosopher Walter Fisher uses his narrative paradigm to argue that all meaningful communication is a form of storytelling and that people are more persuaded by an engaging story than by a rational argument. Fisher's philosophy is an essential companion to the IR theory of dueling

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<sup>252</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2016: Israel/ Palestine*. N.p., 27 Jan. 2016. Web. 14 Sept. 2016.

<sup>253</sup> "Israel/Gaza Conflict: Questions and Answers | Amnesty ..." Amnesty International. Accessed October 24, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/07/israelgaza-conflict-questions-and-answers/>.

<sup>254</sup> O'Malley, Padraig. "Dueling Narratives and Addiction to Narratives." *The Two-state Delusion: Israel and Palestine -- a Tale of Two Narratives*. Print.

narratives because it provides an analysis of *how* narratives are constructed and nestled in ways that warp reality-based facts in order to achieve a political agenda.

Fisher's narrative paradigm is designed to have a broader than theoretical application. His *Narration as a Human Communication Paradigm: The Case of Public Moral Argument* presents a paradigm shift in the way people think about the world. He argues that:

Thus, when I use the term "narration," I do not mean a fictive composition whose propositions may be true or false and have no necessary relationship to the message of that composition. By "narration," I refer to a theory of symbolic actions— words and/or deeds — that have sequence and meaning for those who live, create, or interpret them. The narrative perspective, therefore, has relevance to real as well as fictive worlds, to stories of living and to stories of the imagination.<sup>255</sup>

This shift constitutes a move away from the rational world paradigm, according to which people are persuaded by a logical argument. A simplified version of the distinction between narrative and the rational world paradigm is based in the understanding of humans as storytellers instead of rational beings who are dependent on logical form. The rational world paradigm holds that the world can be reduced to a series of logical relationships uncovered through reasoning, where arguments follow specific criteria for soundness and logic. However, the narrative paradigm concludes that the world is experienced by people as a set of stories told in a process of continual recreation, where rationality is based in people's awareness of how internally consistent stories appear to lived experience.

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<sup>255</sup> Fisher, Walter R. "Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument." *Communications Monographs* 51, no. 1 (1984): 1-22.

Fischer's philosophy has profound connections to the thesis of this chapter in explaining the role and power of narrative in allowing the politicized humanitarian intervention that results in human rights cynicism. This is because Fischer's narrative paradigm is based in the understanding that the 'good reasons' that direct decision making are determined by matters of history, culture, and character. In our earlier discussion of the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it was clear that narratives shaped the facts and events used to form the distinct Israeli and Palestinian perspectives. This conflict is incredibly complex because its history has been constantly filtered by historical narratives — as a set of stories told by storytellers. Although all histories are filtered through a prism of stories told from different perspectives, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has become seemingly intractable due to the depth of difference among its narratives. Palestinians and Israelis don't only have different *names* for certain facts and events, they sometimes use altogether different events and facts. The idea that the narrative paradigm uses an assessment of personal awareness that is not necessarily based in logic suggests that these narratives are often constructed according to gradations of empathy. Empathy, which relies on one's perspective of another's subjective experience and one's own internal emotional life, plays an important role in the justification of humanitarian intervention. Later, we will see the importance of empathy in the peace process, but first let's examine its philosophical role in acts of international humanitarianism.

In their essay "Humanitarian Narratives and the Mobilization of Empathy," Richard Ashby Wilson and Richard D. Brown examine the philosophical roots of

humanitarian intervention. Wilson and Brown address the ways in which humanitarianism, while clearly political, is also an *ethos* embedded in civil society, driving social and cultural movements in addition to constructing legal and political institutions. To maintain its driving force as an *ethos*, humanitarianism employs strong narratives and represents complex situations that create humanitarian elements for a cause to be perceived. Consider how and why some narratives of suffering inspire solidarity movements while others do not. Wilson and Brown explore “how narratives of suffering are vulnerable to appropriation and misrepresentation by political institutions,”<sup>256</sup> occupying a middle ground between two positions that they refer to as Schmitt’s cynicism and Rorty’s credulity. Schmitt’s cynicism is effectively illustrated by his famous maxim, “he who invokes humanity wants to cheat.”<sup>257</sup> He has a realist and Marxist approach to international intervention, by which states are *never* altruistic and only act in self-interested ways. Rorty’s credulity refers to his theory that people have a tendency to too readily believe that something is real or true and therefore are easily manipulated by narratives. Wilson and Brown combine these two conceptions, noting that states, as a result of their self-interest, take advantage of peoples’ credulity by using narratives that evoke empathy. In this manner, Wilson and Brown analyze the role of Fischer’s narrative paradigm based on the implications of political vs. orthodox conceptions of human rights: *human rights* and the *human rights industry*.

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<sup>256</sup> Davis, Dona . 2011. "Humanitarianism and Suffering: The Mobilization of Empathy - Edited by Richard Ashby Wilson & Richard D. Brown." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 17 (3). P 25.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.* P 47.

Norman Finkelstein shares Wilson and Brown's understanding of states' exploitation of the narrative paradigm and its appeal to ethos. He challenges the dominant images of the June 1967 and October 1973 Arab-Israeli wars by revealing inconsistencies within Zionist theory and the practice of Jewish nationalism. Finkelstein's work, although not directly classified as narrative theory, is centered on the idea that factually-contradicting 'images' of history and politics contribute to the lack of Palestinian representation in popular and scholarly works. He references Joan Peters' study entitled *From Time Immemorial*, and considers it to be "among the most spectacular frauds ever published on the Arab-Israeli conflict."<sup>258</sup> Peters claims that a significant proportion of the 700,000 Arabs living in the part of Palestine that became Israel in 1949 only recently settled there, meaning that they emigrated to Palestine only because of the economic opportunities generated by Zionist settlement. Her story is based on falsified evidence of illegal Arab immigration, which Finkelstein carefully disproves in his analysis. Ironically, Peters provides her own interpretation of dueling narrative theory, defining it as "turnspeak — the cynical inverting or distorting of facts, which, for example, make the victim appear as culprit."<sup>259</sup> Here, Peters appears to describe general, Palestinian cynicism as the cause of the 'distortion of facts' that places the blame on the Israelis. In reality, as further explained using international relations theory, the reverse is true. The cynicism portrayed by some Palestinians and political groups is the *product* of the Israeli narrative and its American-backed international preferential treatment.

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<sup>258</sup> Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and reality of the Israel-Palestine conflict*. Verso, 2003. P 22.

<sup>259</sup> Peters, Joan. *From time immemorial: the origins of the Arab-Jewish conflict over Palestine*. JKAP Pubns, 1985. P 173.

Political theorist Amy Zalman applies narrative international relations theory to modern day warfare: “The idea of narrative opens up another possibility of military operations. Instead of being geared to eliminating the assets of the enemy, they might need to be focused on undermining those narratives on which that enemy bases its appeal and which animates and guides its activists.”<sup>260</sup> In this manner, narratives allow facts, such as human rights reports and fatality statistics, to be distorted by political groups and the media in order to justify selective humanitarian intervention. From a theoretical standpoint, human rights cynicism is caused by selective intervention, which is also directly related to the existence of multiple competing narratives. These narratives are able to be manipulated strategically when met by an abstract and wide-reaching human rights discourse with limited practice in addressing or preventing real-world instances of human rights abuse. This limited practice by, for example, treaty bodies or principles of international law refers to the practical disparity between ‘human rights’ and the ‘human rights industry’ by which more general human rights legislation is politicized.

In the the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, there are two distinct, dueling narratives. Padraig O’Malley, a political reconciliation scholar, argues that the binary of national narratives within this conflict is irreconcilable because both parties view themselves as victims, as a minority, and as dispossessed. O’Malley expands upon the basic construction of narratives as stories in order to reveal their historical relevance to current political events. As mentioned, narratives reflect on a people’s past — the trials they weathered, the enemies they confronted, the places they inhabited, the culture they

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<sup>260</sup> Zalman, Amy. "The Global War on Terror A Narrative in Need of a Rewrite." *Carnegie Council Journal: Ethics in International Affairs* (2009): n. pag. Print.

developed, and the values they formed. However, narratives are most critically subjective and selective. O'Malley argues that narratives "frame and filter concepts, images, and information according to desirable beliefs, values, symbols, traditions, and preferences. They are motivational tools that reinforce existing social identities and uniqueness. They arouse deep passions and allegiance."<sup>261</sup> As Zionist philosophy exemplifies, narratives, facts entertained within mythologies, are the linchpin of emerging nationalism. The reason is precisely what O'Malley pinpoints as the 'arousal of deep passions.'

As explained through philosophical theory, narratives define us by binding our past and our present, while defining and filtering the future. Narratives are most effective in their ability to use this historical intersection to logically distort reality. An interesting example of this phenomenon is the January 2017 Executive Order, facilitated by the Trump Administration, banning the immigration of people from seven majority Muslim nations. Trump justifies this ban, which also completely bars the entrance of Syrian refugees for 120 days, through a network of Islamophobic narratives, congealed through repetition coupled with fear-mongering. One fact — that the recent terrorist attacks and 9/11 were committed by Muslim extremists — is contorted to fit a political agenda, painting the picture that *all* foreign Muslims (and even American Muslims) present a direct security threat to our nation. In reality, an American citizen has a higher likelihood of being killed by their clothing catching fire than from an attack by a

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<sup>261</sup> O'Malley, Padraig. *The Two-State Delusion: Israel and Palestine--A Tale of Two Narratives*. Penguin, 2016. P 11.

refugee— that's 1 in 3.6 million.<sup>262</sup> When the layers of racist and xenophobic rhetoric are peeled away and the factual backbone of this policy is exposed, one question arises: *If this policy was enacted to prevent attacks like 9/11 why are nations like Saudi Arabia and Egypt not included, when they are the origin nations of the 9/11 terrorists?* The use of such distorting narratives in American foreign policy occurs particularly in instances of humanitarian intervention or even to set the stage for future intervention. The current Syrian refugee crisis and America's barring of refugees is another specific application of the theory I seek to explore: the effect of these contrived narratives on the policies that have directed the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

The Israelis and the Palestinians have intersecting histories that have clashed as a result of their claims on the same land; the Palestinians claim the land by virtue of historical presence and the Jews, by divine ordinance. Briefly, the Jewish Israeli narrative begins with the expulsion of Jews from their 'homeland' in Judea circa 70 CE, after which they migrated throughout Europe, facing mass discrimination and persecution. As the implementation of anti-Semitic measures became official policy throughout Eastern Europe, worsening conditions inspired the rise of Zionism, which evolved among Russian Jews from the mid-1850s. The following migration and the relentless political engagement of Zionist leader Chaim Weizmann culminated in the Balfour Declaration of 1917.<sup>263</sup> This gave a green light to the creation of a national 'homeland' for Europe's Jews under the protective umbrella of Great Britain. This myth, capitalized upon by the

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<sup>262</sup> Beauchamp, Zack. "You're more likely to be killed by your own clothes than by an immigrant terrorist." Vox. September 13, 2016. Accessed March 31, 2017.

<sup>263</sup>Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Verso, 2003. Print.



international community, fixated on the idea of “a land without a people for a people without a land” — referring to an area already home to 700,000 Palestinians in 1919.<sup>264</sup> In contrast, the Palestinian narrative speaks of an indigenous population without interruption for 1,500 years. The gradual migration of Jews into Palestine quickly became a mass takeover that transformed into decades of violence and internal conflict. This territorial pursuit became a full-fledged occupation when Israel became the focus of US aid, with a possible linkage to post- 9/11 Islamaphobia.

### **The US-Israel Narrative and its Political Implications**

Although through these years of violence, both Israeli and Palestinian political groups have committed human rights violations, there are vast differences in civilian death tolls. For example, in the 2014 Israel-Gaza war, 1,462 Palestinian civilians were killed, including 551 children, compared to the six Israeli civilian deaths during the 2014 fighting.<sup>265</sup> This disproportionality is directly related to the funding the US provides to Israel. Since 1976, Israel has been the largest annual recipient of direct US economic and military assistance, receiving approximately \$3 billion in US foreign assistance each year. This aid is especially striking given that as a wealthy, industrial state, even without this foreign aid, Israel has a per capita income roughly equivalent to that of Spain and South Korea.<sup>266</sup> Therefore, the impact of US foreign intervention, justified by construed

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<sup>264</sup>O'Malley, Pdraig. “Dueling Narratives and Addiction to Narratives.” *The Two-state Delusion: Israel and Palestine -- a Tale of Two Narratives*. Print.

<sup>265</sup> Human Rights Watch. *World Report 2016: Israel/ Palestine*. N.p., 27 Jan. 2016. Web. 14 Sept. 2016.

<sup>266</sup> Mearsheimer, John J., and Stephen Walt M. *The Israel Lobby and U.S. Foreign Policy*. New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2007. Print.

narratives, has highly tangible economic and political effects on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict.

Israel's violations are not widely acknowledged in the West, causing most Palestinians to believe that the rest of the world does not care or even care to know about their situation, taking as truth Israel's claim to be "the only democracy in the Middle East."<sup>267</sup> The US, as a clear leader in the West's unyielding support for Israel, has contributed politically and socially to distorting the reality of Israeli human rights violations with its media sources, like *The New York Times*, labelling Israel "a symbol of human decency," as late as the mid-1980's.<sup>268</sup> Many theorists argue that the US's support of Israel is not only rooted in post-WWII history, but in the modern day War on Terror and the post- 9/11 desire for a "white ally in the Middle East." These arguments are supported by the constant reference of Israel as a symbol of democracy amid a war-torn and radicalized region. In his analysis, Hatem Bazian notes that there is a "particular segment of Islamophobia Industry that is linked directly to the pro-Israel agenda, that is, the groups and organizations entangled in promoting the otherization of Muslims but whose central concern is to undermine the possibilities of Palestinian advocacy."<sup>269</sup> This contextualization is pivotal to an understanding of America's role in this conflict because it explains a key function of the US-Israel narrative as one that is inherently based in

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<sup>267</sup> Finkelstein, Norman G. *Image and Reality of the Israel-Palestine Conflict*. London: Verso, 2003. Print.

<sup>268</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *Middle East Illusions: Including Peace in the Middle East?: Reflections on Justice and Nationhood*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Print.

<sup>269</sup> Bazian, Hatem. "The Islamophobia Industry and the Demonization of Palestine: Implications for American Studies." *American Quarterly* 67.4 (2015): 1057-066. Web.

Islamophobic tendencies.<sup>270</sup> Islamophobic narratives, through which the US vilifies Muslims and Arabs, recasts political groups like Hamas and the PLO as “terrorist organizations” in order to impede international support for the Palestinian cause. While Bazian’s reference to the pro-Israel agenda is correct, the cyclical importance of this narrative rests in the notion that the US-Israel relationship is *both* founded upon and sustained by anti-Muslim rhetoric and its corresponding policy initiatives and practices.

In addition, the global positioning of the US blocks the progress of institutions that seek to resolve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and restrict the violations committed within Gaza and the West Bank. For example, in his analysis of US-Israel relations, Chomsky notes that “Washington’s commitment to enhancing terror was illustrated in December 2001, when it vetoed a Security Council resolution calling for implementation of the Mitchell Plan and dispatch of international monitors to oversee the reduction of violence, the most effective means as generally recognized, but opposed by Israel and regularly blocked by Washington.”<sup>271</sup> Ten days before this veto, the United States boycotted and effectively undermined an international conference in Geneva that concluded that the Fourth Geneva Convention applies to the occupied territories. This conclusion essentially declared that the US-funded Israeli settlements are illegal and should be considered war crimes, using the core principles of international humanitarian

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<sup>270</sup> Bazian, Hatem. "The Islamophobia Industry and the Demonization of Palestine: Implications for American Studies." *American Quarterly* 67.4 (2015): 1057-066. Web.

<sup>271</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *Middle East Illusions: Including Peace in the Middle East?: Reflections on Justice and Nationhood*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003. Print. P 231.

law that originally and ironically were enacted to formally criminalize Nazi atrocities after the Holocaust.

### **Palestinian Responses: Al-Haq and Hamas**

It was this frustration and the corresponding contradiction between Israel's self-representation and the lived realities of Palestinians— and the proliferation of these dueling narratives—that inspired the creation of the first Palestinian human rights organization, Al-Haq, in 1979. Al-Haq is based on the belief that law can expose the inconsistencies and present a critique of the image of Israel as a law-abiding democracy. This organization demonstrates a core faith in the rule of law and the correct documentation of Israeli violations as things that resonate with the international community. Al-Haq uses a collection of data illustrating the deleterious effects of Israeli settlements on Palestinians human rights, compiling affidavits of Palestinians exposed to violence by settlers and soldiers, denied freedom of movement, denied their right to education, and victimized by arrests and house demolitions. Al-Haq self-describes its attention to accurate, detailed reports as an “objective and dispassionate appeal to internationally recognized principles.”<sup>272</sup> This organization effectively navigates the tensions between nationalist and humanist values by assessing the interrelated standards of local and international credibility, enabling a situation where it seemed “Palestinians

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<sup>272</sup> Al-Haq: Defending Human Rights in Palestine Since 1979. *Al-Haq*, 2016, <http://www.alhaq.org/> Accessed 4 Sept. 2016.

‘discovered’ human rights as the ideal language with which to make their voices heard internationally.”<sup>273</sup>

Hamas is another example of a response to selective intervention and the human rights cynicism that results in Palestine. Hamas is a Palestinian Sunni-Islamic fundamentalist organization that has maintained its status as the governing authority of the Gaza Strip since the January 2006 Palestinian parliamentary elections. Tensions with the political party, Fatah, over control of this territory culminated in the 2007 Battle of Gaza, resulting in the ousting of Hamas’ government officials from their positions in the West Bank. Hamas highlights the abuses committed by Israel in its appeal for the liberation of Palestine, completely rejecting the legitimacy of the ‘Zionist state.’<sup>274</sup> Yet Hamas, presenting a response completely distinct from that of Al-Haq, has itself committed various human rights offenses. The UN Commission of Inquiry Report, released in June 2014 found that Palestinian armed groups, including Hamas, have committed serious violations, including the use of torture in interrogations, the firing of rockets into populated areas of Israel, and the firing from within or near civilians in Gaza. In 2015, Hamas was accused of launching twenty rockets into Israel from Gaza, causing no casualties but demonstrating a willingness to attack civilian populations.<sup>275</sup> Interaction between Hamas and the human rights industry highlights their reliance on the nationalist

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<sup>273</sup> Allen, Lori. 2013. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford: Stanford UP. P. 56.

<sup>274</sup> Tamimi, Azzam. *Hamas : A History from Within*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2007. Print.

<sup>275</sup> Al-Haq: Defending Human Rights in Palestine Since 1979. *Al-Haq*, 2016, <http://www.alhaq.org/> Accessed 4 Sept. 2016.

inflection in its discourse, as opposed to its political opponent, Fatah's technocratic tone, and the universalist appeals of Al-Haq as an organization rather than a political party.

In this manner, cynicism serves a political function in the formation and endurance of Hamas as a what Lori Allen defines a "critical stance by which those who are displeased with choices available in the present hold on to the belief that such limited options are not all there should be."<sup>276</sup> Hamas responds to the selective application of human rights and its corresponding cynicism by aligning human rights with the Palestinian history of claim-making as a system of shared values that reflect moral polity. In this manner, Hamas' depiction of human rights encompasses certain political and social ideas related to sincerity and national solidarity. As Allen argues in her theoretical discussion of human rights cynicism, "in its insistence on Palestinians' right to be nationalist, on their right to demand rights that will be guaranteed by a political rather than a technocratic solution, Hamas presents an alternative to the cynical human rights system and to the limbo status quo in politics."<sup>277</sup> Thus, for this political party, human rights is a way to find points of political intersection with the international community, while maintaining a bureaucratic form rooted in nationalism.

Both Al-Haq and Hamas rely on the recognizable disparity between 'human rights,' as they exist in theory, and the reality of humanitarian efforts produced by the 'human rights industry.' However, there is a key difference in that Al-Haq responds to selective intervention by working *within* the pre-existing Western framework of human

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<sup>276</sup>Allen, Lori. 2013. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford: Stanford UP. P. 189.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid. P 157.

rights, while Hamas rejects this framework due to its basis in contrived Israeli narratives. Both responses, rooted in forms of human rights cynicism, present effective alternatives to recognizing human rights abuses, but their inability to produce long-term solutions is limited in practice. Al-Haq's response to the faults of the human rights industry represents the ways in which human rights documentation became a type of historical writing where the Palestinian national narrative was only a post-script to that of other nations, namely the United States and Israel. Consequently, Al-Haq is often viewed by Palestinians as an 'American' organization working on behalf of the West, as "an effort to make the struggle against the occupation peaceful and not violent, which is what the Americans and Israelis wanted."<sup>278</sup> The outward criticism directed towards Al-Haq reflects a larger theoretical debate on the ability to express the perspectives of marginalized groups within a Western framework.

This debate is rooted in the theories of Edward Said and Samuel Huntington in their respective works *Orientalism* and *The Clash of Civilizations*. In his 1978 *Orientalism*, Edward Said frames the "Orient" as a man-made conception based on the Western perspective. He argues that rather than being based on a lived reality within Middle Eastern culture, the "Orient" is a construct that serves as a representation of the West's complementary opposite for the purpose of creating a colonial hegemony.<sup>279</sup> For example, themes such as unbridled sexuality, violence, and savagery, condemned in the

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<sup>278</sup> Allen, Lori. *The Rise and Fall of Human Rights: Cynicism and Politics in Occupied Palestine*. Stanford: Stanford UP, 2013. Print.

<sup>279</sup> Williams, Patrick. *Colonial Discourse and Post-colonial Theory: A Reader*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2006.

West, were impressed upon the Middle East as fundamental characteristics of the Orient. Said's focus therefore is not on the relationship between Orientalism and "the Orient" but rather on the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient.

Huntington's *The Clash of Civilizations* uses these Oriental images and constructions to argue that global conflict is inevitable, as a result of the intractability of opposing cultural differences. While Huntington's assessment of the failures of universalism are correct, his argument relies on stereotypes of cultures and 'historical accounts' of conflict. As Said notes, Huntington systematically ignores the impact of imperialism on the hierarchal world order, leading him to conclude that culture is to blame.

In contrast, Said argues the opposite — that conflict is in fact *the cause* of cultural difference, with these differences serving the political interests of the parties involved. Said combines Michael Foucault's concept of power-knowledge and Antonio Gramsci's concept of hegemony to develop his framework in understanding this process. As Foucault argues, knowledge is formed and spread by those in power— a power dictated by Gramsci's understanding of the dominance of certain groups or states (*the hegemon*) over others. Due to his reliance on hegemonic discourse, Said argues that truth is a function of learned judgment, not of reality itself and that this truth is determined by those in power. This, however, concludes with the contradictory sentiment that perhaps there exists a "place of truth" beyond the hegemonic discourse, and no knowledge pure of political poisoning. In this manner, Said's work presents no real alternative to the Orient. The ambivalence and contradictions within his work reflect a change in the voice



of the intellectual as well as the political discourse surrounding West-East characterizations. The problem remains that the growing ambivalence about nationalism combined with a shift from blaming and rejecting “the West” to seeing “the West” as the only source of authentic work presents a reality where accurate representations must have Third World origins with a metropolitan location. This problem is also addressed in the work of post-colonial scholar Gayatri Spivak, which when applied to Said, offers a compelling criticism of his work.

Spivak relies on an inclined focus on the subaltern, referring to the populations that exist outside of the hegemonic power structure of the colony socially, politically, and geographically. In “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*,” Spivak focuses on the notion of representation in the works of Foucault and Deleuze. She notes that despite their attempt to demonstrate how historical subjects are constructed through discourse and representation, these French critical theorists neglect to accurately represent these groups, instead providing a Eurocentric perspective.<sup>280</sup> According to Spivak, by claiming to be able to speak for the subaltern, these theorists are actually silencing them and constructing false realities about marginalized identities. When placed in the context of Spivak, Said’s *Orientalism* relates to the theory that representations can never be exactly realistic. Said argues that rather than being based on a lived reality within Middle Eastern culture, the ‘Orient’ is a construct that serves as a representation of the West’s complementary opposite for the purpose of creating a colonial hegemony. The Orient can

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<sup>280</sup> Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. "Can the subaltern speak?" *Can the subaltern speak? Reflections on the history of an idea* (1988): 21-78.

therefore be interpreted not as an actual representation, but rather as a reflection of the negative aspects of European society designed to enhance the dichotomy between the East and the West. The tension within the use of Western frameworks to represent the subaltern is also visible within the universalist conception of human rights and justified intervention, which rely on foreign, often Western nations, to successfully address social, political, and economic problems in marginalized nations.

The inability of Said and Spivak to offer a concrete solution to the post-colonial identity and representation is therefore closely tied to the analysis of whether or not a Western-based system of international humanitarian law can effectively address human rights concerns abroad. Al-Haq's limited effectiveness in addressing international concern was perceived internally in Palestine as actually resulting in the *reinforcement* of the occupation. Instead of outwardly challenging Israeli forces, the organization sought to soften the features of the occupation. From Al-Haq's perspective, this was an attempt to gain international credibility as a human rights advocate. While attempting to outwardly terminate an occupation can damage traction with a universalist appeal to human rights, Al-Haq argues that "if, on the other hand, you advocate an end to, for example, house demolitions, you are potentially advocating policies that would merely turn a nasty occupation into a somewhat more benevolent one, if such a thing is possible."<sup>281</sup> The concept of advocating for a *more benevolent* occupation illustrates the stark contrast

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<sup>281</sup> Al-Haq: Defending Human Rights in Palestine Since 1979. *Al-Haq*, 2016, <http://www.alhaq.org/> Accessed 4 Sept. 2016.

between working within and working outside of the pre-existing narratives and frameworks of the international human rights industry.

In contrast, Hamas confronts the opposite dilemma— a rejection of international human rights framework in favor of a nationalistic version. This itself is proven to be highly problematic in its ability to internally regulate human rights. As demonstrated by several reports by *Human Rights Watch* and the UN, Hamas itself is responsible for a series of human rights abuses, many against Palestinians. On May 26, 2015, *Amnesty International* released a report stating that Hamas had carried out extrajudicial killings, abductions, and arrests of Palestinians and has used Al-Shifa Hospital to detain, interrogate, and torture suspects during the 2014 Israel-Gaza conflict. Many victims of torture were members of the rival Palestinian movement, Fatah.<sup>282</sup> Hamas' systematic engendering of human rights within a nationalist framework prevents a universal application, and in itself, paradoxically, fails to eliminate the abuses experienced by the Palestinian people. Hamas relies on its own narrative of the conflict, which lies in direct opposition to the Israeli narrative. These dueling narratives are both a product and a cause of uneven intervention, and in turn inspire a cynicism about the human rights industry. The tension between nationalist narratives and an appeal to universal notions of human rights limits the effectiveness of both Hamas and Al-Haq. In order to even begin to address the human rights abuses faced by Palestinians and Israelis, the dueling narratives must be reconciled and approached in a uniform manner, distinct from the interests of intervening states.

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<sup>282</sup> "Israel/Gaza Conflict: Questions and Answers | Amnesty ..." Amnesty International. Accessed October 24, 2016. <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2014/07/israelgaza-conflict-questions-and-answers/>.

The disconnect between Al-Haq and Hamas is representative of the larger Palestinian struggle, one that faces the problem of a fractured internal narrative. Despite the fact that there are many internal narratives within the Israeli framework, including different variations of Zionism, the goals of these internal narratives align in ways that allow them to function together. For example, many Israeli citizens identify as cultural and not political Zionists, with little regard for the political operatives of the state's government. Yet, due to subsidized housing and other cultural and economic incentives, many of these Israelis decide to live in settlements. Even when different perspectives within the Israeli narrative do not have the same overt objectives, they continue to serve the interests of the Zionists by occupying and living in Palestinian territory. While Israel and the US have together provided a singular, cohesive narrative, Palestinians, as exhibited by the tension between universalist and nationalist appeals, have failed to unify their many socio-political voices. Al-Haq resonates better with the international community because it seems to be a humanitarian organization willing to cooperate and function within a universal understanding of human rights. As a result of Palestinian cynicism towards this universal approach, Hamas presents a radical detachment from the international community. However, as a result of the geographic rift between Gaza and the West Bank, Hamas is faced with political contention from Fatah and the PLO. These fragmented political parties each operate using their own set of narratives. Although they all stem from the same opposition to Israeli occupation, their political tactics and goals fail to unify Palestinians to the extent of the cohesive Israeli-US narrative.

The lack of unity in Palestinian narratives also contributes to the international perception of the legitimacy and purpose of these distinct parties and groups. The international community, paralyzed by the strength of the Israeli-US dominance within the region, is unable to advocate for Palestine. This has in part stemmed from the American depiction of Hamas as a terrorist organization, incapable of and even not desiring to provide political, democratic stability within the region. The most compelling aspect of Hamas' contextual use of human rights discourse is its response to the Israeli-US narrative describing the party as a terrorist organization. Here, we can see a direct connection between a contrived narrative and human rights cynicism. In an article written by Hamas Political Bureau Chief Khalid Mish' al, the party argues that "there were voices, locally and internationally, warning voters not to vote for an organization branded by the US and EU as terrorist because such a democratically exercised right would cost them the financial aid provided by foreign donors."<sup>283</sup> The US-Israel definition of Hamas as a terrorist organization has excluded this party from interacting within the international community and contending with the international community's universal understanding of human rights. This notion is directly related to the language discrepancy featured in the previous chapter, by which the politics of occupation rely on labelling Palestinian groups *terrorists*. The impact of this distinction on stereotype formation will be explained in the following chapter using theories based in the *us vs. them* mentality. This Islamophobic notion has disguised the fact that, in crucial respects, Hamas is not as extremist as the US and Israel. Although many of its actions are condemnable, Hamas states that "it will agree

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<sup>283</sup> Tamimi, Azzam. *Hamas : A History from Within*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2007. Print.

to a long-term truce on the internationally recognized pre-June 1967 border, while pursuing negotiations on a political settlement.”<sup>284</sup> This idea is completely rejected by Israel and the US, which refuse to negotiate and insist that any political outcome must involve an Israeli takeover of substantial parts of the West Bank.

### **Selective Humanitarian Intervention: Inconsistency as a Cause of Cynicism**

Human rights cynicism is two-fold, caused in part by a perceived lack of popular support among the people of the intervening state and reproduced in the reactions of the recipients (or non-recipients) of such aid. Humanitarian intervention can be observed as ‘selective’ in terms of who is receiving aid and how, determined by assessment of the donor through the lens of its own political, economic, and social self interest. This is particularly clear in instances where the public fears that intervention will be costly and, furthermore, not in national self interest. For example, in the case of the Libyan intervention by the US in 2011, a Pew opinion poll from March of that year concluded that 63% of Americans believed that the US had no responsibility to act. The same survey reported the level of support for intervention in previous conflicts: 30% in Bosnia, 47% in Kosovo, and 51% in Darfur.<sup>285</sup> Syria presents a modern example of this dynamic, where Americans and Europeans have consistently refused involvement, despite the worsening level of this humanitarian crisis. As a result of this lack of popular support and pressure to intervene, Western democracies are often able to avoid humanitarian intervention, only choosing to do so as a tool of political engagement.

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<sup>284</sup>Tamimi, Azzam. *Hamas : A History from Within*. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press, 2007. Print.

<sup>285</sup> Menon, Rajan. *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*. Oxford University Press, 2016.

As argued by Rajan Menon in *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*, “thanks to humanitarian intervention’s shallow political roots, leaders are not beset by public pressure to make the extent of suffering the criterion for intervention. And as we shall see, shaky popular support for humanitarian intervention affects not only *whether* it is pursued, but also *how*.”<sup>286</sup> This relates to the problems inherent in Wilson and Brown’s conception of empathy, by which narratives of suffering are often manipulated by political agendas. The paradox of this process is that intervention is prohibited in the context of state sovereignty, except where the intervention is deemed humanitarian. However, even then, humanitarian reasons do not exist in isolation, and it is increasingly difficult to determine the *real* reason for intervention in the international arena. In her article, “*Selective Humanitarian Intervention: Moral Reason and Collective Agents*,” Jennifer Szende also shares this perception. Szende pinpoints a lack of transparency as one of the primary problems facing humanitarian intervention in that “the lack of transparency in deliberation surrounding humanitarian intervention makes it difficult to refute the objection that humanitarian reasons for intervention are merely a pretense.”<sup>287</sup> The decision-making procedures within international law make it difficult and often times impossible to conclusively determine the reasons for the intervention, largely because of the difficulty in striking a balance between universal standards and the need for case-by-case, culturally sensitive assessment. In this manner, Szende concludes that the problems revealed by an examination of inconsistent humanitarian intervention are actually general

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<sup>286</sup> Menon, Rajan. *The Conceit of Humanitarian Intervention*. Oxford University Press, 2016. P 29.

<sup>287</sup> Szende, Jennifer (2012). *Selective Humanitarian Intervention: Moral Reason and Collective Agents*. *Journal of Global Ethics* 8 (1). P 75.

problems with applying the norms of practical reasoning to moral questions dealing with collective agents.<sup>288</sup> Her claims to a need for transparency further parallel a need for both external and internal mechanisms of regulating humanitarian intervention.

The disparity of ‘applying the norms of practical reasoning to moral questions’ relates back to the original debate of logic and narrative — of a universal vs. politicized conception of human rights. The narrative paradigm proves to explain the inner workings of a politicized conception of human rights, one which allows selective humanitarian intervention to prevail. The problems produced by selective foreign involvement in the name of human rights are revealed by examining the ways inconsistency leads to overarching cynicism. These problems are arguably produced by applying the norms of practical reasoning to moral questions dealing with collective agents. The complexity of most humanitarian crises, as they occur at the intersection between political action, morality, and lived experience, provides intervening states an opportunity to warp and disguise their intentions. There is an overwhelming disparity between actual human rights practice in international relations and the theory of human rights critical to the formation of documents such as the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* and the *Charter of the United Nations*.

### **Looking Ahead: The Theory of Reflective Democracy**

Noam Chomsky’s “theory of reflective democracy” argues that our actions abroad reflect our nation’s values internally. In order for us to truly be a democracy, our international interventions must be democratic and consistently applied to human rights

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<sup>288</sup> Szende, Jennifer (2012). Selective Humanitarian Intervention: Moral Reason and Collective Agents. *Journal of Global Ethics*, 8 (1). P 76.



abuses on a global scale. Chomsky looks to environmental policy, government budgets, and the US military sponsorship of Colombia, the hemisphere's leading human-rights violator, in order to argue for the clear discrepancy between the US's policy initiatives and its domestic vision of democracy. He argues that "wealth and power have every reason to want the public largely removed from policy choices and implementation — also a matter of concern, quite apart from its relation to the universality of human rights."<sup>289</sup> Both foreign and domestic policies are tied to a universal understanding of human rights, a contradiction by which we must apply human rights mechanisms consistently without allowing them to be manipulated in order to pursue social, economic, or political agendas. Harold Koh provides a critical analysis of US foreign policy in *How Is International Human Rights Law Enforced?* He arrives at a conclusion paralleling Chomsky's: "International human rights law is enforced not just by nation-states, not just by government officials, not just by world historical figures, but by people like us, by people with the courage and commitment to bring international human rights law home through a transnational legal process of interaction, interpretation, and internalization."<sup>290</sup> Humanitarian law must be consistently enforced externally and internally, driven by public pressure through protests and demonstrations in order to regulate uneven applications of law. Chomsky argues that human rights law is perceived to not be enforced due to ignorance and confusion about the actual processes of

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<sup>289</sup> Chomsky, Noam. *Interventions*. San Francisco: City Lights Books, 2007. Print. Open media series; Open Media book. P 123.

<sup>290</sup> Koh, Harold Hongju, "How Is International Human Rights Law Enforced?" Addison C. Harris Lecture at Indiana University-Bloomington, Jan.21, 1998, *Indiana Law Journal* 74 (Fall 1999): 1397-1417. P 311.

successful legal implementations. In reality, the key to the successful implementation of both domestic and international law rests in the tension between the external enforcement and the internal obedience of these legal rules.

Koh argues that “true compliance is not so much the result of externally imposed sanctions so much as internally felt norms. In other words, as we move from external to internal factors, we also move from coercive to constitutive behavior.”<sup>291</sup> This implies that the frameworks that drive international human rights legislation are problematic in their reliance on external, coercive efforts rather than an appeal to internalization of ‘human rights norms.’ Koh argues that individuals have to activate transnational legal processes by becoming interactive citizens, interpreting the laws of their home country, and advocating for their even application. Most international legal theory suggests a vertical process by which national governments internalize norm-interpretations issued by the global interpretive community into their domestic political structures. For example, within national governments, in-house lawyers and legal advisers acquire institutional mandates to ensure that the government’s policies conform to the standards of international law.<sup>292</sup>

This universalist conception is correct to an extent, but it fails to consider another process, tangential to the vertical acquisition of norms. When corporations, for example, develop standard operating procedures, they adopt internal mechanisms, such as health and safety features or sexual harassment policies, to maintain a ‘habitual compliance’

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<sup>291</sup> Koh, Harold Hongju, “How Is International Human Rights Law Enforced?” Addison C. Harris Lecture at Indiana University-Bloomington, Jan.21, 1998, *Indiana Law Journal* 74 (Fall 1999): 1397-1417. P 312.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.* P 311.

with the internalized international norms. Therefore, over time, domestic decision-making structures become entangled with international legal norms and, as Koh argues, “the institutional arrangements for the making and maintenance of an international commitment become entrenched in domestic legal and political processes.”<sup>293</sup> This interconnection of international and domestic legal obligations allows domestic policy to warp the perception of international policies as they occur ‘on the ground.’ This would require an internalization of international human rights norms separate from the interests of states. Although a universalist human rights approach *does* attempt to do this, it fails in respect to reconciling disparities between how states act towards their citizens and how they act towards the citizens of another state — particularly in cases of international humanitarian intervention. Thus, a disparity is conceived between the general ‘American citizen’ and the ‘non-white foreigner.’ Indeed, even American *domestic* policy only provides human rights to certain groups in society. Koh refers to the consequences of the meshing of international and domestic policy in that “these institutional habits soon lead nations into default patterns of compliance...when a nation deviates from that pattern of presumptive compliance, fictions are created.”<sup>294</sup> The ‘fictions’ Koh refers to are the narratives explored earlier in this chapter created by policy discrepancies as justifications.

In the case of Palestine, Koh’s theory applies to the use of naming Palestinian action terrorism in order to warp domestic policy to make it congruent with international human rights norms. When Palestinians are called terrorists, Americans are reminded of

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<sup>293</sup> Koh, Harold Hongju, “How Is International Human Rights Law Enforced?” Addison C. Harris Lecture at Indiana University-Bloomington, Jan.21, 1998, *Indiana Law Journal* 74 (Fall 1999): 1397-1417. P 313.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.* P 313.

domestic security institutions and laws that protect the human rights of American's citizens. This fiction overshadows the reality of American and Israeli policies towards the conflict, which very clearly violate international standards of human rights norms. By contextualizing Chomsky's theory of reflective democracy, Koh's international law analysis, and philosophical frameworks of cynicism and intervention within the larger case study provided by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, it is clear that the many contrived narratives, on both sides, have resulted from and relied upon the vagueness of universal human rights mechanisms. In order to even begin drafting a sustainable solution to this conflict, the dueling Israeli and Palestinian narratives must be reconciled. Doing so is required prior to dismantling the pro-Israeli framework that is preventing universal human rights legislation from addressing the abuses suffered by both Palestinian and Israeli citizens. American citizens, as the citizens of an intervening state, are uniquely positioned to pressure governmental policies to produce a reflection that adequately mimics the goals of domestic policies. In this manner, Americans can effectively unify dueling narratives, overcome an adherence to stereotypical assumptions, and challenge the dominant images of this conflict.

As a result of the many dueling narratives surrounding the events in Palestine and the theoretical incongruencies within the human rights system, international actors, particularly the US, have used intervention to support one side of the conflict, selectively ignoring human rights abuses by Israel on the other side, in Palestine. This in turn has spread a cynicism towards human rights among Palestinians, which brings about two distinct responses seen in an analysis of Hamas and Al-Haq. Noam Chomsky's notion of

‘reflective democracy’ presents a dynamic solution to defeating the consequences of dueling narratives, politicized intervention, and human rights cynicism, by which the citizens of the intervening nation must advocate against unjust interventions that fail to uniformly address human rights abuses. Despite the fact that this potential solution has its own pitfalls, it stresses the importance of avoiding an uneven application of human rights legislation.

When contextualizing humanitarian intervention uniformly, both the external and internal actors of the conflict must analyze the complex purpose of such intervention, before one can define it as *humanitarian*. Together, the philosophical and international relations-based underpinnings of humanitarian intervention reveal the highly political consequences of dueling narratives. Due to the fact that the Islamophobic narratives have the greatest traction in justifying US foreign policy in the Middle East, we must discuss the ways in which Arab and Muslim stereotypes contribute to selective humanitarian intervention by creating ‘moral distance’ between Americans and Palestinians.

## Chapter V

### *The Philosophy of Bias: Illusory Living, Breathing Stereotypes*

“Could a greater miracle take place than for us to look through each other’s eyes for an instant?”

— Henry David Thoreau

The media plays an enormous role in the creation and perpetuation of stereotypes by triggering biases through the use of selective imagery resulting in their audience’s *moral distancing* from certain foreign policy initiatives and humanitarian crises. While governments often rely on rhetoric to fulfill a political agenda, for example the US’s use of Islamophobic narratives, the *intent* of the media cannot be interpreted in the same way. Because forms of popular media, including television, Hollywood cinema, and literature, are forms of *mass art* in capitalist states like the US, they are manufactured by industries that aim to make a profit. Conceptualizing popular media as mass art allows us to understand *why* our movies and television programs often consist of stereotypical depictions of social groups: in order to appeal to a mass audience, this art must be homogenous. In this chapter, I analyze the inner-workings of narratives within popular media and their connections to both implicit and explicit bias through the formation and dissemination of the stereotypes. I apply psychologically-grounded explanations of bias to the Arab and Muslim identities specifically in order to understand their implications in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. I also provide a quantitative data analysis from an original survey designed to test biases toward Arabs and Muslims. This

application of theory to real-world perceptions illuminates how I think it best to approach this conflict: through Palestinian lived realities.

### **The Homogenization of Mass Art**

We live in a world where people are constantly exposed to mass art—the cartoons in newspapers, our favorite *Netflix* programs, Hollywood classics, and so on. Together, these instances of mass art constitute our ‘popular media’ and have a role in shaping our understanding of events and people. Popular media is a reflection of ‘popular culture,’ which can be described as the entirety of dominant attitudes, ideas, images, perspectives, and other phenomena within a culture’s mainstream that permeates the everyday lives of a society.<sup>295</sup> In his ‘massification argument,’ Noel Carroll provides a philosophical analysis of the ways in which popular media, as *mass art*, influence ideologies. Carroll distinguishes between *mass art* and *folk art* in terms of the different *type* of expressiveness they utilize. While folk art illustrates a vision of a people *from* this particular people, their “distinctive mode of being,” mass art expresses nothing distinctive because it “blurs; it homogenizes.”<sup>296</sup> Similarly, through his ‘theory of mass culture’ Dwight MacDonal argues that the problem with mass art is that it produces homogenized images as a result of its being intended for a mass audience.<sup>297</sup>

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<sup>295</sup> Curran, James P., and Michael Gurevitch. *Mass Media and Society* 4th edition. Arnold, 2005.

<sup>296</sup> *Ibid.* P 17.

<sup>297</sup> Macdonald, Dwight. "A theory of mass culture." *Cultural theory and popular culture: A reader* (1998): 22-36.

Paying mind to the distinct purpose of mass art and mass media, MacDonald and Carroll emphasize that because these forms are meant to appeal to the largest audience possible, they lack individualized and personalized means of expressiveness. In addition, Daniel Bell associates mass art's emphasis on visuality with 'the stimulation of emotions.'<sup>298</sup> For this reason, Bell has a deep suspicion of media in which visual elements appeal directly to our compulsions for *action and sensation*.<sup>299</sup> Bell's theory importantly parallels Plato's suspicion of representation, where Bell's understanding of emotional possession is akin to Platonic fears that audiences will *take on* the emotions of the characters portrayed in a drama. While there is much to be said about the ways in which mass art is formed and the effect it has within society, I limit my discussion here to two key points: 1) mass art, by its very nature, seeks to create homogenized images of multifaceted and complex realities; and 2) that mass art appeals to *cheap emotions* that are shallowly exploited within it. While mass art may not have an *intent* to produce or reproduce stereotypes and bias, much mass art functions to reinforce common prejudices in society.

### **Prejudice, In-group Preference, and Stereotypes**

In this manner, driven by economic profit, American mass art capitalizes, quite literally, on the prejudices already present within our society. It does this by appealing to emotions like fear, which are manipulated and monolithically aroused by a set of

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<sup>298</sup> Bell, Daniel. *The cultural contradictions of capitalism*. Basic Books, 1976.

<sup>299</sup> *Ibid.*



corresponding images. Prejudice was originally defined by Gordon Allport in 1954 as “feeling, favorable or unfavorable, toward a person or thing, prior to, or not based on, actual experience.”<sup>300</sup> While prejudice is used to describe the tendency, intentional or unintentional, to prejudge others based on their perceived social group membership, bias implies an unreasoned distortion of judgement in favor or against a person or thing. In this manner, bias typically refers to an inclination or attitude that predisposes one to favor or disapprove of something or someone, and it can be differentiated from prejudice in terms of experience. Biases are often formed based on one’s experience— their social predispositions or the collection of images they have been exposed to.<sup>301</sup> Prejudice occurs without reference to actual experience, often occurring when someone avoids or hates something without a specific line of reasoning.<sup>302</sup> The distinction between bias and prejudice is important to understanding how each functions in the formation and perpetuation of stereotypes through in-group preferences.

In-group preference, or *homophily*, is closely related to the tendency people have to interact with others they perceive to be similar to them.<sup>303</sup> Taken in the context of social attitudes, in-group preference occurs when someone is positively inclined towards

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<sup>300</sup> Katz, Irwin. "Gordon Allport's" The Nature of Prejudice"." *Political Psychology* (1991): 125-157.

<sup>301</sup> Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid.

<sup>303</sup> Aberson, Christopher L., Carl Shoemaker & Christina Tomolillo (2004) *Implicit Bias and Contact: The Role of Interethnic Friendships*, *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 144:3, 335-347, DOI.

those perceived to be in one's own 'group.'<sup>304</sup> These tendencies help explain the self-organization and self-segregation of people according to aspects of social identity, where feelings of commitment and loyalty are visibly more active among members of an 'in-group.' Importantly, the connection between *homophily*, or in-group preference, and implicit bias appears to exist in a causal loop, a self-perpetuating cycle of how we select friends and how we perceive others. For example, when we select friends with similar social identifying factors to ourselves, we create homogenized friend groups.<sup>305</sup> If we are constantly surrounded by friends who are like us, our friendships can increase implicit biases towards the out-group; as we grow more comfortable with *us* we also grow less comfortable with *them*.<sup>306</sup> Here, we see the foundational beginnings of the *us vs. them* mentality critical to an assessment of how foreign policy relies on typical psychological patterns of behavior.

Stereotypes refer to the well-learned associations between social objects and attributes.<sup>307</sup> Lawrence Blum argues that stereotypes of people can be disrespectful in that they lack "a recognition of their full humanity and individuality."<sup>308</sup> Blum argues that stereotypes mask individuality and lead to *moral distancing* in which "the stereotyper

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<sup>304</sup> Lee, Carole J., and Christian D. Schunn. "Social Biases and Solutions for Procedural Objectivity." *Hypatia* 26, no. 2 (April 2011).

<sup>305</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015).

<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>307</sup> Blum, Lawrence. "Stereotypes and stereotyping: A moral analysis." *Philosophical Papers* 33, no. 3 (2004): 251-289.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*

sees a stereotype as more ‘other’ than he or she really is, and this corrodes her sense of a common, shared humanity.”<sup>309</sup> In both prejudice and stereotyping, an orientating attitude is routinized to the extent that it becomes automatic in the presence of the others.<sup>310</sup> Real-world consequences have been made concrete by Claude Steele and Joshua Aronson with the coining of the term ‘stereotype threat.’ Stereotype threat describes the phenomenon by which a stereotype can influence behavior, causing one to confirm a negative stereotype about their ‘group.’ In the original study, black students under-performed on tests they were told are designed to measure *intellectual ability* instead of *problem solving under lab conditions*.<sup>311</sup> The study’s conclusions suggest that stereotype threat increases cognitive load and causes underperformance in part because it compromises the subject’s confidence levels and ability to concentrate.

Stereotype threat can be wrongly interpreted to provide the ‘evidence’ for justified bias. This evidence can be based in and/or created by systems of belief and representation. In his analysis of stereotype threat, Ron Mallon differentiates between threats that occur due to an activation of beliefs and those that occur due to different phenomena of representation. Using previous case studies, Mallon demonstrates that there is a significant difficulty in determining whether a person’s reaction is due to

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<sup>309</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015). P 352.

<sup>310</sup> Rudman, Laurie A. "Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias." *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004). P 133.

<sup>311</sup> Steele, Claude M., and Joshua Aronson. "Stereotype threat and the intellectual test performance of African Americans." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 69, no. 5 (1995): 797.

genuine biases or other factors such as stress, exhaustion, anxiety, or emotions. Mallon thus construes stereotype threat as existing on both personalist and subpersonalist levels.<sup>312</sup> Personalist explanations are based in the concept that behaviors appeal to mental states that rationally produce other mental states and behavior, while subpersonalist explanations appeal to processes ‘below the level of the person,’ referring to unconscious phenomena.<sup>313</sup> Mallon identifies the limits of our rational governance in that stereotype is “plausibly triggered by beliefs and that one of the triggering beliefs in stereotype threat is belief in the truth of the stereotype itself.”<sup>314</sup>

In addition to confirming negative stereotypes about social groups, stereotype threat also affects our ‘epistemic lives,’ the ways in which we engage with the world as actual and potential knowers. Stacey Goguen explores some of these epistemic ramifications, namely impacts on self-doubt, ideals of rationality, and more widely, social identity threat. Goguen criticizes the common social psychology perspective, originally upheld by Allport, because it falsely limits the effects of stereotype threat to underperformance, preventing a better understanding of the connections to related psychological phenomena. She suggests that stereotype threat results in a hybrid emotional state of self-doubt related to a process with both physiological and reason-

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<sup>312</sup> Mallon, Ron. “Stereotype Threat and Persons.” Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print. P 135.

<sup>313</sup> Ibid. P 135.

<sup>314</sup> Ibid. P 150.

based components.<sup>315</sup> The role of self-doubt is important because of its wider applications in understanding the influence of social identity and the epistemic interactions between people. Because stereotype threat shapes how individuals perceive themselves, it influences their interactions with others, creating a self-perpetuating cycle of isolation or avoidance that perfectly mimics the most damaging aspects of the *we vs. them* mentality. Important factors that exacerbate self-doubt include social stigma and marginalization, which classify stereotype threat as a form of *epistemic injustice*. Goguen's conception of stereotype threat relates to the work of Miranda Fricker. Fricker's analysis of *hermeneutical injustice* and the dissonance between cultural knowledge and personal experience is especially relevant here.

#### **Implicit Bias: Formation, Implications, & Heterogeneity**

Stereotypes, shaping our perception of ourselves and others, convey a single, simple evaluation of a group of people. While explicit attitudes and the process of stereotyping are usually in our conscious awareness, implicit attitudes, in contrast, are evaluations and beliefs that are automatically activated by the mere presence or representation of the attitude object.<sup>316</sup> An implicit bias can be described as “an automatic tendency to think, feel, or act in biased ways, interacting and thinking about people with

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<sup>315</sup> Goguen, Stacy. “Stereotype Threat, Epistemic Injustice, and Rationality.” Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print. P 223.

<sup>316</sup> Dovidio, John F., Kerry Kawakami, and Kelly R. Beach. "Implicit and explicit attitudes: Examination of the relationship between measures of intergroup bias." *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Intergroup processes* 4 (2001): 175-197.

respect to their apparent social identities that align with commonly held stereotypes.”<sup>317</sup>

Implicit biases are not readily available to introspection and are often not directly aligned with a person’s beliefs, feelings, or attitudes.<sup>318</sup>

These automatic tendencies can be measured through an implicit-association test (IAT), which is designed to reveal the strength of an individual’s automatic association between mental representations of objects and value-laden concepts.<sup>319</sup> As Laurie Rudman states in her analysis of the nature of implicit bias, “priming and the IAT belong to a class of implicit measures known as response latency methods, in which orientations are inferred from people’s ability to complete reaction time tasks.”<sup>320</sup> The results of these tests have generally revealed pervasive biases that are not reflected by self-reports, meaning that even biases that are unacknowledged persist, unchallenged, in our minds.<sup>321</sup> Even though one might consider themselves to be tolerant of all genders, in an implicit association test, one may nevertheless associate men with engineering and women with occupations such as nursing and teaching. However, implicit biases are not just internal

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<sup>317</sup> Dovidio, John F., Kerry Kawakami, and Kelly R. Beach. "Implicit and explicit attitudes: Examination of the relationship between measures of intergroup bias." *Blackwell handbook of social psychology: Intergroup processes* 4 (2001): 175-197. P 177.

<sup>318</sup> *Ibid.* P 182.

<sup>319</sup> Greenwald, Anthony G., Brian A. Nosek, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Understanding and using the implicit association test: I. An improved scoring algorithm." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 85, no. 2 (2003): 197.

<sup>320</sup> Rudman, Laurie A. "Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias." *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004). P 131.

<sup>321</sup> Greenwald, Anthony G., Brian A. Nosek, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Understanding and using the implicit association test: I. An improved scoring algorithm." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 85, no. 2 (2003): 197.

lapses in association — they have a very real impact on aspects of behavior and judgement. For example, as proven by a well known and frequently replicated resume study, implicit bias in hiring (when people are given identical resume samples with changed names) have shown that men are judged as more competent than women and white people more so than their black counterparts.<sup>322</sup>

Yet, there appears to be different kinds of implicit bias that operate within a system of ‘functional heterogeneity.’<sup>323</sup> A study conducted in 2006 by Amodio and Devine attempted to isolate the operation of different associations of implicit bias by first testing associations of black/ white people along the dichotomy athletic/intelligent and then again in terms of negative/positive adjective association.<sup>324</sup> Their data demonstrates a striking finding in that the scores on the two separate IAT tests were not correlated. The extent to which individuals expressed the mental/physical correlation was not correlated with negative implicit attitudes.<sup>325</sup> These findings are significant because they suggest that the two associations were operating independently within individual test subjects and indicate that there may be variation across individuals in terms of which associations are operative in producing implicitly biased perceptions, judgements, and actions towards a

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<sup>322</sup> Greenwald, Anthony G., Brian A. Nosek, and Mahzarin R. Banaji. "Understanding and using the implicit association test: I. An improved scoring algorithm." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 85, no. 2 (2003): 197. P 145.

<sup>323</sup> Holroyd, Jules and Joesph Sweetman. "The Heterogeneity of Implicit Bias." Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print.

<sup>324</sup> Amodio, David M., and Patricia G. Devine. "Stereotyping and evaluation in implicit race bias: evidence for independent constructs and unique effects on behavior." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 91, no. 4 (2006): 652.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*

certain group. This same study also measured correlations between judgments about test-performance and the behavior indicator of seating distance. Test subjects were asked to judge the competency of a fictive African-American testing partner and then asked to sit and wait for this partner to enter the room. Participants who displayed strong associations of race on the IAT mental/physical constructs made judgments consistent with these stereotypes but this kind of association did not predict greater seating distance. However, the manifestation of strong negative association on the affect-based IAT was a good indicator of seating distance, but not judgments of testing competence.<sup>326</sup> As argued by Holroyd and Sweetman in their analysis of Amodio and Devine's study, this understanding is critical to finding effective and sustainable strategies to combat implicit bias:

In relation to the particular associations at issue here, for example, if one is involved in a task such as evaluation of an individual's competence or intelligence, then mitigating the associations between race and mental or physical constructs that may influence that judgment will be of particular importance. On the other hand, if one is concerned with increasing the amount and quality of intergroup contact, one might focus on limiting or changing negative affective associations.<sup>327</sup>

Therefore, different implicit associations have influence over different kinds of behavior and require combative strategies based in different operational understandings.

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<sup>326</sup> Amodio, David M., and Patricia G. Devine. "Stereotyping and evaluation in implicit race bias: evidence for independent constructs and unique effects on behavior." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 91, no. 4 (2006): 652.

<sup>327</sup> Holroyd, Jules and Joseph Sweetman. "The Heterogeneity of Implicit Bias." Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print. P 92.



Holroyd and Sweetman also present a dynamic analysis of the heterogeneity of implicit bias by drawing a distinction between semantic and affective associations. While the mental/ physical construct in the previous study is an example of a semantic association (salt/pepper, she/woman), the positive/negative construct, used in the study's second IAT, is an example of an affective association.<sup>328</sup> This distinction identifies a systemic difference in content, underpinned by a structural heterogeneity, that is important in identifying the impact of different social experiences, such as inter-group contact versus media imagery, on implicit bias formation. Rudman's analysis coincides with that of Holroyd and Sweetman by also characterizing all forms of bias as heterogenous. Rudman argues that the use of the term 'non-conscious' to describe implicit bias has caused a debate on whether the definition is declarative (describing mental contents of implicit bias) or procedural (describing how implicit biases operate).<sup>329</sup> A declarative understanding applies to how media conditions people's implicit attitudes without their awareness, causing this bias to remain undetected in long-term memory. Under the procedural perspective, the source of implicit bias is not consciously considered as a causal influence, thereby causing aspects of reason, judgment, and behavior to be influenced by implicit orientations without intention or even awareness.<sup>330</sup> This distinction has implications in understanding what causes

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<sup>328</sup> Holroyd, Jules and Joseph Sweetman. "The Heterogeneity of Implicit Bias." Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print. P 92.

<sup>329</sup> Rudman, Laurie A. "Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias." *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004): 129-142.

<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.* P 134.

implicit bias and whether it is the bias itself that is unconscious or the process of forming and referencing an internalized bias.

### **The Relationship between Implicit and Explicit Biases**

The relationship between implicit and explicit forms of prejudice and bias is largely based on their operational differences, and can be traced to motives of self-preservation. For example, in a study conducted by Nosek and Banaji (2002), the data supported that racial attitudes are likely to be self-censored more than attitudes toward academic subjects because attitude objects elicit greater implicit-explicit correspondence.<sup>331</sup> In practical applications, this means that people are likely to think more deeply about presidential candidates than about soft drinks, as objects high in self-preservation concerns, and therefore access a greater level of connection between implicit and explicit biases within these behaviors and judgments. In this manner, implicit and explicit orientations are most distinguishable in their disparate causes. Compared to explicit opinions, implicit biases are more influenced by early experiences, affective experiences, cultural biases, and cognitive balance principles.<sup>332</sup> Implicit orientations stem from past experiences, for example developmental experiences with maternal care givers, while explicit orientations reflect more recent events. Implicit biases are also more sensitive to affective experiences, such as the activation of the amygdala, which is the

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<sup>331</sup> Greenwald, Anthony G., Mahzarin R. Banaji, Laurie A. Rudman, Shelly D. Farnham, Brian A. Nosek, and Deborah S. Mellott. "A unified theory of implicit attitudes, stereotypes, self-esteem, and self-concept." *Psychological review* 109, no. 1 (2002): 3.

<sup>332</sup> Rudman, Laurie A. "Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias." *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004). P 136.

area of the brain associated with emotional learning. For example, a study conducted by Phelps (2001) found that implicit and not explicit bias coincided with amygdala activation in white people exposed to images of black people. This means that implicit biases are based in and even triggered by aspects of emotional learning, such as fear conditioning and perceptions of anxiety or threat, while explicit biases are not. Therefore, in attempting to reduce implicit bias, changes at the automatic level will depend on emotional reconditioning, such as the formation of feelings of love or admiration for the target of an implicit bias.

Aspects of amygdala activation, such as fear conditioning, suggest that perhaps implicit biases are rational reactions. If most terrorist attacks are committed by Arabs, isn't this implicit and even explicit bias rational? In their analysis of racial cognition and the ethics of implicit bias, Daniel Kelly and Erica Roeddert approach this question through the lens of rationality. Kelly and Roeddert argue that a rational attitude may still be immoral because rationality and morality are different virtues.<sup>333</sup> They provide the example of a student's parents confronted with evidence that their son or daughter is unintelligent. Even if this student has shockingly low test scores, his or her parents remain morally obligated to think the best of their child. They may therefore have an unwarranted and irrational bias towards their daughter's intelligence, but it is moral nonetheless. This is evidence that morality and rationality operate on different scales and that it can in fact be immoral to hold a belief that is rationally justified. This analysis

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<sup>333</sup> Kelly, Daniel, and Erica Roeddert. "Racial cognition and the ethics of implicit bias." *Philosophy Compass* 3, no. 3 (2008): 522-540.

points to the tension between explicit and implicit bias on a personal level, supporting the idea that it is morally condemnable to harbor implicit racial bias and even stands as a reflection of one's own self-conscious. Kelly and Roedder's assessment reveals the difficulty in applying normative philosophical frameworks, with labels such as 'intrinsically opposed to benevolence,' to implicit forms of bias that are often undetectable and exceedingly difficult to combat. Yet, individuals seek to correct internalized forms of implicit bias, especially in cases of self-preservation, because they are seen as morally problematic.

Explicit and implicit biases differentially relate to pressures to promote tolerance towards certain groups. Social pressures, often regulated by popular media content, have an impact on shaping explicit bias without redefining coinciding implicit biases. Lai, Hoffman, and Nosek state that "the strength of the relationship between implicit and explicit attitudes varies across social categories, with age and disability attitudes eliciting particularly weak relationships ( $r$ 's  $<.15$ ) for example, and sexual orientation and political attitudes eliciting particularly comparatively strong ones ( $r$ 's  $>.45$ )."<sup>334</sup> The authors' study demonstrates how variation may be explained by the social pressures against holding negative attitudes toward some groups. However, because the relationship between explicit and implicit prejudice is subject to distinct formative experiences operating via distinct psychological mechanisms, they have distinct routes for change that may translate into potential ways to *reduce* implicit prejudices. This revelation shaped the

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<sup>334</sup> Lai, Calvin K., Kelly M. Hoffman, and Brian A. Nosek. "Reducing implicit prejudice." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 315-330. P 2.

same authors' corresponding study in 2012, designed to determine what mechanisms reduce implicit bias and the real-world practicality of these measures.

This particular study examined the effect of evaluative conditioning in which individuals were 'retrained' to associate concepts together, such as positive affirmation words or traits with black faces. Exposure to these pairings reduced racial prejudice immediately, and this change persisted in a follow-up trial two-days later. Another form of evaluative conditioning involved a computer exercise that used 480 trials of initiating approach toward black faces and avoidance of white faces. Lai, Hoffman, and Nosek conclude that "this change may have been due to the self — a concept strongly associated with the good — becoming more associated with the approached faces."<sup>335</sup> In a 2002 study conducted by Greenwald *et al*, people who liked themselves and identified with their in-group also revealed strong in-group bias, with self-report measures showing no indication of cognitive consistency. Rudman discusses this study, stating that "the dependence of in-group evaluation on the interaction of self-appraisal and group identity is the hallmark of the unified theory of implicit social cognition."<sup>336</sup>

This theory can be paired down to the following pattern: 'If I am good and I am X, then X is also good,'<sup>337</sup> revealing a pattern of linkages between self-concept, group identity, and positive association. In other words, when an individual correlates his or her

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<sup>335</sup> Lai, Calvin K., Kelly M. Hoffman, and Brian A. Nosek. "Reducing implicit prejudice." *Social and Personality Psychology Compass* 7, no. 5 (2013): 315-330. P 4.

<sup>336</sup> Rudman, Laurie A. "Social justice in our minds, homes, and society: The nature, causes, and consequences of implicit bias." *Social Justice Research* 17, no. 2 (2004). P 137.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.* P 137.

sense of *self* with another person, they associate that person with how they view themselves. As we do not view ourselves impartially, appraisals of others may also be distorted. This particular conclusion, underscoring the self as an important component to implicit bias formation, is critical to my argument and will be revisited in the following chapter in order to support a philosophical notion of *the self defined by the other*.

Alex Madva explores how egalitarian goals often conflict with the realities of implicit social bias and considers how individuals and society at large can challenge the underlying issues that produce implicit biases. He begins by critiquing Gendler and Egan's claim that "merely knowing certain social facts makes individuals more likely to act in biased ways."<sup>338</sup> Madva argues that these theories ignore a fourth potential answer — regulation, as a combination of suppression and ignorance. In order to argue this conclusion, Madva states that "the problem is not mere social knowledge, but rather hyperactive social knowledge, agitating our minds in moments when it ought to keep silent."<sup>339</sup> So what is needed to combat implicit social biases is not to maintain the status quo, simply suppress our biased beliefs, or to ignore the problem, but instead to acknowledge our biases when activated and monitor our acceptance and use of them. To self-regulate in this way, we must utilize a 'creative mindset' for "being in a creative mindset prevents the stereotype from being the first thoughts to come to mind."<sup>340</sup> Here,

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<sup>338</sup> Madva, Alex. "Virtue, Social Knowledge, and Implicit Bias. Brownstein, Michael, and Jennifer Saul Mather. *Implicit Bias and Philosophy*. N.p.: Oxford UP, 2016. Print. P 194.

<sup>339</sup> Ibid. P 200.

<sup>340</sup> Ibid. P 205.

Madva presents a dynamic approach to both the formation of biases and their persistence suggesting that in order to mitigate the negative effects of bias, prejudice, and stereotype formation, it is critical to understand their heterogeneity, accept their existence, and use the connection between self-concept and group association to create positive bonds between ourselves and others.

### **Interethnic Friendship**

Interethnic friendship is one effective means of creating positive feelings of trust and ‘in-group’-like qualities among people of different social identities. In a study conducted by Aberson, Shoemaker, and Tomolillo, the role of interethnic friendship was examined using the results of an IAT, self-report bias measures, and friendship questionnaires in order to predict implicit and explicit biases involving African American and Latino identities. The results supported the importance of contact via interethnic friendship in improving intergroup attitudes: participants with close friends who were members of the target group exhibited less implicit prejudice than participants without.<sup>341</sup> This study, heavily replicated in social psychology, supports the findings of Allport’s *contact hypothesis*, providing a theoretical basis for understanding the role of contact in improving intergroup attitudes. This theory specifies that contact with out-group members is beneficial to attitudes regarding the out-group when individuals have equal

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<sup>341</sup> Aberson, Christopher, Shoemaker, Carl and Tomillo, Christina. 2004. “Implicit Bias and Contact: The Role of Interethnic Friendships.” *The Journal of Social Psychology* 144 (3): 335-47.

status, common goals, are in a cooperative or independent setting, and have support from authorities.<sup>342</sup>

However, a later study conducted by Aberson revealed the limitations to this effect, in terms of what type of implicit biases are changed through interethnic friendships. Aberson's study examines the implicit biases of 94 undergraduate students at an American public university. After collecting data on how many African American friends each student had, he performed an IAT testing stereotypically black and white names with positive/negative adjective correlations. The results also supported the conclusion of Allport in that contact did reduce implicitly held biases toward racial minorities; however, in terms of ageism and prejudice towards obese people, contact did not help.<sup>343</sup> In addition, Aberson's findings support the notion that interethnic friendship has a large correlation with implicit bias but no strong correlation with most aspects of explicit bias. Similar to the functioning of prejudice formation, limitations of interethnic friendships are most likely linked to social expectations and standards of tolerance towards traditionally discriminated against groups.

Contact without friendship is susceptible to confirming negative biases. Consider a study in which the majority of college students paired with Asian roommates actually had increased levels of implicit bias towards Asians *after* living with them.<sup>344</sup> However,

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<sup>342</sup> Pettigrew, Thomas F. "Intergroup contact theory." *Annual review of psychology* 49, no. 1 (1998): 65-85.

<sup>343</sup> Aberson, Christopher, Shoemaker, Carl and Tomillo, Christina. 2004. "Implicit Bias and Contact: The Role of Interethnic Friendships." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 144 (3): 335-47.

<sup>344</sup> Ibid.



the positive correlations and bonds created within friendships as opposed to roommates eliminate this potential side effect because friends become a part of one's larger self-concept; we identify closely with our friend group. Sharing a similar perception, Pettigrew argues that the contact hypothesis is unnecessarily burdened with conditions, arguing that interethnic friendship is a key concept because friendships involve all of the conditions for optimal intergroup contact.<sup>345</sup> When applied to interethnic friendships, the contact hypothesis presents an explanation for how token friendships with minority groups often produce positive associations and promote positive implicit associations toward those groups.

The inner workings of interethnic friendships also have considerable epistemic considerations. As Sheila Lintott explains, their function in society is more complex than simply providing personal relationships. Personal relationships play a role in maintaining 'mysterious inequalities' in our society via 'ethnic privileging,' and while racism is not tolerated in the workplace in hiring decisions, it remains in our marriages and friendships.<sup>346</sup> In this manner, while interethnic friendships provide enormous potential for breaking the barrier between *us* and *them*, they are also a place where in-group/out-group preferencing is obvious. Citing feminist critiques on the distinction between private and public realms, Lintott argues that the personal is still political because "whom one

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<sup>345</sup> Aberson, Christopher, Shoemaker, Carl and Tomillo, Christina. 2004. "Implicit Bias and Contact: The Role of Interethnic Friendships." *The Journal of Social Psychology* 144 (3): 335-47.

<sup>346</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015): 318-339.

marries or with whom one socializes with helps determine whom one benefits and supports privately *and* publicly.”<sup>347</sup> In this manner, the very nature of friendship demands the use of biasing factors that determine who we become friends with, including most critically the use of implicit bias, in-group preference, and stereotype threat.

Interethnic friendships are especially applicable to this thesis as a result of the bias individuals have *towards* their friends — the in-group bias that leads to the formation of *us* in the *us vs. them mentality*. As Lintott and Blum argue, friendship grounds specific, special duties by using both rational and emotional considerations of to whom we ‘already feel a special concern.’<sup>348</sup> Because friendships are formed using the same structural basis as in-groups, “because she’s my friend” has similar moral justification properties as “because she’s white” or “because she’s Jewish.” Here, friendship, as a concentrated manifestation of in-group bias, has visible connections to the ways in which narratives are used to shape foreign policy by implicating a sense of moral duty. As Miranda Fricker argues in her work on epistemic injustice, we trust our friends and often extend this trust to other members of perceived in-groups. In this manner, narratives are justified by testimonial injustice because we often systematically favor the in-group as a reliable source, and their narrative becomes “truth,” distorting, concealing, and erasing facts and stories. As argued in Chapter II, the historical and

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<sup>347</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015). P 318.

<sup>348</sup> Blum, Lawrence. "Stereotypes and stereotyping: A moral analysis." *Philosophical Papers* 33, no. 3 (2004): 251-289.

political relationship between Israel and America is one in which the similarities between the two cultures are mirrored in the moral construction and justification tool of *our friends in Israel*— ‘the only democracy in the Middle East.’ The implications include a perceived moral duty to Israel and moral distance from their opponent, allowing the selective favoring of one narrative over another.

Fricker expands upon this ‘moment of epistemic injustice,’ describing *hermeneutical injustice*, which is when “the powerful have an unfair advantage in structuring collective social understandings.”<sup>349</sup> In this manner, friendships sustain a reproduction of inequality by protecting and giving distributions of wealth and power to the in-group exclusively because, as Lintott and Aberson *et al* explain, friendship tends towards homogeneity and maintains the status quo. This process is further sustained in a cyclical relationship with phenomena like stereotype formation and implicit bias because it “keeps the power to structure collective social understandings in the hands of the same individuals and others like them.”<sup>350</sup> Therefore, the greatest counter to bias-based friendship formation is the dismantling of these authority-based understandings of collective knowledge. This is the central goal of many attempts to dismantle bias through education programs that empower marginalized voices and in a Spivakian sense “let the subaltern speak.” Such theories are strongly supported by evidence in social psychology,

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<sup>349</sup> Fricker, Miranda. 2007. *Epistemic Injustice: Power and the Ethics of Knowing*. New York: Oxford University Press.

<sup>350</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015). P 331.

with a study conducted by Rudman, Ashmore, and Gary revealing that students taking diversity education courses evidenced less implicit bias than control group of students not enrolled in diversity education.<sup>351</sup> Similarly, a study by Gurin found in a large-scale study of campus diversity, that students exposed to courses addressing issues of race, ethnicity, and interethnic friendships evidenced a greater ability to understand out-group perspectives.<sup>352</sup> These findings show that exposure to social understandings typically marginalized within society and excluded through in-group bias has an active impact on implicit bias. This can be attributed to the concept that diversity education is similar to interethnic friendship in that it involves processes of discussing issues of race directly with friends or gaining an understanding of out-group perspectives and behaviors through exposure to each other's opinions and experiences.

The operational processes of friendship are important in the formation of identity, trust, and other sources of social connection, often helping us discover more about ourselves as well as the other. However, like narratives, friendships can protect unequal power structures in our society and can be used to analyze phenomena such as the *us vs. them* mentality, stereotype perpetuation, and the systematic favoring of one 'truth' over another. These are the forces that underly a lack of uniformity in American foreign policy, particularly in the application of international human rights law. In order to better

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<sup>351</sup> Rudman, Laurie A., Richard D. Ashmore, and Melvin L. Gary. "'Unlearning' automatic biases: the malleability of implicit prejudice and stereotypes." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 81, no. 5 (2001): 856.

<sup>352</sup> Aberson, Christopher L., Carl Shoemaker, and Christina Tomolillo. "Implicit bias and contact: The role of interethnic friendships." *The Journal of social psychology* 144, no. 3 (2004): 335-347.

understand the underlying connections between implicit bias, friendship, and stereotyping in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, these theories will be applied to their specific reality in the case of Arab and Muslim identities.

### **Media Imagery**

While websites such as YouTube and Facebook provide new opportunities for individuals to share personal images and realities, with social media being the Arab Spring's most critical tool, the influence of today's top television shows, films, and news broadcasts is inescapable and often reproduced within these very platforms. To a certain extent, media has continued to disproportionately reproduce and distribute powerful images from the few who control major media conglomerates and their pocketbooks. This phenomenon has further bearings in Lintott's conception of bias in friendship, by which the power to structure collective social understandings remains in the hands of the non-marginalized few.<sup>353</sup> One aspect of the media's role in the formation of stereotypes and the corresponding activation of implicit biases is the construction of representational images. Therefore, understanding of the operational discourse surrounding implicit biases is critical because these biases are formed and often resurfaced through the use of this media imagery.

In their analysis of images and readers' constructions of news narratives, Rick Busselle and Helena Bilandzic discuss certain images that are not iconic symbols, but are internalized by viewers and consequently serve as a source of information. Images play a

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<sup>353</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015): 318-339.

number of different roles in the use of narratives to construct our world. However, Busselle and Bilandzic depart from previous international relations-based narrative theories by focusing on images from a cognitive-processing, narrative comprehension perspective. They argue that we do not receive stories passively and that viewers often construct a story's sense in their own mind, resulting in a phenomenon referred to as 'story realization': "the audience member's cognitive and emotional understanding of the events based on both the words and images available in the text and their own preexisting, relevant knowledge related to the topic."<sup>354</sup> This parallels David Bordwell's definition of a story as "the imaginary construct we create progressively and retroactively, the developing result of picking up narrative cues, applying schemata, and framing and testing hypotheses."<sup>355</sup>

The connections between stereotypical representations and implicit bias formation are made evident in much research in social psychology. A study conducted by Govan and Williams reveals that representing black and white social categories with counter stereotypical exemplars during implicit prejudice measurement reduces implicit prejudice.<sup>356</sup> A similar study by Turner and Crisp finds that reductions in implicit bias can even occur by imagining counter-stereotypical examples or by considering negative and

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<sup>354</sup> Busselle, Rick and Helena Bilandzic. *Images in Readers' Construction of News Narratives* from Ross, Susan Dente. *Images that injure: Pictorial stereotypes in the media*. ABC-CLIO, 2011. P 33.

<sup>355</sup> Bordwell, David. 1995. *Narration in the fiction film*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

<sup>356</sup> Williams, Kipling D., Cassandra L. Govan, Vanessa Croker, Daniel Tynan, Maggie Cruickshank, and Albert Lam. "Investigations into differences between social-and cyberostracism." *Group Dynamics: Theory, Research, and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2002): 65.

positive events associated with the in-group and out-group.<sup>357</sup> Together, these studies reveal the influence of shifting the representation of a target group by focusing on a subtype of the out-group or by reframing the identity of the out-group. For example, black ‘targets’ are evaluated more positively when the targets are placed in front of positive backgrounds, like a family barbecue rather than negative backgrounds, like a gang-related incident.<sup>358</sup> The results of these studies, proving strong linkages between implicit bias formation and media content, allude to the similar structural potential as interethnic friendships. Although friendships are often reliant on an activation of bias, they also serve as a platform to combat bias by creating social bonds that defy out-group boundaries. Because media is used to fabricate the content of our collective social knowledge, correcting media stereotypes can be an extremely effective means of indirectly addressing implicit bias towards marginalized identities.

#### **Moral Distancing as a Product of Stereotyping and Naming Practices**

The process of *moral distancing*, a lack of empathy towards the *other*, is a result of the stereotyping processes within the formation and perpetuation of dueling narratives. The ‘moral distance’ between ourselves and others is a bias-related manifestation of what Wittgenstein argues is a common failure to recognize our dependence on others. In their study of stereotypes and prejudice, Schwartz, Struch, and Bar-Tal argue that moral

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<sup>357</sup> Turner, Rhiannon N., Richard J. Crisp, and Emily Lambert. "Imagining intergroup contact can improve intergroup attitudes." *Group Processes & Intergroup Relations* 10, no. 4 (2007): 427-441.

<sup>358</sup> Gorham, Bradley W. "Stereotypes in the media: So what?." *Howard Journal of Communication* 10, no. 4 (1999): 229-247.

distancing results when we perceive *value* stereotypes.<sup>359</sup> In contrast to trait stereotypes, value stereotypes evaluate one's own and others' behavior across situations by underlying norms and attitudes. Trait and value stereotypes can intersect, where *wise* is a trait but *wisdom* is a value. Yet traits reflect abilities and styles of behavior, and not the ideals that the perceiver assumes to be the others' basic guiding principles, which are portrayed in value stereotypes.<sup>360</sup> As hierarchies of goals involving what is important to group members in what they aspire to *do and be*, value stereotypes are more likely to reveal perceptions of a group's fundamental human nature. Therefore, Bar-Tal, Schwartz, and Struch argue that in order to understand the implications of intergroup behavior, we must investigate the stereotyped beliefs people hold about the hierarchy of personal values that characterize members of a particular group:

It is when people dehumanize others, viewing them as lacking the moral sensibilities that distinguish human kind, that they can ignore the internalized and social norms that enjoin compassion and oppose cruelty to others.<sup>361</sup>

The perceived humanity of the out-group or the *other*, dictated by our stereotypes about their *values*, is connected to the role of empathy, as the negation of dehumanizing practices. Because empathy is rooted in our understanding of our shared human values and experiences, when we lack empathy due to moral distancing, we are able to ignore or underappreciate the suffering of others.

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<sup>359</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, Shalom H. Schwartz and Naomi Struch "Values, Stereotypes, and Intergroup Antagonism," in *Stereotyping and Prejudice: Changing Conceptions*. New York, N.Y.: Springer, 1989.

<sup>360</sup> Ibid.

<sup>361</sup> Ibid. P 153.



While value stereotypes are more closely linked to intergroup bias, it is important to note that trait stereotypes often *lead to* value stereotypes through their internalization. For example, stereotypes in American media often assign traits such as *violent*, *oppressive to women*, or *radical* to Arabs and Muslims. Yet when these stereotypes are internalized, they become values such as *Arabs are un-American* or *Arabs seek to dismantle American democracy*. This progression occurs through a process Bar-Tal refers to as *delegitimization*. Bar-Tal defines delegitimization as “a categorization of groups into extreme negative social categories which are excluded from human groups that are considered as acting within the limits of acceptable norms and/ or values.”<sup>362</sup> In this manner, this process represents the denial of a categorized group’s humanity, an essential part of moral distancing. Delegitimization is different from stereotyping and prejudice because it involves “extremely negative, salient, and unique contents which serve as a basis for the categorization of terrorists, fascists, and enemies.”<sup>363</sup> In addition, the delegitimized group is perceived not merely as an out-group, but as *outside the boundaries* of society. Bar-Tal also notes that unlike stereotyping in mass media, which may occur without political motive, delegitimization is regulated by social norms and “cannot easily flourish without institutionalized support,”<sup>364</sup> meaning that it is most frequently enforced by political institutions or legal code.

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<sup>362</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel. "Delegitimization: The extreme case of stereotyping and prejudice." In *Stereotyping and prejudice*, pp. 169-182. Springer New York, 1989. P 170.

<sup>363</sup> Ibid. P 175.

<sup>364</sup> Ibid. P 170.

Delegitimization, an extreme instance of moral distancing, is often used to support negative behavior and involves radical in-group favoritism. In order to examine ways of overcoming this processes of moral distancing, Alicke, Dunning, and Krueger appeal to the link between social categorization, in-group favoritism, and self-concept.<sup>365</sup> They use Sabine Otten's concept of 'the in-group as part of the self,' where the self can be conceptualized at different levels of abstraction, with each level being associated with certain patters of behavior and social judgment. For example, we can conceptualize ourself as *I vs. other*, *us vs. them*, making the self a dynamic entity that is adaptive to the way the self is construed. This abstraction suggests that we can *expand* our group-membership to include a broader range of people when we eliminate the moral distance between ourselves and *others*. Alicke, Dunning, and Krueger use Otten's concept of self to define their understanding of 'social identity' as "that part of an individual's self-concept which derives from his knowledge of his membership of a social group together with the valence and emotional significance attached to that membership."<sup>366</sup> This definition depicts one's social identity as based on characteristics shared with others and the process of identifying as a group member. Therefore, Alicke, Dunning, and Krueger's concept of the self, as a psychological theory, directly parallels Wittgenstein's conception of *the self as defined by the other*.

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<sup>365</sup> Alicke, Mark D., David Dunning, and Joachim I. Krueger. *The Self in Social Judgment*. New York: Psychology Press, 2005.

<sup>366</sup> *Ibid.*

In his psychological theory of social identity, Turner adds a dimension of ‘depersonalization’ to the process in which we define ourselves according to our in-group membership. Turner argues that stereotyping causes group members to define themselves and act in terms of prototypical characteristics of the respective social group, causing a loss of individual identity.<sup>367</sup> He calls this process ‘depersonalization,’ “a cognitive redefinition of the self from unique attributes and individual differences to shared group category memberships and association stereotypes.”<sup>368</sup> Turner notes that experiments in social psychology indicate close links between the self as a *unique individual* and the self as a *group member* where the personal and the social self *both* constitute a person’s self-concept. This relates to Wittgenstein’s *fantasy of a private language*, where we desire to be *unique* despite the fact that we are dependent on those around us for our own understanding of our intelligibility. In the process of self-stereotyping, Turner states that the *we* is used to define and conceptualize of the *me*.<sup>369</sup> This process involves depersonalization and the situational dominance of the ‘collective self,’ both through intra-group assimilation and inter-group contrast. The out-group therefore remains extremely relevant to the process of self-stereotyping through *out-group derogation*. Therefore, the self-stereotyping is a *misuse* of the other because in it we use our perceptions of others as a vantage point from which to distance ourselves from them — a

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<sup>367</sup> Turner, John C., and Penelope J. Oakes. "The significance of the social identity concept for social psychology with reference to individualism, interactionism and social influence." *British Journal of Social Psychology* 25, no. 3 (1986): 237-252.

<sup>368</sup> *Ibid.* P 244.

<sup>369</sup> *Ibid.* P 244.

failure to recognize the Wittgensteinian understanding of the self. Although not mentioned by Turner explicitly, it seems as though self-stereotyping is more damaging towards the perception of the out-group. This relates to the role of the self in the perpetuation of common media stereotypes; we respond to these images with an intensity in which we see ourselves as *fundamentally different*, in value systems and even in aspects of humanity, from the stereotyped.

### **Analytical Applications toward Arab and Muslim Identities**

As a result of the multifaceted media portrayal of Arabs, ranging from news stories about the fall of Aleppo to the Iraqi backdrop of the popular television show *Homeland*, imagery plays an enormous role in stereotypes concerning this identity. Furthermore, the concept of providing a counter-stereotypical image is applicable to the representation of Arabs in popular media, including television and Hollywood films, because Arabs are often cast as villains and terrorists instead of superheroes and ordinary family members. As the main distributor of images, often reinforcing stereotypes through the activation of implicit biases, the media therefore plays an important role in the representation of Arabs and Muslims. In my analysis, the term ‘popular media’ includes images used in children’s literature, cartoons, television programs, news reports, and cinema. Although only select forms of popular media will be analyzed, the multifaceted and interrelated character of these images, through the usage of subliminal messaging, gives my analysis broader implications. For example, the illustrations in children’s books

and cartoons have applicability to the scenes and images in the news because they share common aspects of underlying political significance.

In his work *Through the Hebrew Looking Glass*, Fouzi El-Asmar analyses the use of common Arab caricatures in Israeli children's literature. The Arab character has a continuous presence in media globally, and therefore can also be analyzed in the context of American children's literature by upholding a careful perspective of socio-political contexts. According to El-Asmar, the stereotype is used to serve political objectives and is subject to extreme changes and fluctuations related to changes in the political context.<sup>370</sup> Consider, for example, America's illustration of the Japanese in response to World War II. When the political climate became hostile, the portrayal of Japanese identity sharply transitioned from that of intelligence and wisdom to slyness and betrayal. El-Asmar directly parallels this transition with that of the Arab image in Israeli Hebrew children's literature after the 1973 war.<sup>371</sup> These stereotypical portrayals are therefore in flux, shifting to represent intersections between imagined fears and lived realities.

In *Home/Land/Security*, Karin Gwinn Wilkins expands upon the socio-political connections made by El-Asmar in order to apply them to the narrative of terrorism and its roots in action movies and popular media. Both El-Asmar and Wilkins argue that the use of stereotypes in media platforms seeks to simplify and reduce conflicts by creating a black-and-white context with a monolithic depiction of main characters. Israeli children's

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<sup>370</sup> Asmar, Fouzi. *Through the Hebrew looking-glass: Arab stereotypes in children's literature*. St. Martin's Press, 1986.

<sup>371</sup> Ibid.

literature develops false perceptions based on a distorted sense of reality in which the question of peace is never thematically central because it would require a deeper discussion of Zionist ideology. In this manner, the Israeli-Palestinian conflict is condensed into a 'non-problem' by which the socio-political aspects of the conflict are represented in a radically one-sided manner: the Arabs are guilty of everything and jealous of the Jews and the Israelis have a right to their 'currently unpopulated' homeland. In addition, the Arab character in Hebrew children's literature is problematic as a single depiction of *The Arab* that neglects religion, culture, country of origin, or any other aspect of personal background. The only image of a positive Arab refers to an Arab who wittingly or unwittingly has come to accept the Zionist point of view on Palestine. The *good Arab* gives up his or her identity and defies his or her people, in fundamental contradiction to the *good Israeli*.<sup>372</sup> Wilkins reaches an identical conclusion to that of El-Asmar in that simplistic representations of conflicts activates students' perceptions of problems as *right vs. wrong* or *us vs. them* by condensing many cultural nuances into one monolithic identity. In this manner, the diversity of Islam is eradicated in the mystical settings of many action-adventure films because they serve as narratives of homeland and security.<sup>373</sup>

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<sup>372</sup> Asmar, Fouzi. *Through the Hebrew looking-glass: Arab stereotypes in children's literature*. St. Martin's Press, 1986.

<sup>373</sup> Wilkins, Karin Gwinn. *Home/land/security: What we learn about Arab communities from action-adventure films*. Lexington Books, 2008.

While the existence of these media-based Arab stereotypes is clear, their theoretical linkages to implicit biases towards Arab realities must be further examined. Wilkins applies the literature-based framework of El-Asmar to the education provided by popular media, interpreted in social and cultural contexts in order to prove that an empirical link exists between problematic media representations and the discrimination and oppression of Arab-Americans. Wilkins argues that understanding historic relations of power is key to eliminating false perceptions, stating that “collective memory of historical events, along with assumptions about the causes and consequences of these events build from authoritative perspectives projected through mediated narratives.”<sup>374</sup> The perception of stereotypes directly correlates with the types of images viewed, the viewers’ experience with the Arab world, and relationships with Arab friends or relatives. For Wilkins, security is a social construction, developed through the personal and social experience of *fearing the other*. In an action-adventure film, the villains are distant from the cultural center and dehumanized with caricatures that are insulting, monolithic, and morally inaccessible. Without a collection of positive personal experiences that contradict these stereotypical depictions, this depiction becomes the viewer’s understanding of the lived reality of the other. In this manner, “security becomes a central justification for transforming fear of the other into particular practices that harm those who are believed to be associated with groups responsible for terrorist acts.”<sup>375</sup> Wilkins application of El-

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<sup>374</sup> Wilkins, Karin Gwinn. *Home/land/security: What we learn about Arab communities from action-adventure films*. Lexington Books, 2008. P 12.

<sup>375</sup> *Ibid.* P 42.

Asmar's *Arab character theory* to a psychological analysis of how media constructions create false perceptions is easily confirmed through the data of the studies presented earlier, most notably theories involving in-group selection.

That the media is a source of monolithic Arab representations is also evident in the theory of Jack Shaheen in his analysis *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Shaheen identifies Hollywood as “the authoritative creator of commonly shared attitudes and feelings and even the shared experiences of Americans.”<sup>376</sup> In this manner, media induces a form of blindness among Americans by ‘manufacturing prejudice.’ Shaheen’s analysis includes over 1,100 films dating before 9/11, demonstrating clearly that Arab stereotypes were actively proliferated long before the horrific attack on the Twin Towers. However, there is a clear historical demarcation in the portrayal of Arab Palestinians beginning in the 1980’s. Shaheen notes that Palestinians appear almost exclusively as terrorists against Israel, never as innocents suffering under Israeli occupation. For example, in the film *The Seventh Sign* (1988), they kill thirty-four Israeli school children and in *The Body* (2001), a Palestinian fanatic purposefully destroys an ancient skeleton that the Israeli and American protagonists believed to be the body of Christ. Interestingly, two pre-9/11 films that project Palestinians in a positive light, *Hanna K* (1983) and *The Little Drummer Girl* (1984) are not available on Netflix or

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<sup>376</sup> Shaheen, Jack G. 2009. *Reel Bad Arabs : How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Rev. and updated ed. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press. P 17.



Blockbuster's extensive online listings. They are also not available for purchase from major film distributors including Amazon and Movies Unlimited.<sup>377</sup>

Shaheen's theory is consistent with the conclusions of studies focused on the use of Arab stereotypes in press coverage. For example, a study conducted by Suleiman in 1988 addressed different aspects of Arab imagery in American media, presenting a longitude study of American press coverage of the 1956, 1967, and 1973 Arab-Israeli conflicts. Suleiman concludes that the negatively stereotyped Arab was used as a weapon in the American media in favor of Israel, resurfacing in order to coincide with instances of increased violence.<sup>378</sup> Similarly, a 1995 study by Zaharana analyzed the portrayal of the Palestinians in *Time* magazine from 1948-1993. The research concludes that the Palestinian image underwent a full transformation from invisibility to high visibility after the signing of the Israeli-PLO Accord in 1993.<sup>379</sup> Hashem also performed a content analysis in 1995 of news articles published by *Time* magazine and *Newsweek* between January 1990 and December 1993.<sup>380</sup> This study concludes that most portrayals of Arabs involved a lack of democracy, unity, and modernity, including a culture of

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<sup>377</sup> Shaheen, Jack G. 2009. *Reel Bad Arabs : How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Rev. and updated ed. Northampton, Mass.: Olive Branch Press. P 53-64.

<sup>378</sup> Suleiman, Michael. (1975). "Perceptions of the Middle East in American newsmagazines." In B. Abu-Laban & F. Zeadey (Eds.), *Arabs in America myths and realities* (pp. 28-44). Wilmette, IL: The Medina University Press.

<sup>379</sup> Zaharna, Rhonda. S. (1995). "The Palestinian leadership and the American media: Changing images, conflicting results." In Y. R. Kamalipour (Ed.), *The U.S. media and the Middle East: Image and perception* (pp. 37-49). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

<sup>380</sup> Hashem, Mahboub. (1995). "Coverage of Arabs in two leading U.S. newsmagazines: *Times* and *Newsweek*." In Y. R. Kamalipour (Ed.), *The U.S. media and the Middle East: Image and perception* (pp. 151-162). Westport, CT: Greenwood Press.

fundamentalism. Yet Hashem also found select instances of coverage that included fewer stereotypes and a focus on different realities.

Interestingly, despite common assumptions, there was a marked increase in sympathetic portrayals of Arabs and Muslims after 9/11. President George W. Bush's distinction between Arab and Muslim 'friends' and 'enemies' was arguably the centerpiece of these sympathetic images. Bush stated that "the enemy of America is not our many Muslim friends; it is not our many Arab friends. Our enemy is a radical network of terrorists, and every government that supports them."<sup>381</sup> Yet at this exact time in the weeks, months, and even years after 9/11, hate crimes, acts of workplace discrimination, bias incidents, and airline discrimination increased exponentially. According to data provided by the FBI, hate crimes against Arabs and Muslims multiplied by 1,600% from 2000 to 2001.<sup>382</sup> Given that Arabs and Muslims have long been stereotyped, with 9/11 seemingly an opportune moment for further stereotyping alongside the US domestic and foreign policies compromising the civil and human rights of Arabs and Muslims, why would sympathetic depictions of these identities appear at this particular moment?

In her analysis of Arabs and Muslims in American media, Evelyn Alsultany expands upon Shaheen's depiction of pre-9/11 stereotypes by describing the

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<sup>381</sup> Bush, George W., "Address to a Joint Session of Congress and the American People," September 20, 2001.

<sup>382</sup> American-Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee, "Report on Hate Crimes and Discrimination against Arab-Americans: The Post 9/11 Backlash." 2003.

representational strategies used *after* the beginning of the War on Terror in 2001. The Arab depiction described by Alsultany differs from that of El-Asmar and Shaheen in that it is not a monolithic representation, but rather a system of “simplified complex representations.”<sup>383</sup> This theory is similar that of Wilkins in his analysis of the Israeli interpretation of a *good Arab*, manipulated in order to reframe the purposes of the Israeli occupation. In addition to demonizing the enemy, these media stereotypes also provide a balanced, positive representation of the US “in order to project [the United States] as an enlightened country that has entered a postrace era.”<sup>384</sup> Although pre-9/11 stereotypes were repetitive in their negative caricatures of ruthless Sultans executing market thieves and orientalist harem maidens, post-9/11 marked a more complex set of characters designed to intensively justify US foreign policy initiatives in the Middle East. Alsultany argues that “positive representations of Arabs and Muslims have helped form a new kind of racism, one that projects antiracism and multiculturalism on the surface but simultaneously produces the logics and affects necessary to legitimize policies and practices.”<sup>385</sup>

In this manner, the Arab stereotype is immensely more complex than the turban-wearing cartoon screaming “*Allah akbar!*” as he blows up a public transit station. The implications of Alsultany’s theory explains the purpose of the simplified complex

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<sup>383</sup> Alsultany, Evelyn. "Arabs and Muslims in the media after 9/11: Representational strategies for a "postrace" era." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013). P 163.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.* P 163.

<sup>385</sup> *Ibid.* P 162.

representation of Arabs — as a signal that the United States is a post-racial, *multicultural* society that no longer discriminates. This depiction is central to the formation of the US narrative, with imperialism justified by a need to ‘protect oppressed Arab women,’ further emphasizing America’s global role as an influential democracy. In addition, this narrative also serves to support US sponsorship of the Israeli occupation because “having sympathy for some of them [Arabs] reflects an enlightened culture that can distinguish between the ‘good’ and ‘bad’ ones.”<sup>386</sup>

### **Multiculturalism and its Limitations**

In response to the proliferation of false perceptions, many proposed solutions to Arab discrimination are based in an understanding that exposing students to the lived realities of their peers will promote tolerance, as a platform central to the theories of multiculturalism and diversity. However, as Alana Lentin and Gavan Titley argue in *The Crises of Multiculturalism*, attempts to increase diversity have drawbacks rooted in problems with integration, referred to as *bad diversity*. Described by Stuart Hall as a “maddeningly spongy and imprecise discursive field,” multiculturalism is a “conceptual grab bag of issues relating to race, culture, and identity that seems to be defined simply by negation.”<sup>387</sup> In this manner, multiculturalism’s vague polysemy is a widespread source of debate that only further muddies the areas involving race, belonging, and social futures in a globalized, neoliberal area. Lentin and Titley use the *Danish Cartoon*

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<sup>386</sup> Alsultany, Evelyn. "Arabs and Muslims in the media after 9/11: Representational strategies for a "post-race" era." *American Quarterly* 65, no. 1 (2013). P 168.

<sup>387</sup> Lentin, Alana, and Gavin Titley. *The crises of multiculturalism: Racism in a neoliberal age*. Zed Books Ltd, 2011. P 11.

*Controversy* to illustrate the problems associated with accepting all vantage points, a practice that actually results in upholding that one interpretation is the “correct perspective.” The legislative and governmental response to the cartoon, depicting Muhammad in a discriminatory way and directly violating the Islamic religion, was that the cartoon was and should be read in one way: as a self-evident act of inclusive liberal mockery. Here, we see the problems inherent to multiculturalism’s vague inclusivity in that it remains selective towards which groups are granted a sense of victimhood. This selectivity is regulated by the same social pressures that encouraged the regulation of test subjects’ bias towards certain racial groups and not others.

The “multicultural fantasy” in Europe ascribed value to difference over commonality, cultural particularity over social cohesion, and an apologetic relativism, disadvantaging the platforms of shared values and a commitment to the liberty of expression.<sup>388</sup> Multiculturalism allows a society to ignore continuing and shifting societal racism, and although it provides narrow pathways for the organization and mobilization of feminists and LGBTQ activists, its resulting influence allows unregulated power distribution. More often than not, multiculturalism has been seen as a “mode of management and control, securing the legitimacy of the status quo through a deflection of questions of power and inequality into the relatively more malleable economy of cultural

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<sup>388</sup> Weissberg, Robert. *Pernicious tolerance: How teaching to accept differences undermines civil society*. Transaction Publishers, 2011.

recognition.”<sup>389</sup> In his critique of multiculturalism, Weissburg argues that the foundational problem with tolerance is that it does not allow a critique of aspects of a culture, eschewing boundaries altogether so that “the welcome mat is out for everyone, no questions asked.”<sup>390</sup> This argument counters that of Lentin and Titley by suggesting that the problems with multiculturalism are rooted in notions of blind acceptance instead of concealed selectivity.

Weissburg fails to analyze the institutional and systematic aspects of racism that exist within a capitalist framework, which exploit differences as both a diversion action and a tool to weaken the influence of the public. Though we cannot yet envision “good diversity,” the educational tolerance model proposed by Lentin and Titley is based in communal unity, cohesion, and shared realities and futures. Weissburg misinterprets the vision of tolerance upheld by diversity theorists and instead views it as a recognition that there are no “good or bad” character traits, just enviable differences. Character traits are not limited to a given race, and believing so is boldly defending the idea that race is genetically based in assigned realities. By arguing that diversity ignores negative character traits of certain social groups, Weissburg is advocating for the ideas that form the very core of stereotype formation. In contrast, Lentin and Titley’s theory correctly argues that institution-based cultural recognition and an inclined focus on outlying

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<sup>389</sup> Lentin, Alana, and Gavin Titley. *The crises of multiculturalism: Racism in a neoliberal age*. Zed Books Ltd, 2011. P 15.

<sup>390</sup> Weissberg, Robert. *Pernicious tolerance: How teaching to accept differences undermines civil society*. Transaction Publishers, 2011.

differences allows a systematic form of racism inherently invisible to the public. The isolation of certain communities, like ghettos and slums, is defended in the name of *diversity* and as a result these segregated communities become extremely susceptible to racism.

The racism directed towards these segregated communities, often governmentally institutionalized through property tax rates and other extortions, becomes recognized as truth within a larger narrative framework. Ron Eyerman's *theory of recited truths* demonstrates how the pitfalls of multiculturalism, by which racist institutions are referred to as illustrations of *diversity*, leads to stereotype formation.<sup>391</sup> Eyerman's argument is based in the understanding that multiculturalism provides a *spongy referent* signaled by countless ideological maneuverings to a spectrum of political questions. Iconic events offer signposts and occurrences become events through recitation, forming a dialect of actions and interpretation. An event occurs and is molded to encompass the roles of the protagonists, interpreters, and audience. As meaning and "facts" are applied, several interpretations compete with one another and achieve a hegemony, constructing what Wilkins would refer to as a "false lived reality" by which the audience is fed inaccurate, assumed material to the point of its becoming an absolute truth in his or her perception. It becomes a part of his or her lived experiences, and influences their opinions, viewpoints, perceptions, and even actions. The theory of recited truths can therefore be understood as a foundational platform to the formation and extension of stereotypes.

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<sup>391</sup> Titley, Gavan. "Exclusion through Openness? A Tentative Anatomy of the Ritual of 'Migration Debates'." (2012).

When applied to Arab identity, this theory explains the naturalization over the last decade of the immutable entity *Muslim* as the wedge that actively prevents national integration. This monolithic assigned identity is a contingent product of differing contextual histories and situated political anxieties. Repetitive media coverage and contorted realities have constructed the recited truth that *Arabs are terrorists...Arabs hate America...Arabs are Muslims*. In turn, these recited truths are used to justify media content otherwise seen as wildly racist, had they been depicting most other groups, as an “inclusive act of mockery.”<sup>392</sup> The problem with ideas like “inclusive mockery” is that it is essentially impossible to offend or ridicule distinct groups equally, especially when some are defended over others. A cartoon with the stereotypical Hitler-era depiction of a Jew would be seen as unacceptable, just as a reference to lynching would be outlawed in common media content. This phenomenon is connected to the concept of tolerating racism towards some groups but not others, dictated by social psychology’s understanding of media-based social pressures.

Post-colonial theorist Homi Bhabha centralizes this critique of multiculturalism by arguing that the construction of cultural diversity brings about the containment of cultural difference *within* a logic of tolerant universalism.<sup>393</sup> Difference, then, is merged as a relation of power that demands a response in transformative, political terms. Similar

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<sup>392</sup> Titley, Gavan. "Exclusion through Openness? A Tentative Anatomy of the Ritual of 'Migration Debates'." (2012).

<sup>393</sup> Bhabha, Homi. "Of mimicry and man: The ambivalence of colonial discourse." October 28 (1984): 125-133.



to a universalist conception of human rights, selectivity plays an enormous role in *how* and *where* these normative frameworks are actually applied. There are prominent, racist hierarchies within the concept of ‘cultural diversity’ because multiculturalism itself is colored by Western understandings of what freedom looks like. In this manner, a woman wearing a hijab is often universally viewed as oppressed by non-Muslims even when her headwear represents her cultural difference and her fundamental right to express that difference. Here we see direct connections to media-based Arab stereotypes, notably the oppressed burqa-clad woman. Given the clear limitations to the mediating effects of multiculturalism and institutionalized diversity, a more compelling approach to eliminating Arab stereotypes lies in the foundations of the *theory of recited truths* — the lived realities of Arab people. Platforms such as diversity education and interethnic friendship are extremely compelling challenges to implicit bias because they provide insight towards these lived realities by challenging the hegemonic framework of collective social knowledge.

### **Quantitative Survey Analysis**

In order to examine the potential for a relationship between educational background and stereotype formation, I developed an analytical based survey<sup>394</sup> to test these correlations among a sample of undergraduate students at Bucknell University. The survey consists of twenty questions designed to ascertain the background of the participant as well as detect their response to several situations including an airport

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<sup>394</sup> See \*Appendix for an exact copy of this survey as distributed

security check and a political cartoon published by *Charlie Hebdo*, the French satirical magazine that has been the target of multiple terrorist attacks. The background questions establish the participant's gender, self-identified race, class year, socioeconomic background, work experience, residence location on campus, and ethnic composition of their home environment. The survey was distributed using an emailed *Qualtrics* link to a random assortment of current Bucknell students. Within the recorded responses, 37% identified as male and 59.3% identified as female, with the remaining 3.7% having not selected a binary gender. Eighty-five-point-two percent of participants identified as Caucasian, 3.7% as African American, 3.7% as Asian/ Pacific Islander, and 3.7% as Arab. 77.8% of participants reported that they had not been raised in a neighborhood with an Arab population. When asked to describe his or her family's socioeconomic status, 55.6% of participants described his or her family as middle class, 37% as above middle class, and 3.7% as below middle class. The background foundation data collected was cross-analyzed with questions designed to test for stereotype recognition. It is important to note that due to the limited size of the survey, these statistics do not represent the Bucknell population as a whole, but rather can be used to identify trends based in patterned response behavior.

The participants were asked, for example, to respond to an image taken from *Disney's* animated classic *Aladdin*. The image depicted Arab women as belly dancers dressed in stereotypical garb while the men were drawn in caricature with dominant "Arab" traits, such as hooked noses, beards, and large, exaggerated turbans. Participants

were also given an image depicting a woman wearing a hijab being searched in an airport security portal. The participants were asked to select the statement they felt best fit their response to the image: “This image represents a justified safety precaution upheld by airports internationally as a response to recent correlations between acts of terrorism and the Muslim culture” *or* “This image represents a violation of the equal rights of all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or religion and their right to not be discriminated against by airport personnel.” This question is designed to determine the participant’s perception of the gravity of stereotyped realities and characterizations. If the participant recognizes the image as a “justified security threat,” it is an indication that the participant perceives reality within this *recited truth* to an extent that it affects his or her perception and judgment. However, when a participant perceives the image as a human rights violation, it is an indication that the participant is not influenced by popular stereotypes surrounding Arab women and the religion of Islam.

Although the results of the survey are limited by sample size, several strong correlations between identity indicators and bias traps can be used to produce trends that indicate a potential relationship between factors like interethnic friendship and increased stereotype recognition. Eighty-three-point-three percent of students who identified as having studied Arabic language and/or culture found the airport scene to be a violation of equal rights. In contrast, only 57.33% of students who did not study Arabic identified the scene as a violation of equal rights, the remaining 43.75% labelling the image as a justified safety precaution. Eighty-seven-point-five percent of students raised in a

neighborhood with an Arab population also identified the scene as a violation of equal rights and the same percentage also noted that they would *not* look for the Aladdin-based ‘attractions’ abroad. Only 64.5% of students who were not raised in a neighborhood with an Arab population identified the airport scene as a violation of human rights. These survey results support the conclusion that students who have studied Arabic or who have been raised in a community with Arabs are more likely to recognize stereotype-based biases in the media. This trend can be interpreted as further support that the lived realities of Arab people, whether by learning the geography of the Middle East or the Arabic alphabet, or interacting with Arab neighbors is a critical component of eliminating students’ susceptibility to stereotype related biases.

It is clear from the foundational background of the recorded survey responses that the distribution of participants coincides with the demographic of the Bucknell student population. Within an undergraduate class of 5,763 students, 52.2% are female and 47.8% are male. Excluding the 5.2% International Student population, the demographic consists of 83.1% white, 3.9% Asian, 3.4% African American, 5.5% Hispanic, and 3.4% multi-race.<sup>395</sup> As detected by my survey statistics, the Bucknell community hosts a predominantly white/ middle-upper class student population. However, it is important to recognize that although the demographic of my survey is consistent with that of Bucknell’s total population, the accuracy of the survey is compromised by the small

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<sup>395</sup> *Bucknell University - CollegeData College Profile*. (n.d.). Retrieved April 01, 2017, from [http://www.collegedata.com/cs/data/college/college\\_pg01\\_tmpl.jhtml?schoolId=179](http://www.collegedata.com/cs/data/college/college_pg01_tmpl.jhtml?schoolId=179)

campus population during the time of the recorded results. The size of the survey, involving only 58 participants at the time of data collection, demonstrates that statistical analysis of the results alone is not sufficient in developing a thesis or corresponding theory of a causal relationship between education and stereotype perception. However, the trends detected by this survey do maintain the conclusions of the psychological and philosophical theories analyzed, supporting the argument that exposure to Arab lived realities has potential to reduce implicit bias towards this social group.

While the quantitative analysis of this survey and its theoretical implications are helpful to an understanding of potential solutions to Arab discrimination in general, this chapter has greater applications in the nuanced connection between forces like implicit bias and the continuation of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict itself. Implicit and explicit forms of bias and prejudice are effectively activated and reinforced by the stereotypical images essential to narrative formation. The terrorist label is so effective in Israeli and American narratives of the occupation because it creates a moral barrier that makes Palestinians distinct in their values, a process of moral distancing combined with systematic *othering*.

Naming a Palestinian group a 'terrorist entity' provides this moral distance by appealing to stereotypical notions of terrorism and by, in turn, further perpetuating the false stereotype that *all Muslims are* terrorists. As examined by instances of stereotype threat, these false associations can actually change the behavior of *others*, causing them to adhere to their assigned characterizations. As a result being labelled a terrorist group

and thereby isolated from interacting within the international community, Hamas has resorted to using terroristic practices on the citizens of Israel and Palestine in a blatant disregard for human rights and the 'human rights industry.' Together, prejudice, bias, and stereotypes have cyclical tendencies and are concentrated into the resulting in-group-based *we vs. them* mentality. This mentality is arguably the root cause of the phenomenon of *moral distancing*, by which Americans exhibit blindness towards the selective nature of human rights abuses in Palestine. Without public pressure in the form of social action, American foreign policy initiatives utilize selective applications of human rights intervention in order to maneuver politically-orientated agendas.

## Finding Palestine, Finding Ourselves

### *A Synthetic Conclusion*

“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world.  
Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

— Margaret Mead

My identity as a white, American woman may be seen by some as an obstacle to my understanding of the Middle East and its sociopolitical contexts. Given that I do not identify as either Jewish or Arab, I cannot hope to know or speak from the the different perspective-based positionalities within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Yet, as an American, I am in fact uniquely positioned to see the ways in which the Israeli and Palestinian narratives operate within this dispute and their implications for US foreign policy initiatives. The active perpetuation of Arab and Muslim stereotypes in media and political platforms has created a phenomenon by which Americans have drawn barriers between themselves and Palestinians, selectively *othering* them through a process of moral distancing. As a result, the actions of our government, in providing both international political protection and economic sponsorship to the Israeli government, have contributed to the seemingly unsolvable reality of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict as it stands today. The seeming intractability of this conflict can be attributed to the dueling Israeli and Palestinian narratives and their internal discrepancies, each reliant on language use, naming processes, the dissemination of stereotypes, and the contextless framing of

certain events and histories. For this reason, the strategically US-backed Israeli narrative has contributed to the epistemic injustice faced by Palestinians, discrediting their history and identity, and thereby constituting an especially problematic obstacle to achieving peace.

### **Reconciling Dueling Narratives**

Taking into account the ways in which these dueling narratives operate, a sustainable solution to this conflict must first create a singular history that seeks to highlight and reconcile both perspectives. This requires a change in the Israeli and Palestinian, and consequently, American, perceptions of one another— a new way of thinking that enables one's opponent to be visualized not just as a perpetrator, but also as a victim. Bar-Tal and Salomon argue that “opponents need to be legitimized and personalized: legitimization grants humanity to adversaries and allows them to be viewed as an acceptable group with which to maintain peaceful relations; personalization enables hostile groups to view their rivals as humane, trustworthy individuals with legitimate needs and goals”<sup>396</sup> Establishing commonality, essential for reconciliation, also requires acknowledging one's own involvement in the conflict. This recognition in turn requires changing conceptual schemas and the beliefs they embed. Recognition of how we are implicated in this conflict will only be achieved when we can see the relevant others as

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<sup>396</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Gavriel Salomon. “Israeli-Jewish narratives of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict: Evolution, contents, functions and consequences.” *History's double helix: The intertwined narratives of Israel/Palestine* (2006). P 37.



culturally and individually multifaceted and complex, escaping the monolithic depictions established through the use of stereotypes.

In intractable conflicts, each opposing side creates a monolithic identity by constructing itself in opposition to the other, making stereotyping inevitable and the debunking of stereotypes necessary. Constructing *us* in contrast to *them* involves recruiting historical facts to support the narratives associated with these monolithic constructions, thereby solidifying the interdependent relationship between the dissemination of stereotypes and the perpetuation of narratives through *collective memory* and the *ethos* of a time.<sup>397</sup> This form of self-critical revision can be achieved through strategies that seek to deconstruct generalized stereotypes and challenge their presence in collective ideologies. Mordechai Bar-On presents three strategies for the recognition of one's negative contribution to conflict:

1. To uncover and peel off the prevailing narrative's exclusionist nationalistic and self-congratulatory ideologies that tend to distort it.
2. To transcend simplistic generalizations and labeling, and discover the full complexity of the disputed events, both their motives and causations.
3. To try to understand the motives and rationale of the "enemy's" behavior, and to present the narrative with maximum sensitivity to the sensibilities of the opposite side, with human compassion and a deeper understanding of the tragic nature of the conflict.<sup>398</sup>

The strategies proposed by Bar-On represent the importance of naming processes and language use in creating the undertones of narrative-based ideologies. These 'self-

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<sup>397</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Yona Teichman. "Stereotypes and prejudice in conflict: Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish society." Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<sup>398</sup> Bar-On, Mordechai in Rotberg, Robert I. *Israeli and Palestinian narratives of conflict: History's double helix*. Indiana University Press, 2006. P 153.

congratulatory' tones, when combined by simplistic generalizations of both oneself and the *other*, prevent the full complexity of conflicts from being perceived in all their nuance — a complexity that allows for the recognition of multiple perspectives.

Changing collective memories in order to recognize the faults of both sides must be reliant on facts to the extent that when these facts, such as civilian death tolls and population counts, are disputed, both groups must agree on a number.<sup>399</sup> In his analysis of the activation of stereotypes and prejudice in conflicts, Bar-Tal states that changing collective memories can be achieved through the phenomenon of 'writing a common history,' a fusion of the Israeli and Palestinian narratives. The approach I recommend requires "jointly recreating a version of the past that can be endorsed by both groups involved in the conflict," requiring exposure to untold pasts, one's own misdeeds, and the adherence to agreed upon facts.<sup>400</sup> When successful, this method serves as a powerful means for changing the negative psychological intergroup repertoire about the rival because a common history can humanize and legitimize the other group.

One of the greatest obstacles to writing a common history involves the discrepancies in language use and the innate power of names in forming attitudes, beliefs, and even behaviors towards groups. As Yasir Suleiman argues, Israeli name changes from Arabic to Hebrew functioned within the ideological and political imperatives of the

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<sup>399</sup> Bar-Tal, Daniel, and Yona Teichman. "Stereotypes and prejudice in conflict: Representations of Arabs in Israeli Jewish society." Cambridge University Press, 2005.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid. P 405.

state.<sup>401</sup> For example, *Kul al-Arab* published a story in April 1999 about the change of an Islamic building complex from Ribat al-Kurd to a Hebrew name. Directly after this name change, Palestinian quasi-national institutions in the surrounding area were shut down and the identity papers of native Palestinians residing in Jerusalem began to be forcibly withdrawn, in a process of synchronized ‘cartographic remembering.’<sup>402</sup> Julie Peteet argues that while the rhetoric and particular forms of naming and renaming may not necessarily inform particular actions, when a synchronization occurs between forms of knowledge and practice, there is an underlying power structure by which those producing knowledge are in a position to enact as well as sustain and reproduce it.<sup>403</sup>

Therefore, the central issue involves how Zionist discourses, images, and forms of knowledge are coupled with sociopolitical practices and institutions, as demonstrated within the US. This is because names distinctly correlate with changes in political climate, and help construct the narratives used to justify political actions. George Kateb examines the ways in which these images create a form of underlying racism that is fostered by the media:

For terrorism to be adequate to the project of imperialism, for imperialism to be sustainable publicly and rhetorically, terrorism must be falsely associated with Arabs and Muslims everywhere. For this idea to take hold, ordinary people have to refuse to make distinctions among Arabs and Muslims, all of whom are

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<sup>401</sup> Suleiman, Yasir. *A War of Words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. Vol. 19. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

<sup>402</sup> Ibid.

<sup>403</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 153-72.

assumed to be actually or potentially guilty of terrorism, just by their ascribed identity.<sup>404</sup>

Here, Kateb points to the importance of social action. Because individuals have a central role in accepting and further perpetuating these narratives, they also have the potential to do the exact opposite: to dismantle narratives by refusing to *make* these associations in the first place. Kateb also alludes to Peteet's understanding of the power-driven dynamics by which naming associations reinforce imperialistic political maneuvers. For example, Palestinians referred to Israel as *Occupied Palestine* or *the Zionist entity* for decades, ending precisely when the PLO recognized Palestine in the late 1980s. As a result, the use of these names in Wafa, the Palestinian news agency, and other radio and news broadcasts, diminished.<sup>405</sup> In the same way, settlements in the West Bank, illegal under international law, are often referred to in American media as *neighborhoods*.<sup>406</sup>

The idea that processes of naming and labelling can influence and reproduce particular actions is supported by Wittgenstein's understanding of the equation of language and action, where *to speak is to act*. Peteet attributes this synchronization to underlying power structures, by which those producing knowledge have the epistemic ability to enact as well as sustain and reproduce it. This suggests that while action and language may not be as seemingly correlated as Wittgensteinian philosophy implies, there

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<sup>404</sup> Kateb, George. "A Life of Fear." *Social Research: FEAR: ITS POLITICAL USES & ABUSES* 71, no. 4 (April 2004). P 893.

<sup>405</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005): 153-72. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3993769>.

<sup>406</sup> Suleiman, Yasir. *A War of Words: Language and conflict in the Middle East*. Vol. 19. Cambridge University Press, 2004.

are distinct power structures that enable certain groups to couple naming processes with institutional or sociopolitical actions, making them more meaningful by appealing to narrative construction. This thereby preserves the Wittgensteinian *value* between language and action under the scope of strategic sociopolitical mechanisms. As José Medina and Miranda Fricker argue, marginalized groups, in this case, Palestinians, are excluded from these linguistic abilities through the process of *epistemic injustice*. Therefore, in order to even begin to eliminate the political use of naming techniques to enforce and strengthen corresponding actions, Palestinians must be granted epistemic justice by which their narratives are not systematically excluded by the influence of the Israeli-US alliance.

Truly uniting narratives would require a deconstruction of the underlying power structures within the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, by which a common history could help to reinforce attempts at establishing peace. An example of Bar-Tal's notion of 'writing a common history' has been successfully demonstrated by the work of the *Peace Research Institute in the Middle East* (PRIME) through their integrated study on 'disarming' the teaching of the history of the Middle East in Israeli and Palestinian classrooms.<sup>407</sup> As a non-governmental, non-profit organization, PRIME's central purpose is to pursue mutual coexistence and peace-building through the joint research and outreach of Israeli and

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<sup>407</sup> Adwan, S and Bar-On, D. (In Press) PRIME shared histories project as an example of a peace building project under fire. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*.

Palestinian teachers.<sup>408</sup> During this study, beginning in 2000, six Palestinian and six Jewish history teachers developed a joint history book over the course of ten years with the objective of introducing students to the other narrative. The hope was that this joint project would eventually lead to the type of joint narrative for which scholars such as Bar-Tal advocate. This project is important because textbooks are considered “the formal representations of the society’s ideology and its ethos,” imparting the values, goals, and myths that a society wants to implement within future generations.<sup>409</sup>

However, the success of this project, outlined in the book *Side by Side: Parallel Histories of Israel-Palestine*, was vastly limited by the human rights abuses that continue today, in a large part due to the US use of its UN Security Council veto power to prevent resolutions that seek to condemn Israel. While the Israeli participants experienced Palestinian restriction to movement first-hand as they witnessed Palestinian participants attempting to attend the workshops, this caused a different disparity by which “Israelis had more freedom to move, and so they had to obtain the Palestinian travel permits and bring the papers to the Palestinians.”<sup>410</sup> The study’s conductors noted that this was

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<sup>408</sup> “Peace Research Institute in the Middle East.” PRIME homepage - Peace Research Institute in the Middle East. Accessed March 28, 2017. <https://www.vispo.com/PRIME/>.

<sup>409</sup> Bar-On, Dan, and Sami Adwan. "The psychology of better dialogue between two separate but interdependent narratives." *Israeli and Palestinian narratives of conflict: History's double helix* (2006). P 206.

<sup>410</sup> Adwan, Sami Abd al-Razzaq, Dan Bar-On, and Eyal J. Naveh, eds. *Side by side: Parallel histories of Israel-Palestine*. New Press, 2012.

actually detrimental to the project because it gave the representatives of the Israeli side more power within the project itself.<sup>411</sup>

Because of the continuing occupation, creating a single, unified narrative of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict that is fully accepted by both sides is not yet feasible. However, there is potential to eventually produce this level of historical integration by presenting the conflict's history in a way that highlights the particular language use and perspectives of both Israelis and Palestinians, paying attention to what is left out and what is focused on in each. The Israeli and Palestinian dueling narratives are not accurately characterized as 'parallel' because they do not present mirror-image constructions of certain events. For example, even the work produced by the PRIME project omits any acknowledgement of Israel's dominant military strength backed by its nuclear arsenal, or a broader context of the conflict within the strategic, imperial pursuits in the region.<sup>412</sup> This information is arguably vital to understanding the role of the US and the ways in which this conflict has surpassed the boundaries of being characterized as simply a territorial dispute. Likewise, the Balfour Declaration will always be positive for the Jews, as the international community's first recognition of the need for a Jewish state, but negative for the Palestinians, as the first of many events by which their right to the very same land was ignored by the international community. These Israeli-Palestinian dueling narratives are better understood as even more distant because they rely on not

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<sup>411</sup> Adwan, S and Bar-On, D. (In Press) PRIME shared histories project as an example of a peace building project under fire. *International Journal of Politics, Culture and Society*.

<sup>412</sup> Ibid.

only different *names* for events and facts, but different *facts* in themselves. The narratives in this conflict represent a modern day jig-saw puzzle which must be placed in the *context* of one another before being effectively combined.

### **Exposure to Arab Lived Realities**

The politicized tension in language use and the omission of certain facts and events altogether also presents difficulties in teaching the history of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict to Americans. American educational approaches often adopt the Israeli perspective, as Marcy Jane Knopf-Newman explains in her analysis of the political implications of teaching the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. Knopf-Newman argues for a shift in the language use surrounding American teachings of Palestine by also including historical and cultural texts produced by Palestinians, instead of systematically favoring the Israeli-Zionist narrative.<sup>413</sup> Similarly, Howard Zinn argues that “the educational system brings up whole generations of Americans who do not understand what we have done to other countries. What this does is it leads Americans to accept uncritically what their government tells them about current foreign policy.”<sup>414</sup> Zinn advocates for a critical assessment of US foreign policy through the active citizenship and education of *American* citizens, an approach that mirrors Chomsky’s theory of reflective democracy. To achieve an informal American understanding of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in a way that properly addresses the nuances of *both* narratives, we must incorporate the

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<sup>413</sup> Knopf-Newman, M. “The politics of teaching Palestine to Americans: Addressing pedagogical strategies.” Springer, 2011.

<sup>414</sup> Zinn, Howard and Donaldo Macedo, *Howard Zinn on Democratic Education* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm Publishers, 2005), 49; 53.



distinct but parallel roles of intergroup friendship and diversity education, anchored in the exposure to ‘lived realities.’

The concept of “lived realities” refers to the complex structures of everyday life by which everything we feel and sense, in respect to our immediate situation, is of central importance to our engagement with others. In such a way, lived realities function to highlight complex relationship in real time between facts, feelings, and action.<sup>415</sup> While they differ on platforms of authenticity and perceptual understanding, both intergroup friendship and diversity education share aspects such as the role of narrative, first-person reporting, and the use of individual testimony. Friendship and education can help us transcend our own frames of reference and realize ‘the stories standing next to us.’ Knowledge gained through friendship is often self-knowledge because “we learn much from and with our friends, friendship broadens our perspectives and increases our range of experiences.”<sup>416</sup> In this manner, exposure to Arab lived realities is a critical approach to creating the foundations necessary for unifying narratives precisely because it validates the complexities that oppose media-based stereotypes, thereby transforming even our own perceptions of ourselves.

Exposure to the lived realities of others requires that differently situated subjects and groups in terms of their power bear different responsibilities when attempting to

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<sup>415</sup> Roth, Michael. “The Pattern of Life: Personal, Emotional, Relational.” N.p., Jan. 2004. Web. 29 Mar. 2017. <http://www.apesangelsandoutlaws.com/ei.htm>

<sup>416</sup> Lintott, Sheila. "Friendship and Bias: Ethical and Epistemic Considerations." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 46, no. 3 (2015): P 328.

minimize hermeneutical gaps and other forms of epistemic injustice. This is a concept highlighted by the differences between the arguments of Fricker and Medina — Medina argues for a more pluralistic and relational interpretation of the ethics of knowing and interpreting. Context is important because psychic structures and cognitive schemas exist at all levels of consciousness and are not usually available for self-scrutiny.<sup>417</sup> As Lawrence Blum points out, “there is often an emotional investment in prejudices and stereotypes not directly susceptible to cognitive treatment through disconfirmation.”<sup>418</sup> So, because our stereotypes involve abstract emotions, like security and fear, simply being told that a stereotype is inaccurate will not have the needed impact on the cognitive role of prejudices. For this reason, in addition to being actively aware of our language use, we must also respond to the oppression of others in an empathetic manner.

Empathy is central to the work of Saba Fatima, as she argues for empathy as a response that should inform US foreign policy in a manner that is inclusive of Muslim-Americans. In terms of Medina’s pluralistic approach to combatting epistemic injustice, Fatima provides ways in which Muslim-Americans can present their realities in terms of their affective responses to the sociopolitical institutions advanced by selective naming practices and other forms of linguistic chicanery. An ‘affective response’ refers to an

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<sup>417</sup> Kelly, Daniel, Luc Faucher, and Edouard Machery. "Getting Rid of Racism: Assessing Three Proposals in Light of Psychological Evidence." *Journal of Social Philosophy* 41, no. 3 (September 2010): 293-322.

<sup>418</sup> Blum, Lawrence. "Stereotypes and stereotyping: A moral analysis." *Philosophical Papers* 33, no. 3 (2004): 251-289.

agent's moral emotions or inclinations, such as anger or distrust, which inform their scripts as mediated by their social location within systems of domination.<sup>419</sup> Fatima insightfully argues that Muslim-Americans should bring their knowledge cultivated from affective responses to the US government's domestic and foreign policies regarding Muslims into the political arena.<sup>420</sup> Fatima loosely defines empathy as "a viscerally felt comprehension of another's emotional state."<sup>421</sup> Empathy does not involve blindly endorsing the position of another person, but rather sustaining a feeling of connection with the state of the *other*. Because the scope of our epistemic privilege contains the affective response that transcends 'nation-state' borders in favor of our proximity to the narratives of Muslims globally, as Wittgenstein argues, this response is essential to our 'selves' remaining multifaceted and whole.<sup>422</sup>

Ultimately, Fatima argues for "empathy as the sort of affective response that should inform our political discourse in light of the power dynamics of global conflicts, diasporas, loyalties, values, and the relationships these dynamics sustain."<sup>423</sup> Empathy experienced by individuals in society shapes the boundaries of public discourse involving state policies. Therefore, there is a strong relationship between the affective responses that people have to certain narratives and the moral locus of the narratives that are

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<sup>419</sup> Fatima, Saba. "Muslim-American Scripts." *Hypatia* 28, no. 2 (2013). P 342.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid. P 347.

<sup>421</sup> Ibid. P 347.

<sup>422</sup> Ibid. P 347.

<sup>423</sup> Ibid. P 347.

systematically favored in the sociopolitical context of our society. Perhaps the most important aspect of Fatima's conception of empathy as an affective response is its requirement to remove one's own positional power when attempting to grant epistemic justice to others. Removing ourselves from our own social location requires the crucial step of placing ourselves within the proximal context of another's narrative— "a precursor to affective response such as properly guided empathy."<sup>424</sup> This is a phenomenon referred to by Maria Lugones as 'world-travelling,' which seeks to illuminate the importance of empathy when attempting to perceive the lived realities of others.<sup>425</sup>

In her essay "*Playfulness, "World"-Travelling, and Loving Perception*," Lugones provides the counterpart to the nuanced responsibilities Fatima prescribes for Muslim-Americans. Lugones's 'world-travelling' refers to a particular feature possessed by the *others* of society, by which they have necessarily acquired flexibility in shifting from mainstream constructions of life to other constructions in which they feel more comfortable and 'at home.'<sup>426</sup> While this flexibility is necessary to *others*, it can also be adopted by those who feel at home in mainstream society, for example the white, Anglo-Saxon frameworks of life in America.<sup>427</sup> In such instances, Lugones recommends we travel to 'other worlds' with an attitude that she calls *playfulness*. Appealing to Frye's

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<sup>424</sup> Fatima, Saba. "Muslim-American Scripts." *Hypatia* 28, no. 2 (2013). P 351.

<sup>425</sup> Lugones, Maria. "Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception." *Hypatia* 2, no. 2 (1987): 3-19.

<sup>426</sup> *Ibid.* P 2.

<sup>427</sup> *Ibid.* P 4.

conception of *arrogant perception*, the failure to love or identify with another person because of one's own arrogant views, Lugones explains how abusing her mother taught her how to be abused herself. Lugones' notion of how our actions help define ourselves relates to an understanding of the importance of upholding 'universal human rights' in a uniform way, because the human rights of *others* are also *our human rights*.

Lugones writes of how she did not want to become what her mother was and therefore had a sense of not being integrated within her mother's world. This resulted in her inability to understand herself because she could not identify with her mother.<sup>428</sup> Lugones explains that she was only able to her understand her *self* as 'made real' when she was able to identify with the multiplicity of 'worlds' experienced by other women, including her mother: "I am incomplete and unreal without other women. I am profoundly dependent on others without having to be their subordinate, their slave, their servant."<sup>429</sup> Lugones's argument relates to the Wittgensteinian paradox of the self defined by the other; through an analysis of *arrogant* versus *loving* perception, she concludes that we are fully dependent on each other for the possibility of being understood. Without this understanding, we lack intelligibility to ourselves and others. We are profoundly lacking in *something* — we are incomplete. In this manner, "travelling to each other's 'worlds' would enable us to *be* through *loving* each other."<sup>430</sup> When we approach other people

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<sup>428</sup> Lugones, Maria. "Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception." *Hypatia* 2, no. 2 (1987). P 6.

<sup>429</sup> *Ibid.* P 8.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.* P 10.

with an arrogant perception, we learn to be treated arrogantly by others, seeing ourselves as removed and sometimes even lesser than the *other*.

The process of loving each other is intimately tied to Lugones's notion of playfulness, not as subscribing to the rules of a game, but rather as having a certain attitude that carries us through the activity by turning it into play.<sup>431</sup> Playfulness, while giving meaning to our activity, is embedded in a form of uncertainty as "an openness to surprise."<sup>432</sup> This attitude creates a context in which the dismantling of monolithic stereotypes is made possible, maybe even likely. Playfulness is a type of metaphysical attitude that is not adherent to a set of rules or norms— it is completely context-driven. Lugones also argues that this attitude involves a stripping of the self-important attitudes that often characterize arrogant perceptions that prevent us from being open to self-construction.

Playfulness is, in part, an openness to being a fool, which is a combination of not worrying about competence, not being self-important, not taking norms as sacred and finding ambiguity and double edges a source of wisdom and delight.<sup>433</sup>

Playfulness requires an understanding of our own limitations in our knowledge of others — recognizing the inaccuracy of prescribed stereotypes and approaching other people's 'worlds,' their lived realities, with an openness connected to the understanding that *love reveals plurality*.

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<sup>431</sup> Lugones, Maria. "Playfulness, "world"-travelling, and loving perception." *Hypatia* 2, no. 2 (1987). P 8.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.* P 16.

<sup>433</sup> *Ibid.* P 17.

According to Lugones, a failure in love is a failure to identify or relate to other people, what Medina calls *relationability*. Relationability is related to Lugones's 'playful world-travelling' because they are both rooted in epistemic empathy. To explore the worlds of others is to relate to them in a loving way that involves realizing one's own place in the lived realities of others. Medina argues that what underlies the epistemology of resistance and polyphonic contextualism is not relativism but *relationism* as the focus of attempts to combat epistemic injustice. He asks a question that alludes to the tension between universalism and cultural relativism: *How can we produce a form of shared sensibility* — “a set of cognitive-affective attitudes toward one another that can guide our life in common”— *on the basis of our epistemic differences rather than by attempting to suppress them?*<sup>434</sup> The main problems with our approach to *others*, as outlined by Lugones's playfulness and Medina's *kaleidoscopic social sensibility*, rest in this desire to fixate on universal commonalities.

In this manner, abstraction, as a manifestation of this desire, prevents us from understanding our affective emotions as our own and as deeply responsive to and reliant on the lived realities of those around us because it strips away understandings of the linguistic multiplicity present *within* our shared language. As both George Kateb and Mordechai Bar-On explain in their distinct analyses of fear and evil, abstraction is dangerous because it removes us from the actual horrors of concrete 'evil' — evil as it exists in the lived experiences of others, and not as a name seamlessly applied to things

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<sup>434</sup> Medina, José. *The epistemology of resistance: Gender and racial oppression, epistemic injustice, and the social imagination*. Oxford University Press, 2012.

like Hitler's Third Reich and Hamas' rocket attacks. Kateb argues that "one stops witnessing when one abstracts so much and gets away from the phenomenological experience of the suffering of real people."<sup>435</sup> This consequently undermines the work of the imagination, by which a spectator who is outside an event connects to embodied people in pain. Similarly, Bar-On argues that "Jewish Israelis and Palestinians vie with each other for such recognition and pursue their rivalry as a public relations campaign, thereby reifying the *evils* of terrorism and repression, a process that makes it so much harder to not use a single emblematic yardstick for *evil*."<sup>436</sup> In such cases, there is a need for a contextual and flexible understanding of *evil* because we call so many things evil when they share only a Wittgensteinian 'family resemblance.' Some comparisons are possible without establishing a universal idea of evil, yet we must avoid at all costs attempts to reduce all evils to one abstraction because this renders the binary of *good vs. evil—us vs. them* reified. Instead, we must see evil as a collective struggle by which we maintain the differences of distinct realities and their nuanced complexities. While both the Holocaust and the Israeli occupation of Palestine may both be termed evil, under no circumstance can these two distinct events be collapsed into one abstraction of evil. They both have implications in the human rights of others, representing the inaction of a world

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<sup>435</sup> Kateb, George. "A Life of Fear." *Social Research: FEAR: ITS POLITICAL USES & ABUSES* 71, no. 4 (April 2004): 887-926.

<sup>436</sup> Bar-On, Mordechai in Rotberg, Robert I. *Israeli and Palestinian narratives of conflict: History's double helix*. Indiana University Press, 2006. P 161.



of bystanders, but their many differences must be appreciated and maintained as their own.

### **Working Within International Human Rights Frameworks: Al-Haq and the BDS Movement**

The problem of abstraction surpasses the negative conceptions of *fear* and *evil*, remaining applicable to even the responses enacted by the universal human rights regime. *The Universal Declaration of Human Rights* seeks to provide an abstract conception of human rights in order to protect and make equal people all over the world as members of *humanity*. Yet, as the philosophical investigations of Medina and Lugones emphasize, abstraction reifies dangerous binaries, particularly when combined by linguistic chicanery and the selective applications of ‘universal’ norms. For example, as Peteet claims, “over the course of much of the previous century, rhetoric and words were selectively deployed, repeated, insisted upon and entered into mainstream language to construct Palestinians as discursively as beyond the pale of humanity.”<sup>437</sup> While there is a need to revisit the multifaceted realities of what human rights look like in different places, when we declare a set of standards a “universal declaration of human rights” but do not condemn all violations we are denying the humanity of the victims. Peteet insists that these rights are granted by virtue of membership in the human community and therefore “the notions of humanity and the distribution of human rights are closely interwoven.”<sup>438</sup>

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<sup>437</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 167.

<sup>438</sup> Peteet, Julie. "Words as Interventions: Naming in the Palestine: Israel Conflict." *Third World Quarterly* 26, no. 1 (2005). P 167.

Understanding the epistemic power of this illusory group, *humanity*, many Palestinian organizations attempt to appeal to these universal standards of human rights, as illustrated by the formation of the human rights organization, Al-Haq, and the social movement, BDS. The main critiques of the BDS movement center on its isolation of the Jews living in Israel as well as its potential to make the situation worse for Palestinians living in Gaza and the West Bank.<sup>439</sup> Here, it is critical to eliminate the reification of binaries that we attempt to make abstract and applicable to temporally-bound historical contexts. Palestinian holocaustal fears are misplaced because the humanity of Israelis, as a dependent on Palestinian *others* for their own constructions of selfhood, is also threatened by the occupation. As Judith Butler maintains “if the structure of occupation remains the same, if Israeli citizenship is not democratized for all of its inhabitants, and if the rights of refugees continue to be dishonored, then such carefully structured instances of cohabitation become transient moments, eclipsed time and again by these overwhelming structural realities.”<sup>440</sup> Butler’s attention to the effect of the occupation on Israeli citizenship is not an attempt to collapse distinctions between Palestinians and Israelis; rather, it is designed to prove the type of Wittgensteinian integration that these two groups share— a form of proximal understanding limited by their unwanted closeness in a battle over the same land they both call ‘home.’ The problem with BDS

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<sup>439</sup> Bhandar, Brenna. "Some Reflections on BDS and Feminist Political Solidarity." *feminists@ law* 4, no. 1 (2014).

<sup>440</sup> Butler, Judith. “Palestine, State Politics, and the Anarchist Impasse,” in Blumenfeld, Jacob, Chiara Bottici, and Simon Critchley. *The Anarchist Turn*. (2013).

critics is their reliance on a Kantian view that presupposes that *we are all people here and there is a basic respect between us*, systematically ignoring existing political realities.<sup>441</sup>

Many sources of criticism also derive from the BDS's attack on Israeli academia. Yet, as argued by Israeli scholars including Norman Finkelstein and Ilan Pappé, academics, having access to the highest level of knowledge, have special responsibilities. Academia doesn't function in a void in such a way that it is distinct from the world's problems. In an interview with Arab media source *Al-Mayadeen*, Professor Keith Hammond of the Scottish University of Glasgow explicitly argues that Israeli academics should support their Palestinian colleagues and speak out against their own government.<sup>442</sup> The central objective of the BDS movement is its role as a communicator, informing Israel that its actions in Palestine are not acceptable by applying economic and social pressure within the international framework. Yet it is important to note that Israel will not be able to be held accountable to international law as long as it has the backing of the US. Because the BDS movement gives ordinary people an opportunity to act simply by refusing to buy *Sabra* hummus at their local grocer, this form of activism, when combined by an understanding of the epistemic value of recognizing ourselves in the struggles of others, has remarkable potency. Given that the centerpiece of the BDS movement is American awareness and action, it reflects a successful challenge to the *we*

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<sup>441</sup> Butler, Judith. "Palestine, State Politics, and the Anarchist Impasse," in Blumenfeld, Jacob, Chiara Bottici, and Simon Critchley. *The Anarchist Turn*. (2013).

<sup>442</sup> Al-Mayadeen. Web. <http://www.almayadeen.net/programs/episode/16604/--من-أجل-العدالة-في-فلسطين--من-داخل-جامعة-غلاسكو>

*vs. they* mentality. This movement also accomplishes the goals of Chomsky's theory of reflective democracy, by which our human rights abroad directly reflect our liberties at home— a political manifestation of Medina's and Butler's conception that *here* is also *there*. While BDS and Al-Haq both work within international humanitarian legal frameworks in order to activate the dispute-resolving potential of these movements, they must be referenced universally, and Israel must be held accountable for its human rights abuses and corresponding violations of international law.

In terms of the Wittgensteinian notion of the *self defined by the other*, my argument should not be read as merely a reduced humanist approach reliant on the emphasis that *both Jews and Arabs are human*. Rather, we must understand that our actions, as extensions of our own subconscious biases, our explicit beliefs, and our value hierarchies, represent us. We are only made intelligible when we are recognized or understood by others through the shared frameworks of our language. Through linguistic chicanery and the process of creating *others*, dueling narratives perpetuate the illusion of a private language. Epistemic injustice occurs when we exclude others by denying their intelligibility, their intelligence, and their reliability as knowers. This is why epistemic injustice, as we see in the erasure of a Palestinian voice, is so effective in dehumanizing and delegitimizing the *other side*. Therefore, by seeing Palestinians as *others*, we are misunderstanding the logic of our language and the 'way of our world.'

The illusory binaries made visible by philosophical, feminist, psychological, and political analyses of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, including the tension between

cultural relativism and universalism in the implementation of human rights law, the selective disparities in our language use, the dueling narratives that naming processes both rely upon and enforce, the epistemological injustice of silencing those marginalized by society, and the psychological construction of the *we vs. they* mentality all contribute to an imbalanced distinction between ourselves and others. In order to resolve the underlying source of this conflict—the dueling Israeli and Palestinian narratives—we must provide an environment conducive to the reconciliation of these narratives. Such an environment would require the prevention of further human rights abuses from both Israeli and Palestinian sources, addressed through regulations codified in international law. The role of the United States in this conflict presents an opportunity for Americans to know the other, thereby knowing themselves.

When we seek to understand real people—our neighbors, our fellow students, our peers—we begin to dissociate these people from the media-based caricatures that effectively dehumanize them. There is always an acute need to reconcile with the *other* and, in the context of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict, this requires unraveling decades of religious, ethnic, and political hostility towards both Jews and Arabs as victims of interrelated forms of oppression. In the end, both the Israeli and the Palestinian narratives are based in a sense of justice—more importantly, in a sense of being denied this justice in the context of international humanitarian intervention. If Americans become empathetic towards Arab people, they will begin to question and critically assess US foreign policy. Thus, the most effective thing that can pressure the American government

to change its policies and objectives is the American people. My argument attempts to reveal the importance of the lived realities of Palestinians, from the human rights abuses they face daily, to the falsified stereotypes that represent them in American media platforms. As Wittgenstein's philosophy of language tells us, we are functionally bound to those around us, and therefore we must seek to preserve the *other*. We can do this by recognizing our humanity in the struggles of *others*, through the empowerment of their voices and perspectives. In this manner, the beginning of a feasible solution for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict rests deep within the notion that we need to *find Palestine*, in order to *find ourselves*.

*\*Qualtrics Survey*

I would like to invite you to participate in a short online survey that seeks to investigate the impact of cultural and linguistic education on the formation and interception of Arab stereotypes. This survey should take about 10 to 15 minutes to complete. Participation is voluntary and responses will be kept anonymous. You have the option to not respond to any questions that you choose. Participation or non-participation will not impact your relationship with your instructors and university officials in any way. Submission of the completed survey will be interpreted as your informed consent to participate.

If you have any questions about the research, please contact Sarah Decker via email at [sed021@bucknell.edu](mailto:sed021@bucknell.edu) or Prof. Martin Isleem via email at [martin.isleem@bucknell.edu](mailto:martin.isleem@bucknell.edu).

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Please select your gender

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- Male
- Female
- Other

Please select your self-identified race

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- Caucasian
- Hispanic/ Latino
- Black/ African American
- Native American/American Indian
- Asian/ Pacific Islander
- Other

How would you describe your political views toward Mexican immigration into the United States?

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- Coincide with politicians who seek to ban illegal immigration into the United States
- Coincide with politicians who seek to grant Mexican immigrants legal status
- I have no opinion on this matter
- Other

Do you consider your family

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- Middle Class  
 Above Middle Class  
 Below Middle Class  
 Other

Do you think that daily culture at Bucknell represents your culture?

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- Yes  
 No  
 Other

Have you been raised in a neighborhood with an Arab population?

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- Yes  
 No  
 Other

In your opinion, was the Bucknell administration's response to recent race issues on campus out of proportion?

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- Yes  
 No  
 Other

Do you think minority students in the Bucknell community have the ability to gain more access to resources than other students?

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- Yes  
 No  
 Other

Have you in the past or do you plan to study Arabic culture and/or language?

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- Yes  
 No  
 Other



To what extent have you studied Arab and/or Muslim culture, religion, or language?

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- Individually
- In an academic setting
- Other
- I have not studied Arab and/or Muslim culture, religion, or language

If you have studied Arab and/or Muslim culture, religion, or language how did this affect your perception of the Arab world? If you have not studied these topics, how do you think doing so would impact your understanding of the Arab world?

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What year are you currently as a Bucknell student?

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- First Year
- Sophomore
- Junior
- Senior
- 5th Year
- Graduate Student
- Other

Do you work on campus as a Bucknell student?

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- Yes I work through the work-study program
- Yes I work on campus, independent of the work-study program
- No
- Other



If you went to the Arab world, would you attempt to look for the attractions depicted in Disney's animated film *Aladdin*?

- Yes
- No
- Other



Please select the answer that best fits your response to this image

- This image represents a justified safety precaution upheld by airports internationally as a response to recent correlations between acts of terrorism and the Muslim culture.
- This image represents a violation of the equal rights of all individuals, regardless of race, ethnicity, culture, or religion and their right to not be discriminated against by airport personnel.

("Yes to wearing the Burqa\* ...on the inside!")



\*Burqa is a long, loose garment covering the whole body from head to feet, worn in public by many Muslim women.

Should this image be censored or not? Please provide a brief explanation.

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